

## **Summary of Introductory Remarks by the Director General**

The Director General, Mohamed ElBaradei, in his opening address, told the group that it was an honour for the IAEA that Prince Albert II of Monaco had come to Vienna to attend the ceremony, in particular since Prince Albert II was the host of the IAEA Marine Laboratories in Monaco.

Dr. ElBaradei observed that Prince Albert's dedication to science was well known. Indeed, one of Prince Albert's first journeys out of the country as a Head of State, in July 2005, had been to Spitzbergen, in an expedition that replicated the journey undertaken some 100 years earlier by Prince Albert I. The scientific mission of this expedition was to examine evidence of climate change and the impact of pollutants from human activity on Arctic flora and fauna. Dr. ElBaradei was proud to note that the IAEA participated in this expedition.

Dr. ElBaradei underscored that environmental sustainability was central to development efforts. The 'footprint' of the human population on earth was expanding and the past 50 years had witnessed an unprecedented rise in the earth's population. This growth, from 2.5 to 6.5 billion, had greatly increased demands on the earth's natural resources. Water use and grain consumption had increased by a factor of 3, demand for seafood had increased by a factor of 5 and carbon emissions from the burning of fossil fuels had increased by a factor of 4. A major impact of these kinds of activities, Dr. ElBaradei said, could be seen in the world's oceans. For example, in 2004, marine scientists estimated that industrial fleets had fished out at least 90 per cent of all large ocean predators over the last 50 years. These predators included, inter alia, tuna, marlin, swordfish, sharks and halibut.

Nonetheless, Dr. ElBaradei stated, the marine environment was in itself a laboratory: it provided opportunities to study the impacts of humans on the environment. IAEA scientists used nuclear technologies to help in understanding, managing and protecting the marine coastal environments. Dr. ElBaradei observed that the Laboratories in Monaco were very important in helping scientists to assess the impact of climate change and to understand how atmospheric carbon dioxide was absorbed into the oceans.

In concluding, Dr. ElBaradei thanked the other organizations that participated in this exhibition: the United Nations Environmental Programme, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization of Canada.