

knowledge of nuclear techniques. Its work on regulatory standards for health and safety promises great benefits at a time when national laws are still flexible enough to be adapted to a co-ordinated international approach. Only in its role as the world's clearing-house for nuclear materials, originally conceived as its primary function, has the Agency not yet been given an opportunity to live up to expectations. A somewhat unexpected increase in the availability of conventional fuels and the consequent delay in developing power reactors to produce electricity on a competitive basis with power stations fueled by oil or coal has been a major reason for the Agency's failure to develop along these lines. The delay in the advent of the nuclear era is, however, not entirely devoid of advantage, as the Director General of the Agency, Sterling Cole, pointed out:

It could be said that we have unwittingly been given a needed respite, that we have been given a few years in which to prepare the conditions under which a full utilization of nuclear energy will have due regard for the protection of the safety and interests of the public, and under which the benefits will be accessible not only to a few but to all.