

# Imed Zabaar, Staff Council President, addresses the IAEA Staff Association Ball 2016

Good evening, everybody!

Ladies and Gentlemen, and all our guests, I bid you welcome!

Like many of you, I have been looking forward to this evening for quite some time. I can proudly say that from its modest beginnings, our ball has over the years become one of the most renowned and most glamorous of its kind in Vienna.

We are delighted to have you here tonight. Thank you for coming.

As our Director General never tires of saying, the IAEA is an "organization of excellence".

We all take great pride in the work that we do for the Agency. Might I thus ask you all, colleagues and excellencies alike, to join me in a toast to the IAEA and its staff for yet another productive and successful year.

"To the Agency and its staff".

Thank you!

An organization that works well also plays well. The history of our ball pays testimony to the excellence of our playtime.

One of the ball's founding fathers, now enjoying well deserved retirement, Mr. Peter Patak, told me that back in 1967, the event flew under the flag of the UNO Ball. It was held for the first time in the Sofiensäle and proved a roaring success from the word 'go'. It raised 1420 Austrian schillings for charity. At the time, that was a considerable sum.

We are proud that the IAEA Staff Association kept a worthy tradition alive and continues its efforts to strengthening ties between the international community and its host country.

Last year in November, the IAEA Staff Association organized a ceremony to hand over the total amount of €85 000 from the proceeds of past IAEA Staff Association Balls. The money went to seven deserving charities:

- St Anna Kinderkrebsforschung;
- Caritas;
- SOS Kinderdorf;
- Ute Bock;
- 1% for Development Fund;
- The Diakonie; and
- Wiener Hilfswerk.



When all is said and done, we believe, without a doubt, no matter how much money we raise, the awareness that this event has created is priceless!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Staff Association did not do all this alone. It is very much a joint effort. Much of what we've achieved tonight would not have been possible without our sponsors, to whom our sincere thanks are due.

First and foremost, we are particularly grateful to the Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Vienna, as well as to HONDA, SHIKI Japanese Fine Dining, Restaurant Nihonbashi and the Mizuho Bank Nederland.

Their generosity knew no bounds. Permit me to thank them in my flawless Japanese:

*"Dōmo arigatōgozaimas"*

Our thanks also go to:

- Dr. Michael Häupl, the Mayor of Vienna,
- Dr. Yukiya Amano, IAEA Director General,
- and the management of the Hofburg.

We also wish to thank all the volunteers, musicians, artists, security officers, catering service staff and photographers.

A special 'Thank You' must also go to the Ball Organizing Committee chaired by:

- Elly Wynsford-Brown
- And assisted by her team:
- Kaseza Talengwa Lukumbuzya,
- Pappachan Punnackal,
- Alexia Poriki,
- Fabien Petit,
- Margaret Robertson,
- Venecia Blacker,
- Anjarika Strohal,
- Chakkappan Thottakara, and
- Doris Gludovacz

They all worked hard to make tonight a real success.

A very big 'Thank You' also goes to Jennifer, our master of ceremonies. Jennifer, you really look fabulous tonight!

Finally, a 'Thank You' to everyone I haven't mentioned by name, all of whom contributed to making our night a true delight. Look around you and see what you helped us achieve!

Indeed, looking around me at all the people here tonight, I feel proud to be part of a truly fantastic setting. Good food, select drinks and dancing until the wee small hours of the morning, meeting old friends and making new ones among those who share a common commitment to the good.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We bring the live music, you bring your feet, and together we'll have a great evening.

Have an amazing night!



Photos: Dean Calma and Sandu Cucui, style arts



## KAGAMIBIRAKI

Believed to be of divine origins, *sake* emerged as the drink of Japanese nobility over 2,000 years ago and grew to enjoy widespread popularity among all Japanese.

Sake was especially popular on festive occasions. To celebrate important events such as the New Year, weddings, anniversaries or the opening of a new business, a special ritual, the *KAGAMIBIRAKI* (cask breaking ceremony) was performed. *KAGAMI* refers to the circular mirror that was unveiled by a Shinto priest during the ceremony as a symbol of the divine spirit. It also refers to the circular lid of the sake cask that is broken open by the guest of honour using a large wooden mallet. The sake is then ladled out to all in attendance.

This ceremonial opening of the sake cask is believed to bring blessings of health, happiness and prosperity to all, as the sake is raised in a resounding toast of "KAMPAI!!"



