INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

OTHER ORGANS RELATED TO THE UN

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA)

Origin. An intergovernmental agency, the IAEA was established in 1957 under the aegis of the UN and reports annually to the General Assembly. Its Statute was approved on 26 Oct. 1956 at a conference at UN Headquarters.

Functions. To accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world; and to ensure that assistance provided by it or at its request or under its supervision or control is not used in such a way as to further any military purpose. In addition, under the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Treaty of Rarotonga, the Pelindaba Treaty and the Bangkok Treaty: to verify states’ obligation to prevent diversion of nuclear fissionable material from peaceful uses to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Activities. The IAEA gives advice and technical assistance to developing countries on nuclear power development, nuclear safety, radioactive waste management, legal aspects of atomic energy use, and prospecting for and exploiting nuclear raw materials. In addition, it promotes the use of radiation and isotopes in agriculture, industry, medicine and hydrology through expert services, training courses and fellowships, grants of equipment and supplies, research contracts, scientific meetings and publications. During 2000 there were over 1,000 operational projects for technical co-operation. These activities involved 5,600 expert assignments while 2,263 persons received training abroad.

Safeguards are the technical means applied by the IAEA to verify that nuclear equipment or materials are used exclusively for peaceful purposes. IAEA safeguards cover more than 95% of civilian nuclear installations outside the five nuclear-weapon states (China, France, Russia, UK and USA). These five nuclear-weapon states have concluded agreements with the Agency which permit the application of IAEA safeguards to all their civil nuclear activities. Installations in non-nuclear-weapon states under safeguards or containing safeguarded material at 31 Dec. 2000 were 196 power reactors, 156 research reactors and critical assemblies, 13 conversion plants, 42 fuel fabrication plants, six reprocessing plants, 11 enrichment plants and 316 other installations. In 2000, 2,467 inspections were conducted under the safeguard agreements at 900 nuclear installations in 65 non-nuclear-weapon states. By Dec. 1999 a total of 224 safeguard agreements were in force with 140 states. A programme designed to prevent and combat illicit trafficking of nuclear weapons came into force in April 1996.

Organization. The Statute provides for an annual General Conference, a 35-member Board of Governors and a Secretariat headed by a Director-General. The IAEA had 135 member states in March 2003.

There are also research laboratories in Austria and Monaco. The International Centre for Theoretical Physics was established in Trieste, in 1964, and is operated jointly by UNESCO and the IAEA.

Headquarters: Vienna International Centre, PO Box 100, A-1400 Vienna, Austria. Website: http://www.iaea.org/worldatom

Director-General: Dr Mohamed ElBaradei (Egypt).

Publications. Annual Report; IAEA Bulletin (quarterly); IAEA Newsbriefs (bi-monthly); IAEA Yearbook; INIS Reference Series; Legal Series; Nuclear Fusion (monthly); Nuclear Safety Review (annual); INIS Atomindex (CD-Rom); Technical Directories; Technical Reports Series.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO)

Origin. The WTO is founded on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which entered into force on 1 Jan. 1948. Its 23 original signatories were members of a Preparatory Committee appointed by the UN Economic and Social Council to draft the charter for a proposed International Trade Organization. Since this charter was never ratified, the General Agreement remained the only international instrument laying down trade rules. In Dec. 1993 there were 111
contracting parties, and a further 22 countries applying GATT rules on a *de facto* basis. On 15 April 1994 trade ministers of 123 countries signed the Final Act of the GATT Uruguay Round of negotiations at Marrakesh, bringing the WTO into being on 1 Jan. 1995. As of Feb. 2003 the WTO had 145 members.

The object of the Act is the liberalization of world trade. By it, member countries undertake to apply fair trade rules covering commodities, services and intellectual property. It provides for the lowering of tariffs on industrial goods and tropical products; the abolition of import duties on a variety of items; the progressive abolition of quotas on garments and textiles; the gradual reduction of trade-distorting subsidies and import barriers; and agreements on intellectual property and trade in services. Members are required to accept the results of the Uruguay Round talks in their entirety, and subscribe to all the WTO's agreements and disciplines. There are no enforcement procedures, however; decisions are ultimately reached by consensus.

**Functions.** The WTO is the legal and institutional foundation of the multilateral trading system. Surveillance of national trade policies is an important part of its work. At the centre of this is the *Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM)*, agreed by Ministers in 1994 (Article III of the Marrakesh Agreement). The TPRM was broadened in 1995 when the WTO came into being, to cover services trade and intellectual property. Its principal objective is to facilitate the smooth functioning of the multilateral trading system by enhancing the transparency of members’ trade policies. All members are subject to review under the TPRM, which mandates that four members with the largest share of world trade (European Union, USA, Japan, Canada) be reviewed every two years; the next 16, every four years; and others every six, with a longer period able to be fixed for the least-developed members. Also, in 1994, flexibility of up to six months was introduced into the review cycles, and in 1996, it was agreed that every second review of each of the first four trading entities should be an interim review. Reviews are conducted by the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB) on the basis of a policy statement by the member under review and a report by economists in the Secretariat’s Trade Policy Review Division.

The *International Trade Centre* (since 1968 operated jointly with the United Nations through UNCTAD) was established by GATT in 1964 to provide information and training on export markets and marketing techniques, and thereby to assist the trade of developing countries. In 1984 the Centre became an executing agency of the UN Development Programme, responsible for carrying out UNDP-financed projects related to trade promotion.

**Organization.** A two-yearly ministerial meeting is the ultimate policy-making body. The 144-member General Council has some 30 subordinate councils and committees. The *Dispute Settlement Body* was set up to deal with disputes between countries. Appeals against its verdicts are heard by a seven-member *Appellate Body*. In 2003 it was composed of representatives of Egypt, the European Union, Japan, Brazil, Australia, USA and India. Dispute panels may be set up *ad hoc*, and objectors to their ruling may appeal to the Appellate Body whose decision is binding. Refusal to comply at this stage can result in the application of trade sanctions. Each appeal is heard by three of the Appellate Body members. Before cases are heard by dispute panels, there is a 60-day consultation period. The previous GATT Secretariat now serves the WTO, which has no resources of its own other than its operating budget. The budget for 2002 was 143,129,850 Swiss francs.

**Headquarters:** Centre William Rappard, 154 rue de Lausanne, CH-1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland.
**Website:** http://www.wto.org
**e-mail:** enquiries@wto.org
**Director-General:** Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand).

**Publications.** Annual Report; *International Trade: Trends and Statistics* (annual); *WTO Focus* (10 a year).

**Further Reading**