

Ordensüberreichung an Dr. Kandeh K. Yumkella,

Ansprache

Excellency,

ladies and gentlemen,

It is a particular pleasure for me to welcome you here today in the Marble Hall of the Austrian Foreign Ministry on a very special occasion.

The Austrian Federal President has awarded one of the highest decorations of the Republic of Austria to Dr. Yumkella.

I will have the privilege to present it to him in a few minutes.

Before we proceed to this more formal part of our get-together let me say a few words why I consider the timing of our ceremony very fortunate.

Dr. Yumkella will leave Vienna very soon and return to his home country Sierra Leone where he will be running for the presidential office.

We cannot let him go without expressing our gratitude and appreciation for the work he has accomplished in Vienna in his previous functions as Director General of UNIDO and Special Representative of the Secretary-General and CEO of Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All).

As you know, only a couple days ago Vienna was confirmed as the seat of Sustainable Energy for All.

This decision of the Executive Committee also confirms Dr.Yumkella's choice of Vienna as the city best suited for hosting the Initiative of the UN-Secretary General.

We are, naturally, very happy about this decision and will continue to provide the future Sustainable Energy for All Partnership with all the support we can give.

You may remember that the seeds for the Initiative were sown during the first edition of the Vienna Forum in 2009.

Like this year's fourth edition, the forum was organized back then by the Austrian Foreign Ministry in cooperation with UNIDO.

It was Kandeh Yumkella, in his then function as Director General of UNIDO, who first formulated the three goals of the Initiative:

- ensuring universal access to modern forms of energy,**
- doubling the global growth rate of energy efficiency and**
- doubling the share of renewable energy in the worldwide energy mix.**

It was him and a few others like our partners from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) who were the first to see the need for giving energy the role which had been missing in the millennium development goals - the role as a driving force for development.

Due to his background and ample experience Kandeh Yumkella was acutely aware of the fact that without energy there is no development.

Today, energy figures as goal No. 7 on the list of Sustainable Development Goals to be adopted by the UN Summit this September.

This is no mean achievement and it is an achievement that we mainly owe to Kandeh Yumkella.

Let me take you back to the "birthplace" of SE4All, the first edition of the Vienna Energy Forum.

Dr. Yumkella was not content with the role as an initiator, he also did his utmost to spread the good news and build up global awareness of the importance of the issue.

In doing so, he employed all the infectious enthusiasm, the eloquence and considerable charm for which he is so well known.

First, and most importantly, the Secretary General of the United Nations saw the merits of the case Kande Yumkella made and launched SE4All as his personal Initiative together with the President of the World Bank.

In his new function as Special Representative of the Secretary General and CEO of SE4All Kande Yumkella faced the task of mobilizing global support for the Initiative and catalysing action from governments, business, academia and civil society to make the project fly.

Austria firmly believes in the future of the Initiative.

SE4All is in the process of acquiring a long-term institutional identity and is set to take over new tasks connected with the implementation of sustainable energy as Sustainable Development Goal No. 7.

As such, it will build on the strong basis that was laid by the unwavering commitment and inexhaustible energy of its first Secretary General and CEO.

Excellency, Austria has many reasons to be grateful to you.

In your ten years as head of International Organizations based in Vienna you have contributed to strengthen Vienna's reputation as an international meeting place and energy hub.

Let me therefore thank you for the good cooperation you have always shared with the Austrian Foreign Ministry during your time in Vienna.

We are happy that we could work with you on a wide range of common projects and we wish you much success and personal fulfilment in all the projects that you will be taking up in the future.

I now have the honour to present you with the insignia of the Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Sash for services to the Republic of Austria together with a certification signed by President Heinz Fischer and a letter of congratulation from Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz.