

United Nations
**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY**

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION

Official Records

**SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE, 644th
MEETING**



Friday, 17 October 1969,
at 3.25 p.m.

NEW YORK

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Chairman: Mr. Eugeniusz KULAGA (Poland).

AGENDA ITEM 33

Effects of atomic radiation: report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (concluded) (A/7613; A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that Morocco had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution (see A/SPC/L.171/Add.2).

2. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Pakistan) congratulated the officers of the Committee on their election and expressed the condolences of his delegation on the death of Mr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke, President of the Somali Republic. He complimented the Scientific Committee and the Secretariat experts who had helped to draw up the report (A/7613), the findings and recommendations of which were an outstanding example of international co-operation in the face of a common danger. He noted that the present report was based on a greater amount of research and contained most valuable information for doctors and scientists alike; that was why he endorsed the suggestion of the United States representative at the preceding meeting that the Committee should prepare a summary for laymen which should be given wider distribution.

3. He noted certain biological effects of atomic radiation mentioned in the report and said his delegation approved the need for continuation of the Scientific Committee's work, so that more knowledge could be gained on atomic radiation. His delegation also supported that Committee's recommendation that the world-wide survey on the levels of radiation should be continued and hoped that the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2) would be unanimously supported by the members of the Special Political Committee.

4. Mr. CUEVAS CANCINO (Mexico) said that radiation was one of the great problems of the present time. The

studies in the report of the Scientific Committee were clearly and authoritatively presented. His delegation felt some misgivings about one or two of the conclusions in the report, in particular with regard to the fact that debris from nuclear tests and from some underground tests was the principle causes of environment contamination. Since the increase in radiation was the worst danger now threatening mankind, there should be no more nuclear explosions.

5. He noted some of the dangers to which the Scientific Committee had drawn attention, more particularly those to which children were exposed, and expressed the hope that the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2) would be unanimously approved so that Member States could increase their co-operation. He hoped too that the body recently set up in Latin America would set an example in the matter of limiting the uses or abuses of nuclear energy. His delegation, which was one of the sponsors of the resolution, had taken part in the Scientific Committee's work and considered that, in encouraging the Committee to pursue its task, the General Assembly would only be performing its duty to mankind.

6. Mr. PIÑEIRO (Argentina) expressed approval of the report of the Scientific Committee (A/7613) and stressed the importance Argentina attached to that Committee. He drew attention to the ways in which his country had assisted the Scientific Committee and expressed approval of its future programme of work. He noted the links which existed between the Committee's work and that of the United Nations Conference on Human Environment, which was to be held in 1972. His delegation had helped in preparing the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2) so as to encourage the Scientific Committee to continue to play the part of a watch-dog that would alert the international community to the risks of radiation.

7. Mr. KONOSO (Zambia) said that after listening with interest to the representatives of Australia, the United States and the Soviet Union, he thought there was hope that the suspension of nuclear tests would continue, provided that France was willing not to resume its tests and that all countries observed the provisions of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, signed in Moscow in 1963. He drew attention to the biological effects of ionizing radiation, more particularly to the serious effects it would have on children, and he pointed to the danger to mankind of nuclear tests. His delegation would unreservedly support the draft resolution so that those dangers could be averted.

8. Mr. STRADOWSKY (Poland) expressed his delegation's great appreciation of the Scientific Committee's report. The subjects with which it dealt require permanent observation, so that the work on the effects of atomic contamination

from whatever sources must be continued. He agreed with the United States representative that the report should be widely disseminated in a form that was easily understood. He supported the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2).

9. Mr. HOLDER (Liberia) congratulated the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur on their election.

10. He congratulated the Scientific Committee on its report (A/7613), which owed its importance and authority to the objectivity and impartiality with which it had been prepared. His delegation noted with satisfaction that radioactive contamination of the environment had recently declined, but it was concerned to learn that some nuclear tests had recently taken place.

11. It supported draft resolution A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2, since the report was neither comprehensive nor self-contained. He assured the Scientific Committee that Liberia would continue to give it its support.

12. Mr. NEKROUF (Morocco) expressed his best wishes to the Chairman and the other officers of the Special Political Committee for the successful accomplishment of their task. He asked the Somali delegation to accept the sincere condolences of the Government and people of Morocco on the death of the President of the Somali Republic.

13. Morocco approved the Scientific Committee's report and hoped that it would continue its studies on the effects of atomic radiation. His delegation fully supported the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2) and had asked that its name should be added to the list of its sponsors.

14. Mr. KIKHIA (Libya) congratulated the officers of the Special Political Committee on their election. He expressed the sincere condolences of his delegation to the representative of Somalia on the tragic death of the President of the Somali Republic.

15. He congratulated the Scientific Committee on the work it had done on its report (A/7613), in which his Government was particularly interested. That Committee had been justified in concentrating its efforts on three particularly important aspects of the question.

16. He supported the proposal made at the previous meeting by the representative of the United States that the Scientific Committee should distribute its report in two versions, one of which would provide all technical and scientific data, while the other would be a summary in simple language which could, at no great expense, acquaint a greater number of persons with the work of the Scientific Committee.

17. His delegation was happy to note that the Committee had decided to continue to keep under review and assess the levels of radiation to which the world population was or might become exposed, in particular from the use of nuclear energy, from radiation and radio-nuclides and also from the natural sources present in the environment. His delegation also approved the other decisions of the Scientific Committee on its future programme of work.

18. With regard to sources and dissemination of information, he hoped that the Scientific Committee itself and the scientific staff of the Secretariat would find means of extending their activities in the field of exchange of information and scientific data without being hindered by rigid legalistic or political arguments.

19. The Scientific Committee mentioned in its report the uncertainty regarding the estimate of the radiation level in the case of a large part of the world population. The sincere and co-ordinated association of all nations was an essential requirement for the success and effectiveness of the common scientific effort and a prerequisite to any valuable international co-operation. In that respect he hoped that in future the Scientific Committee would inform the Special Political Committee whether regional organizations were interested enough to co-operate with the United Nations agencies in that matter.

20. In conclusion, he wished to express his concern at the fact mentioned in the report that nuclear test debris in the atmosphere remained the most serious radioactive contaminating elements of the environment and that small quantities of radioactive material had leaked from some of the underground tests. It was important that a treaty should be concluded banning nuclear tests and that it should be signed by all the Powers, as that would be the only way of achieving effective measures of nuclear disarmament.

21. Mr. JACOVIDES (Cyprus) expressed pleasure at the choice of officers for the Committee who, he felt sure, would do constructive work.

22. He thanked the Scientific Committee for its excellent report and pointed to the interest his country took in the effects of atomic radiation on man and his environment. His delegation had been among the foremost in endeavouring to bring about the prohibition of nuclear tests and, in the Sixth Committee, it had put forward concrete legal arguments concerning the responsibility of States in international law for causing damage to life or property outside their own territory as a result of nuclear tests, even when those tests had been conducted on their own territory. In that connexion his delegation expressed satisfaction at the signature of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water. He felt certain, however, that even though nuclear tests were banned, vigilance was essential. He was convinced that the high quality of the research work done on the effects of atomic radiation by the Scientific Committee more than justified the renewal of its mandate. His delegation was happy to support the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2).

23. He wished to convey the sincere condolences of his delegation to the Somali delegation on the occasion of the tragic loss experienced by the Somali people in the death of its President, Mr. Abdirashid Ali Shermarke.

24. Mr. TURNER (Australia) supported the proposal of the representative of the United States at the previous meeting that the main findings of the Scientific Committee should be summarized in a chapter of its report in layman's language. That chapter might be reprinted separately at

relatively little cost in a form suitable for wider dissemination among the general public. It might also be possible to print a somewhat smaller number of the complete reports, as some readers of the present report did not use its technical sections. He was not proposing an amendment to the present draft resolution, but simply suggesting that the Scientific Committee should be invited to consider the possibility and desirability of adopting that procedure for its future reports.

25. Mr. WHALLEY (United States of America) was happy to note that many delegations were supporting his idea. He wished to point out however that he was not making a formal proposal and that the Scientific Committee should decide for itself on the possibility of putting the idea into practice, due attention being paid to the financial implications. He did however, think that his suggestion would make the work of the Scientific Committee much more widely known.

26. The CHAIRMAN said that the statements of the Australian and United States representatives would be reproduced in the summary records of the Committee and would be brought to the notice of the Scientific Committee.

27. Mr. DRACOU LIS (Greece) congratulated the officers of the Special Political Committee on their election. He would give his full support to the Scientific Committee's report (A/7613) and hoped that the Special Political Committee would adopt the future programme of work prepared by the Scientific Committee.

28. The CHAIRMAN said that if no delegation requested that the draft resolution (A/SPC/L.171 and Add.1 and 2)

should be put to the vote, he would regard it as unanimously adopted.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

Communication from the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences

29. Mr. CHAI (Secretary of the Committee) read out a letter dated 15 October 1969 addressed to the Chairman of the Special Political Committee from the President of the General Assembly and communicating to him a copy of a letter dated 14 October 1969 in which the Chairman of the Committee on Conferences requested the President to draw the attention of the Chairmen of the Main Committees of the General Assembly to the provisions of sub-paragraph 7 (b) and paragraph 9 of resolution 2239 (XXI) entitled "Pattern of Conferences".

Organization of the Committee's work

30. The CHAIRMAN recalled that the following item on the agenda of the Committee was the policies of *apartheid* of the Government of South Africa. The report of the Special Committee on the Policies of *Apartheid* of the Government of the Republic of South Africa should be distributed on Monday, 20 October. He therefore proposed that the next meeting of the Committee should be held in the afternoon of 21 October so that members of the Committee would have time to study the report.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.