

IAEA Staff Association

Ball

Hofburg Palace, Vienna

1 February 2020

The IAEA Staff Association Ball took place on Saturday, 1 February 2020, at the Hofburg Imperial Palace. The Ball celebrated 'Life below Water', addressing number 14 of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and so raising awareness that over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. However, today we can see more than 30 percent of the world's fish stocks overexploited. Whereas oceans absorb some 30 percent of the carbon dioxide produced by humans, we continue to see a significant rise in ocean acidification since the industrial revolution.

Marine pollution is reaching alarming levels, with an average of 13,000 pieces of plastic littering every square kilometre of our oceans. SDG 14 aims to manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems from pollution in a sustainable manner, as well as address the impact of ocean acidification.

Under this motto, the Hofburg was illuminated with breathtaking underwater views throughout the entrance area, the Feststiege and the Seitengalerie. In addition, and in collaboration with the Natural History Museum of Vienna (NHM) a splendid exhibition focusing on plastic pollution in the marine environment had been set up at the entrance to the Hofburg. The organizing committee invited relevant start-ups and partners to promote green initiatives in this regard.

For the third year in a row, the Ball was organized and certified as a 'green event' by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism. The Staff Association Ball continues to be the only Ball in Vienna to be awarded this green certification.

As has become the tradition over the years, the Vienna Pipes and Drums opened proceedings followed by the UN Security and Safety Service performing the customary flag ceremony. The welcome by the Master



of Ceremonies, Ms Jennifer Lusser, was followed by the lively and entertaining Mariachi Sin Fronteras, with live Mexican music, taking all ball guests on a journey to the most famous squares in Mexico to the accompaniment of Mariachi music.

In continuing the evening's theme, ¡BAILA MÉXICO!, a folklore dance group from Mexico who shared their enthusiasm for the cultural heritage of Mexico as expressed through dance.

The opening ceremony was concluded by a talented Soprano, and IAEA Staff Member, Ms Christina Krawec. She sang beautiful arias and demonstrated her talent and international opera singing experience.

The Staff Council President welcomed the 3,600 guests to the official opening of the 2020 Staff Association Ball. He praised the IAEA staff members for their many achievements and successes over the years and commended the Staff Association Ball Committee on having organised yet again, such a splendid ball.

Another highlight of this evening was the attendance and speech given by the new Director General Mr Rafael Mariano Grossi. He commended the Ball Committee on its endeavours. He knew full well how much effort went into organizing an event of such a scale and thanked all the staff for their dedication and hard work. The Elmayer Dance School performed the traditional debutantes opening waltz joined by Director General Grossi and his wife and concluded the ceremony with a waltz formation comprising a team of professional dancers.

Once again, the Staff Association Ball featured a diverse musical programme. It ranged from The Johann Strauss Ensemble Vienna and the Gerhard Aflenzer Broadway Big Band in the Festsaal to The Strompin' Lickers with Swing in the Zeremoniensaal, followed by the legendary Ceilidh with ALASTAIR. Evelyn Salsa y Sabor performed Latin American music in the salsa room and Hokus Pokus entertained the guests with pop and soul classics in the Rittersaal. Ghattoman & The Believers with their authentic combination of Reggae and Afro grooves performed in the Radetzky Apartments.

The Petaw Band, West African music with an electric touch, performed in Forum, followed by the ball's disco, with DJ Mike Allai & DJ Smart Marty MC. In keeping with tradition, the legendary 'Silent Disco' shook the Orchestergang into silence - but the beat was great.

On the stroke of midnight, the guests were entertained by the amazing cover band 'Diana Ross & The Shades' - with most inspiring hits of the 60's, thus ensuring the very best show entertainment in the Festsaal. The show was followed by the traditional quadrille under the direction of Professor Thomas Schaefer-Elmayer.

For the third year in the history of the Staff Association Ball, both the opening ceremony and the midnight show were live streamed on Facebook for those of our colleagues and other guests who could not attend the festivities.

The Organising Committee comprised Elly Wynsford-Brown, Fabien Petit, Anjarika Strohal, Martyn O. Ubani, Lydia Baben, Gareth Horton, Ahmad Mazrui, Edit Boros, Doris Gludovacz, as well as Venecia Blacker and Elodie Broussard in an advisory capacity.

The next IAEA Staff Association Ball in 2021 has been cancelled in light of the COVID-19 measures and precautions. The next ball is confirmed for 2022 (status October 2020).



Statement of the Staff Council President Imed Zabaar to the IAEA Staff Association Ball 2020

Good evening everybody!

It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you to the annual IAEA Staff Association Ball. It is truly splendid to see you here in such numbers.

I extend a special welcome to our guests of honour and the representatives of our host country. I also welcome our Director General Mr Rafael Mariano Grossi and his lady wife.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With a touch of pride, I can 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 proud that the IAEA Staff Association has kept a worthy tradition alive as it continues its efforts to strengthen ties between the international community and our host country.

Like every year, our ball was sold out within the first few days.

Many of you travelled the globe to be with us here tonight. You were drawn by the fact that our ball ranks high as one of the most enjoyable social events during the ball season here in Vienna.

In fact, since 2018 the IAEA Staff Association Ball has been the one and only eco-certified ball in Vienna.

Two weeks ago, together with our organizing committee, I had the honour to receive a certificate for green events from the Austrian Ministry of Sustainability and Tourism in recognition of the organizing committee's efforts to ensure that the ball is a truly green affair.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Many of you familiar with the IAEA know that our slogan is "Atoms for peace and development".

It is thus no coincidence that this year, the theme for our ball is "Life Below Water" which is one of the seventeen sustainable development goals adopted by all United Nations Member States.

The seventeen goals constitute a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future.

Ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and spur economic growth and development. – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

Water covers more than 70 per cent of the surface area of our planet. It is a major source of food and income for many. It is thus of paramount importance that we tackle climate change and work to preserve and sustain our oceans.

The growing acidification of our oceans poses a major threat to marine life and ecosystems. The ever-increasing volume of contaminants, such as microplastics and heavy metals affect marine organisms, not to speak of the quality of seafood and the transfer of contaminants throughout the food chain.

The IAEA is proud to be among the global players providing solutions to these problems. In its environmental laboratories, IAEA experts use nuclear and isotopic techniques to address Member States' coastal and marine ecological challenges and needs.

Please join me in giving our colleagues in the IAEA laboratories in Monaco and Seibersdorf a resounding round of applause for all their work and achievements.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Much of what we have achieved would not have been possible without your support and active participation – as well as the generous donations from our sponsors, to whom our sincere thanks are due.

Especial thanks go to:

- The Permanent Mission of Mexico,
- OPEC Fund for International Development,
- BMW Wien,
- UNFCU,
- Casino Wien,
- Natural History Museum Vienna.
- Company Arian, who provided us with a beautiful photobooth for your underwater photos



Your support is truly appreciated! Thank you!

I also wish to thank the management of the Hofburg, all the volunteers, graphic designers, web designers, musicians, artists, security officers, catering service and photographers. Thank you.

A particular 'thank you' must also go to the Ball Organizing Committee. The members worked very hard to make tonight a roaring success.

Our warmest thanks and gratitude also go to Jennifer, our master of ceremonies, who will make our night a true delight.

And to all those whom I have not mentioned by name, thank you so much for your part in making our evening truly enjoyable.

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my great pleasure and honour to invite our IAEA Director General Mr Rafael Mariano Grossi and his wife up to the stage to say a few words.

