

## Hans Blix appointed Director General

On 1 December 1981, Dr Hans Blix took office as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency in succession to Dr Sigvard Eklund who has headed the IAEA since 1961.

The Agency's Board of Governors nominated Dr Blix by acclamation on 26 September. His appointment was unanimously approved by the final session of the 25th regular session of the General Conference of the IAEA the same day. The President of the Conference, Ambassador Manaspas Xuto, administered the oath of office to Dr Blix at the final plenary meeting that day.

After taking the oath of office the Director General designate addressed the delegates:

"I should like to express my gratitude to you all for your approval of my appointment as Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"I pledge to do my utmost to live up to the confidence you have placed in me. I shall need your continued support in a task which I know is not easy.

"It is perhaps inevitable that the choice of the executive head of an international organization is influenced by views on the country from which he or she comes. And it is true, of course, for all of us, that we are the products of our backgrounds and can not entirely liberate ourselves from them. I have to admit it: I am another Swede.

"I should like to emphasize however, that the step from a national civil service to an international one is a fundamental change. It is important, indeed vital, that international civil servants have the full confidence of all Member States. To achieve this they must be guided in their work exclusively by the objectives and principles laid down in the Statute of the international organization they serve, and by the guidelines laid down by the policy-making organs of the organization.

"An international organization is the joint tool of the Member States which have created it. Its successful functioning depends upon the Member States' continued co-operation. It depends also upon the co-operation of the staff. They must faithfully, diligently and intelligently execute all those tasks which are laid upon them. On my part, I assure you that I shall devote all my energy in the service of the Agency.

"I do not bring to the Office of the Director General the scientific background and the erudition of Dr Sigvard Eklund. This is a handicap which I recognize and which cannot be remedied. Only – I hope and trust – this will be compensated to some extent by competence within the staff. During the 20 years that Dr Eklund has been the Director General, he has helped to build up one of the world's most effective and competent international organizations. We all stand in gratitude to him.

"I can only bring to the office which I assume the experience of a career which has given me extensive work in the fields of international law and organization, disarmament, detente and development co-operation. Energy – including nuclear energy – is an important item in all these areas.

### A biographical note

Hans Blix was born in 1928 in Uppsala. He studied at the University of Uppsala, at Columbia University, where he was also a research graduate and at Cambridge, where he received his Ph D.

In 1959 he became Doctor of Laws at the Stockholm University and in 1960 was appointed associate professor in international law.

From 1963 to 1976 Dr Blix was Head of Department at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and served as Legal Adviser on International Law. In 1976 he became Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in charge of international development co-operation. He was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs in October 1978. In September 1979 he was again appointed Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in charge of international development co-operation.

Since 1961 he has been a member of Sweden's delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, and from 1962 to 1978 a member of the Swedish delegation to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

He has written several books on subjects associated with international and constitutional law and was leader of the Liberal Campaign Committee in favour of retention of the Swedish nuclear energy program in the referendum in 1980.

He is married to Eva Blix, née Kettis, Director at the Ministry of Commerce. They have two children.



After taking the oath of office as Director General of the IAEA at the final plenary session of the General Conference, Dr Blix shakes hands with the President of the Conference, Ambassador Manaspas Xuto, under the approving gaze of Dr Eklund.

“I also bring the experience that it is vitally important to listen to the voices of all countries, big and small, East and West, North and South. Harmony is only created when all instruments are in tune.

“I am aware, of course, that much work is needed both by Member States and IAEA staff to bring about agreement and consensus. Different interests do exist between Member States in various matters. But we are all agreed on the importance of nuclear energy, its technical promotion, its safe use, its public acceptance. We are also agreed on the necessity of safeguards to promote exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Technical Assistance – a field which is close to my heart

and of which I am a strong supporter – is vitally important to the developing countries and, consequently, to this Agency.

“Lastly, I shall bring to the office of Director General a deep conviction of the need for international community building. The growing interdependence of all States has an inescapable corollary in a need for consultation, co-operation and common action.

“This is, first of all, the task of Governments. But the staff and the Director General of an international organization can facilitate and contribute to this task. They should. And I will try.”



1 December 1981: Director General Hans Blix is escorted into the Agency's Headquarters by Director General Emeritus Sigvard Eklund.