Statement of the Staff Council President Imed Zabaar to the IAEA Staff Association Ball 2018

Thank you so much. Good Evening everybody!

It is a great honour and privilege for me to welcome you this evening to the annual IAEA Staff Association Ball. I am both truly delighted and amazed to see so many of you. Thank you for coming in such numbers.

Let me start with what they call on television 'a commercial break'.

For those of you who are not familiar with the work of the IAEA Staff Association, I should perhaps mention that we do more than organize stunning social events two or three times a year. Our main activities are securing the rights of all members of the Agency staff and safeguarding their interests. We work together with management to promote working conditions that conform with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The very fact that our Director General is here with us tonight speaks volumes. It bears testimony to the healthy and harmonious staff/management relations here at the Agency.

In addition to our challenging day-to-day roles and functions, we serve the ideals of peace, respect for fundamental rights, economic and social progress and international cooperation.

The vision of the IAEA for Peace and Development that we all share has brought you all together in such numbers tonight - representing all different nationalities and cultures. We are intent upon keeping a worthy tradition alive as we celebrate the spirit and commitment of a truly united international body.

Once again, I thank you all for coming and joining in the fun.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are so many people I need to thank this evening.

Much of what we've achieved wouldn't have been possible without sponsorship.

I thank our main sponsors, the OPEC Fund for International Development, BMW Wien, Drei, Casino Wien and UNFCU.

Your support and generosity are greatly appreciated.

At the same time, the Ball is a sponsor in its own right.

In November just past, the IAEA Staff Association donated no less than €148,000 from the proceeds of previous balls. The funds went to a number of deserving charity organizations.

Furthermore, we were also able to help the American Red Cross in supporting the victims of hurricane Harvey and the Mexican Red Cross in supporting the victims of the earthquake in Mexico, as well as helping a German humanitarian relief organization to aid the victims of the earthquake in the Iran/Iraq border region.

Thanks are also due to people who have lent us moral and practical support. Their numbers include Dr Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, Dr Michael Häupl, the Mayor of Vienna and Mr. Yukiya Amano, IAEA Director General, as well as the management of the Hofburg.

I would like to thank the members on Ball Organizing Committee. They are here beside me on the stage. The team under the leadership of Elly Wynsford-Brown comprises:

Fabien Petit
Anjarika Strohal
Abigail Minsun Kim
Lydia Baben
Martyn Ubani
Sukcharanjit Singh
Venecia Blacker
Doris Gludovacz
Kaseza Talengwa Lukumbuzya
Margaret Robertson
Elodie Broussard .

They worked hard to make this evening so enjoyable.

Their task was far from simple, yet always performed with consummate skill.

You have done a wonderful job.

To Jennifer, our master of ceremonies, all the volunteers, Graphic designers, Web designers, musicians, artists, security officers, catering service and photographers. Thank you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Tonight is a celebration of the international community, with old friends meeting and new friends made: dedicating ourselves to causes and people we care most about. It is an opportunity to raise money for charity and yes, tonight is also about having a good time – which I really hope you'll all do.

On our way here tonight, my wife who never misses a chance to dance, reminded me that:

Roses are red,
Salsa is hot,
Chocolate has calories,
Dancing does not.

And I said to her: "Dearest, you can dance, you can jive, and have the time of your life. But Darling, PLEASE save the last dance for me."

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Thank you all again for coming.
Have a wonderful evening!

And… DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY!

Colours of Africa