

United Nations
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
FORTY-SECOND SESSION
*Official Records**



SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
4th meeting
held on
Thursday, 15 October 1987
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairmans Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar)

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87-56165 7136S (E)

15p.

Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/42/SR.4
27 October 1987
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 74: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (continued) (A/42/210 and A/SPC/42/L.2)

1. Mr. FREUDENSCHUSS (Austria) said that his country was happy to have acted as host once again for the Scientific Committee, which had held its session at Vienna. He welcomed the participation in the work of the Committee for the first time of a Chinese delegation, for that could only enhance the Committee's authority and universality.
2. The tragic accident at Chernobyl, which had not been forgotten in Austria, had increased the awareness of the risks arising from the use of nuclear power and of the importance of international co-operation with respect to nuclear safety. It was now clear that unilateral measures were not enough. That was why his country had proposed to its neighbours that they should conclude bilateral agreements to reduce the risks of transboundary nuclear pollution.
3. As in 1986, Austria was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2 and it had also sponsored resolution 41/212 B in which the General Assembly appealed to all Governments to ensure that the highest standards of safety in the design and operation of nuclear plants were applied in order to minimize risks to life and health and to take into account the legitimate interests of neighbouring countries that could be affected by transboundary effects of the use of nuclear energy.
4. His delegation was pleased to note that the Scientific Committee had examined means of collecting and analysing data on the Chernobyl accident in order to improve protection against, and knowledge about, the effects of atomic radiation. It awaited with interest the report which the Committee was to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-third session.
5. Mr. IDRIS (Sudan) said that his country was a long-standing member of the Scientific Committee and attached very great importance to its work. The Committee did much to make world public opinion more aware of the harmful effects of atomic radiation, which was the consequence of the ambition of certain States to impose their military supremacy on other peoples.
6. In view of the importance of the Committee's work for all mankind, the budgetary restrictions imposed on it were most regrettable, for its work might suffer. His delegation urged all the parties concerned to find a swift solution to the Committee's financial problems so that it could devote itself fully to its tasks.
7. His country was beset with serious economic problems, the effects of which were impeding its development programmes, and it objected vigorously to the enormous waste of resources on nuclear research for military purposes.

(Mr. Jiris, Sudan)

8. His delegation noted with great concern the tendency for the big Powers to make the third world the stage for their rivalries, a corollary of that process was the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the threats hanging over the countries of southern Africa and the Middle East were a perfect illustration of that fact.

9. The nuclear co-operation between Israel and South Africa and the attack on Iraqi nuclear installations fell into the same category. Aware of the threats hanging over mankind, his country welcomed the undertaking of the Soviet Union and the United States to reduce the numbers of their medium-range missiles.

10. Like all other countries, Sudan was worried about the dangers of atomic radiation and it could not close its eyes to the activities of certain States which, shamelessly exploiting the financial difficulties of some countries, tried to make them dumping-grounds for their nuclear wastes. It objected to the sale to poor countries of foodstuffs polluted as a result of nuclear accidents and it denounced the frantic efforts of certain States to sell radioactive materials in third world countries, exposing their peoples to radiation risks.

11. Mr. TIMERBAEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/42/21C) demonstrated the usefulness of the Committee's work. The information and conclusions contained in the report brought out clearly the great danger of atomic radiation to the health and life of peoples and it also provided a solid scientific base which confirmed the need to put an end to the nuclear-arms race, totally prohibit nuclear-weapon tests and guarantee the safe development of the nuclear-energy industry for peaceful means. The Committee had also made an outstanding contribution to the negotiation of the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, which had been the first important agreement on arms limitation. The effective co-operation established between the Committee and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international agencies would no doubt continue to develop. His country shared the concerns expressed about the budgetary restrictions imposed on the Committee.

12. The forty-second session of the General Assembly was opening in a particularly favourable atmosphere for the future of a safer world. The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station had demonstrated that the peaceful uses of the atom were not without risk. His country was grateful to all the Governments and all the organizations, in particular the Scientific Committee, which had collaborated in the efforts to cope with the consequences of that breakdown. The lessons drawn from the Chernobyl accident and from accidents in nuclear power stations in other countries prompted reflection on matters connected with the safety of the use of atomic energy. The Soviet Union had prepared a long-term plan to improve management, the interaction between man and machine, and information and personnel training, in particular with regard to emergencies. Studies were being made of the long-term consequences of the accident and vigorous efforts were being made to develop nuclear reactors equipped with safety devices. The accident had only strengthened the conviction that the use of the atom, for peaceful purposes or

(Mr. Timerbaev, USSR)

otherwise, would always involve risks. The harmful effects of atomic radiation demonstrated that it had become more vital than ever to achieve nuclear disarmament.

13. The idea of universal co-operation and a new political approach was gaining ground. His country had in fact presented a whole series of far-reaching initiatives and concrete proposals for the maintenance of international security which covered nuclear disarmament as well. The new political approach had prompted the Soviet Union to present a programme designed to free the planet from nuclear weapons by the year 2000 and to form an integral part of the comprehensive system of international peace and security which it had proposed should be established and which was beginning to take concrete shape. The recent agreements reached in Washington by Mr. Shevardnadze and Mr. Shultz had demonstrated for the first time in history that mankind was about to take the path of nuclear disarmament and that there was a real opportunity to eliminate part of the nuclear arsenals of the Soviet Union and the United States and to make progress in the negotiation of other vital issues.

14. The Soviet Union was convinced that the effort to end nuclear-weapons testing must be given high priority. It was an important and independent means of limiting and ending the arms race and would have major military, technical, political, international, legal and moral implications. Not only could nuclear testing have a very dangerous impact on the environment but, above all, each test was yet another step towards the further improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of even more lethal types. As was well known, in 1985 the Soviet Union had imposed a unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosions and had abided by it for 18 months. That moratorium, which the Soviet Union was prepared to revert to at any time provided the United States decided to end its nuclear explosions, had reinforced demands for ending nuclear tests. In that context, the agreement reached between the USSR and the United States to open, before 1 December 1987, full-scale phased talks in a single forum, the ultimate goal of which would be the cessation of nuclear tests, was of the utmost importance.

15. The improvement in the political climate would undoubtedly help to further international co-operation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The International Atomic Energy Agency, currently celebrating its 30th anniversary, played an important role in that regard and enjoyed the support of the Soviet Union. The entry into force of three major instruments - in the preparation of which the Soviet Union had been actively involved - the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, was gratifying. International co-operation in promoting nuclear safety seemed to have entered on a new stage as a result of the special session of the IAEA General Conference, where the Soviet Union had presented detailed proposals on the establishment of an international régime for the safe development of nuclear energy. IAEA would undoubtedly continue to promote international co-operation in the constructive uses of nuclear energy.

16. Unless there was widespread awareness of the need for joint action to rid the planet of nuclear weapons altogether and create adequate conditions for exclusively

(Mr. Timerbaev, USSR)

peaceful uses of atomic energy, under strict international control, hopes for a better future were unlikely to be fulfilled. The relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system, including the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, could and must contribute to the achievement of that lofty goal.

17. Mr. SVOBODA (Canada) said that Canada, as a member of the Scientific Committee since its establishment, was once again a co-sponsor of the resolution on the effects of ionizing radiation. It welcomed the close collaboration between that Committee and other international bodies, including the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Health Organization and most notably the International Atomic Energy Agency. It was also particularly gratified that a Chinese delegation had taken part in the work of the Committee.

18. Canadian scientists had always played an active part in the scientific work of the Committee which though small was a highly competent technical body. The support of the Canadian radiation protection establishment for the Committee was a prime indication of the importance Canada attached to the Committee's role in assessing the health risks of radiation.

19. Canada shared the concern, expressed by Denmark on behalf of the European Economic Community, about the Committee's lack of resources. The Committee's work-load had increased and would continue to do so, not only because of the Chernobyl accident, on which a report was to be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-third session, but also because of the conclusions of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which emphasized the danger of ionizing radiation to the environment. For financial reasons, however, the Committee had been obliged to defer a number of reports and to reduce the scope of others.

20. Accordingly Canada, contrary to its customary policy, strongly recommended that funds should be allocated to the Committee so that an additional full-time scientific officer could be recruited to assist in finalizing its report to the Assembly and thus complete the task assigned to it.

21. With reference to the remarks made at the previous meeting by the representative of France, who had wondered whether the United States would agree to carry out nuclear tests in the north-east quarter of its territory, which bordered on Canada, he stressed that the question was not one of choosing a new test site, but rather of agreeing, as Canada had always advocated, on putting a complete and universal stop to nuclear testing.

22. Mr. OKUDA (Japan) said that his country had been a member of the Scientific Committee since its establishment and was one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2. The Committee's scientific work, which had made a valuable contribution to a better understanding of the technical and scientific aspects of ionizing radiation, was becoming increasingly important in view of the ever-widening use of nuclear power.

(Mr. Okuda, Japan)

23. At its last session, the Scientific Committee had held fruitful discussions on physical as well as biological topics. His delegation was particularly interested in the Committee's assessment of the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl tragedy and was grateful for the co-operation of all the parties concerned in assembling the information for the report the Committee was called upon to submit to the Assembly.

24. His delegation accordingly took note with satisfaction of the Scientific Committee's report and hoped that the co-operation between the Committee and States Member of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, including the International Atomic Energy Agency, and various non-governmental organizations would continue.

25. Mr. ABDULLAH (Indonesia) congratulated the Scientific Committee on the quality of its work. Its most recent report (A/42/210) clearly demonstrated its competence. Its studies of the harmful effects of ionizing radiation on man and the environment had become increasingly important with the growing global concern about those dangers. The co-operation extended to the Committee by specialized agencies or United Nations organs such as IAEA, WHO and UNEP greatly facilitated its work.

26. The budgetary restrictions imposed on the Committee were a matter for regret. The resources at the Committee's disposal were far below what had been approved in the recent past, while its mandate was becoming increasingly complex. The short-term financial support which UNEP had provided had been providential. Requests for information had escalated since the Chernobyl accident and, in order to respond, the Committee must have adequate human and financial resources. Such accidents could recur and, as no country was safe from the risk of nuclear pollution, the Committee's studies on the effects of atomic pollution were extremely useful. Adequate financing would enable it to co-ordinate its programmes in an effective manner.

27. The conclusion of a comprehensive ban on nuclear-weapon testing was of great importance. Notwithstanding the highest priority given to the negotiations on that issue, progress had been impeded on various pretexts. It was therefore more than ever important that nuclear weapon States should negotiate in good faith in order to reach an agreement to ban testing in all environments.

28. Since its inception, the Committee had played a unique role in influencing the policies of Governments and in exploring modalities for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The norms of international co-operation that had been developed since the establishment of the Committee were no less important. For those reasons, his delegation would support the Committee's programme of activities and co-sponsor draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2.

29. Mr. SHAH (Pakistan) said that, while appreciating the need for a thorough review of natural sources of radiation and of exposure from the application of radiation therapy for medical purposes, Pakistan supported a moratorium on all nuclear explosions, that being the only way to preserve the fragile environment of the planet from the risk of future contamination.

(Mr. Shah, Pakistan)

30. The Prime Minister of Pakistan had recently stated in the General Assembly that Pakistan was prepared to subscribe to a comprehensive test ban in a global, regional or bilateral context.
31. The Chernobyl accident had demonstrated the need for international agreements on nuclear safety and a rational and equitable system for co-operation in that field. At the thirty-first session of the General Conference of IAEA, in September 1987, Pakistan had sponsored a resolution on the sharing of information on nuclear safety. Given the dangers of radioactive fall-out in the event of a nuclear accident, a rational system of co-operation must be established, as a matter of urgency, and measures taken to protect nuclear installations in case of armed attack. The industrialized countries must assist the developing countries in maintaining the reactors which they exported and refrain from prohibiting the supply of essential spare parts. Pakistan was also strongly opposed to the restrictions imposed on the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes; that technology was essential for developing countries faced with an acute shortage of conventional fuels and energy resources.
32. The effects of ionizing radiation were a matter of increasing concern to world public opinion and it was therefore essential to provide the Committee with the necessary resources for continuing its work.
33. Miss BYRNE (United States of America) said that the Chernobyl accident had underscored in a very tragic way that there was still much to be learned about the relatively new technologies of nuclear energy and the effects of radiation on people and their environment.
34. A number of international bodies had been involved in responding to the immediate need for improving nuclear safety and providing mechanisms for assistance and notification in the event of nuclear disasters. The Scientific Committee had initiated studies of the early effects produced by high doses of radiation on the human body and of the longer-term consequences of the Chernobyl accident. Her delegation strongly supported the view of the Committee that there had been a world-wide increase in public concern about ionizing radiation, which heightened the importance of the regular and widespread publication of the Committee's reports which were widely recognized as authoritative.
35. Her delegation, in thanking the Committee for the professional and non-partisan manner in which it had discharged its mandate, joined those delegations which had commended the Committee for the meritorious work which it had accomplished to date and pledged continued support.
36. Mr. JUDE (Uruguay) said that the fact that Uruguay was a co-sponsor of the draft resolution submitted by Sweden implied not only that it supported the work of the Scientific Committee but also that that support must be viewed in the broader context of Uruguay's position of principle in supporting the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy and the need to do everything possible to improve the relevant safety mechanisms. Notwithstanding differences of views and of hopes which had not been satisfied, the United Nations Conference for the Promotion of

(Mr. Jude, Uruguay)

International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, held at Geneva in March 1987, could provide a helpful stimulus to the converging activities of IAEA, UNEP and WHO. The Scientific Committee could not only make a substantial contribution to the follow-up measures recommended by the Conference but could also play a more active role in assisting IAEA to promote international nuclear security.

37. The Scientific Committee, during the 32 years which it had devoted to the study of the effects and risks of ionizing radiation, had demonstrated its competence. Its last technical report, following its annual meeting held at Vienna in March 1987, was a clear example of its competence in physics and biology. In that connection, the relevant national services had been interested in the Committee's technical discussions on such matters as natural sources of radiation, exposure to radiation resulting from the production of nuclear energy or the carcinogenic effects of radiation. Hopes were also centred on the forthcoming discussions on the data collected and processed following the Chernobyl accident with a view to improving mechanisms and methods for protecting against the effects of ionizing radiation.

38. The various resolutions adopted by the Committee without a vote demonstrated that there was a consensus regarding support for the functions and goals of the Scientific Committee; count must, however, also be taken of the need to provide the Committee with a mandate that would enable it to make general or specific recommendations regarding action to be taken at the national, regional or global level to prevent or lessen the effects of ionizing radiation on man and the environment. Giving the Committee a power of recommendation would enhance the relevance and usefulness of the data which it provided and would also be in the interest of countries themselves. His delegation also shared the concerns expressed regarding the budgetary restrictions recently imposed on the Scientific Committee and hoped that the financial resources allotted to the Committee would shortly be restored at their previous level.

39. Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that, although his country was not a member of the Scientific Committee, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had followed the work of the Committee with great interest in view of the increasing importance of studies on the effects of ionizing radiation.

40. His delegation hoped that the Committee would co-operate more closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other specialized agencies. He urged all developed countries to submit periodic reports to the Committee, supplying it with the data it needed to prepare its reports, which were extremely important for all countries, especially those that were exposed to risks of pollution and lacked the means to protect themselves. Libya also hoped that the Scientific Committee would be authorized to formulate recommendations on environmental protection measures to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels.

41. His country was concerned by reports of the risk of unprecedented marine pollution from the radioactivity released by nuclear testing, as a result of ocean currents and the movement of contaminated migratory fish. Those concerns were

(Mr. Muntasser, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

justified because Libya had a 1,900-kilometre Mediterranean coastline and the Mediterranean was its only access to fishing resources.

42. Libya flatly opposed nuclear testing for military purposes, dumping of nuclear waste in the oceans and burial of such waste in the desert regions of the developing countries, which lacked the means to forestall the short-term or long-term damage they caused.

43. Libya's position on nuclear testing had been stated in a letter, dated 14 October 1987, from President Qaddafi to the Secretary-General. In that letter the Libyan President had echoed the deep concern expressed by representatives of people's organizations from New Caledonia, the Cook Islands, Fiji and Western Samoa regarding French nuclear tests in the South Pacific and reports indicating that Israel, in co-operation with France, intended to undertake similar experiments in the region; he had called on the international community to assume its responsibilities with respect to those practices, which undermined all international efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

44. The Libyan Government had always opposed the arms race, both on land and in space, and expressed its satisfaction at recent signs of détente; it hoped that negotiations between the parties concerned would result in an agreement for the dismantling of nuclear arsenals.

45. At the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the Director of the IAEA had drawn attention to the risk of pollution by ionizing radiation, in the event that nuclear installations were attacked with conventional arms. Such attacks could effectively trigger radiological warfare.

46. The attention of the international community should be drawn to the criminal actions of certain States which, while claiming to comply with international law, did not hesitate to violate the principles of the Charter and believed themselves to be invested with a divine right to launch attacks under the guise of self-defence. The unjustified raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor might have had serious consequences had the Iraqi authorities not taken the necessary preventive measures. The retention of the relevant item on the agenda of the General Assembly attested to the international community's acknowledgement of the seriousness of such attacks.

47. Mr. CHATURVEDI (India) said that a tragic accident like the one at Chernobyl in 1986 was a reminder of the terrible consequences that ionizing radiation could have for man and his environment. The lessons of that accident and others made it essential for scientists and policy-makers to treat the problem of nuclear safety with the greatest caution, urgency and seriousness. Scientists, doctors and environmentalists had begun to realize that even the most minute amount of radiation was extremely dangerous and long-lasting. It was therefore urgent to conclude international agreements on nuclear safety and to reinforce co-operation in that sphere, in particular between the developed world and the developing countries.

(Mr. Chaturvedi, India)

48. India was aware of the need to maintain the highest nuclear safety standards and had co-operated closely with the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. Indian scientists and experts had actively participated and contributed to the Committee's annual meetings in Vienna, and the Indian delegation was pleased with the useful recommendations made by the Committee at its March 1987 session. India was dedicated to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, because it had always considered science and technology as the means to accelerate economic development. The primary objective of India's nuclear energy programme, as defined in the Atomic Energy Act of 1948, was the development, control and use of atomic energy solely for peaceful purposes, such as the generation of electricity and the use of nuclear energy in research, agriculture, industry, medicine and other areas. To achieve those objectives, it had endeavoured to develop a flexible infrastructure of research facilities, scientific and technical manpower, raw-material-processing centres and facilities for the manufacture of the nuclear components and electronic equipment necessary for the programme.

49. In the past, the Scientific Committee had submitted comprehensive reports to the General Assembly. The ninth substantive report of the Committee on the subject of genetic and somatic effects of ionizing radiation had been very well received. His delegation welcomed the annual progress report submitted by the Committee and hoped that it, like preceding reports, would enhance the knowledge of mankind on the destructive effects of ionizing radiation. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Commission on Radiological Protection and the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements had been closely co-operating with the United Nations Scientific Committee. He hoped that the Member States, the specialized agencies and other United Nations organizations, as well as national and international scientific organizations, would continue to make information available to the Scientific Committee so that its reports would be of ever-increasing utility. He expressed his delegation's satisfaction at the growing co-operation between the Scientific Committee and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and reaffirmed India's continued support for the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

50. Mr. RADENKOVIC (Yugoslavia) said that his delegation had carefully studied the report of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and took a positive view of its work. Over the past 30 years, the Committee had proved that it was a very authoritative and useful international body whose activities were beneficial for the whole of mankind. Co-operation with international governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as with the Member States, was essential for the success of the Committee's work. The Scientific Committee's report showed that its work had been hampered by financial difficulties. His delegation considered it necessary to provide the Committee with sufficient resources to enable it to carry out its work successfully and, in that regard, expressed its gratitude to UNEP for its financial support to the Committee.

(Mr. Radenkovic, Yugoslavia)

51. Nuclear energy opened up undreamed-of possibilities of improving living conditions in all walks of life. Unfortunately, ever since nuclear energy had been discovered, its vast potential had attracted the attention primarily of those who sought to use its destructive power to intimidate others and ensure their own security. His delegation hoped that that period was now over and that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy would in future receive more attention than its military uses. The experience gained so far had demonstrated that the useful purposes of nuclear energy could be very dangerous because of unforeseen failures and disasters and that it was therefore necessary to handle such energy with the utmost care. The responsibility of the users of nuclear energy was all the greater that the harmful effects, particularly for man and the environment, could spread over vast distances including beyond the boundaries of the State where the accident had occurred.

52. His delegation did use nuclear energy to generate electricity but it applied comprehensive safety and environmental protection measures so as to prevent pollution and more serious accidents. Yugoslavia therefore fully supported all the efforts to protect the environment and to enhance the safety of nuclear reactors. Since international co-operation was essential in that area, his delegation welcomed the fact that a large number of international conventions had been concluded but felt that further efforts were needed in that direction.

53. Yugoslavia was in favour of strict implementation of the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency as well as of all other international instruments relating to that area, and it welcomed the statements made by the nuclear Powers at Vienna, in 1986, concerning the dissemination of information on accidents involving military nuclear objects. Yugoslavia considered that it was necessary to promote international co-operation for the exploration and utilization of nuclear energy as well as for the prevention of harmful consequences throughout the world. It supported a comprehensive nuclear-test ban so as to end the nuclear-arms race and to protect the environment. That position was already well known and was reflected in the documents of the Eighth Meeting of Heads of State or Government of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1986.

54. Mr. AL-HADDAWI (Iraq) said that Iraq had been one of the first developing countries to launch a programme for the development of nuclear energy. His Government considered nuclear energy to be one of the most reliable sources of energy and it knew that harnessing such energy was one of the keys to economic development, and it attached the utmost importance to implementing its nuclear energy programme. For that reason Iraq was following very closely everything relating to nuclear accidents and their effects on man and the environment and was participating actively in all international meetings and conferences on the subject and, in particular, in the activities of IAEA.

55. The consequences of a nuclear accident resulting from human error or technical failure, although serious, could not be compared with those which might result from a premeditated attack on nuclear facilities. The raid on the Iraqi reactor might

(Mr. Al-Haddawi, Iraq)

have had appalling consequences. The danger was not limited to civilian nuclear power stations and any initiative designed to forestall nuclear disasters or to attenuate their effects must take into account the risks to which military facilities and nuclear weapons were exposed.

56. Paradoxically, those who had been most anxious to act at the time of the Chernobyl accident were those who had sought by every means to impede the adoption of international measures designed to prevent the Zionist entity from launching a further attack on the Iraqi reactor.

57. The conclusion of an international convention banning armed attacks on nuclear infrastructures was more necessary now than ever before; as many experts pointed out, a radiological war could start with an operation carried out using conventional weapons.

58. His delegation deplored the fact the Scientific Committee had not drawn attention to those risks in its report. For the same reasons, his delegation would have difficulty in endorsing draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2, in its present form.

59. Iraq also wished to speak out against the paralysing political pressures to which the United Nations organs responsible for matters relating to disarmament and nuclear technology, particularly the Conference on Disarmament were subject. It was vital that such organs should preserve their independence and objectivity and that they should be free from the narrow political calculations which had so often led mankind to the edge of the precipice.

60. Mr. DANUS (Chile), speaking on behalf of the countries which were members of the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, said that the international community was becoming increasingly aware of the effects of ionizing radiation and was perceiving the dangers of such radiation with increasing clarity. Chile and the other countries which were members of the Permanent Commission had circulated document A/39/343 in which they categorically rejected the nuclear explosions in the South Pacific, which entailed serious dangers to the marine environment and its natural resources. The question of the cessation of nuclear tests was of particular importance to the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific which, on a number of occasions, had energetically protested the nuclear tests carried out on Mururoa atoll. They therefore supported the complaints made by the States of the South Pacific, which were the most seriously affected, and were ready to continue denouncing, within the international bodies concerned, the attitude of the countries which were violating the sovereign rights of those States. It was clear that, no matter who conducted them, such explosions, violated the most elementary norms of justice, since they affected vast maritime areas belonging to third States which had not consented to the experiments, the results of which were uncertain and doubtful.

61. The explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in 1986 had provided indisputable proof of the dangers and the direct and indirect damage that ionizing radiation could produce. He hoped that the information to be derived from that accident would serve to improve protection against the harmful effects of ionizing

(Mr. Danus, Chile)

radiation. Those problems called more than ever for strengthening the important tasks assumed by IAEA by establishing appropriate safeguard clauses and unannounced on-site inspections of nuclear reactors. It was also necessary to draft international legislation concerning State responsibility to providing sanctions for the direct and indirect damage caused by, and the delayed effects of, transboundary pollution, the legal basis being the concept of "misuse of the law". In that connection the Scientific Committee should be congratulated for its professionalism and the seriousness with which it had performed its task of evaluating and studying ionizing radiation.

62. The international community should take note of the extent of the damage from ionizing radiation produced by such nuclear tests, whether in space, in the atmosphere, on the surface of the earth, under the sea or underground. It was therefore extremely important for the Scientific Committee to continue its work, with the support of the international community, with an eye to achieving full understanding and knowledge of the harmful effects of such tests and to maintain close and permanent links with UNEP. It was also essential to provide that Committee with the human and material resources it needed.

63. Chile appealed to the international community and, in particular, to those States possessing the latest nuclear technology, to make an effort to increase co-operation in the peaceful development of nuclear energy with countries requiring that technology for their socio-economic development. That would help to strengthen international peace and security, in accordance with the fundamental purposes of the Charter.

64. Mr. POLICHTCHOUK (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) noted that the first item on the Special Political Committee's agenda was one which interested all States without exception. The work of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation was extremely important and the conclusions in its report (A/42/210) confirmed the need to put an end to nuclear tests and avert the threat of a nuclear war.

65. After the accident that had occurred in April 1986 at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, the situation had now returned to normal. The damaged reactor was solidly encased and totally isolated, and all danger was thus ruled out. Decontamination operations had been carried out within a radius of 30 kilometres and the biological effects of the radiation were apparently no longer to be feared, whether in the short or the long term. Many researchers at the Kiev Medical Centre were studying the effects of the radiation on the nervous system. It should be noted that the report prepared by Soviet experts on the Chernobyl accident had been greatly valued by international specialists, who had praised the exhaustive and objective nature of the report and the sound basis of the measures taken.

66. Many specialists and journalists who had gone to the accident site had been favourably impressed by the measures taken. As Mr. Gorbachev had declared, the lessons drawn from Chernobyl should serve the whole of mankind. An accident in a nuclear power station having had tragic effects, the destruction that would be

(Mr. Polichtchouk, Ukrainian SSR)

caused by the use of atomic weapons could well be imagined. Nuclear energy must be used only for the progress of the whole of mankind.

67. The Ukrainian SSR supported the programme for devising an international system for the safe development of nuclear energy submitted by the USSR to the General Conference of AIEA. Among measures that would strengthen international co-operation in nuclear safety, he mentioned the two instruments adopted in 1986 to which his country had been one of the first signatories, namely, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency.

68. Lastly, he said that his delegation supported draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2.

69. Mr. GAUSSOT (France) speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he wished to remind the Chilean delegation, which represented a country situated 7,000 kilometres from Mururoa, that many scientific studies had amply demonstrated that the French tests in the South Pacific had had no harmful effect on the health of the population of the region or on the environment. Another speaker, representing a country even further from that part of the world, had raised the question with a virulence directly proportional to the distance which separated his country from the Pacific. Many delegations would have been surprised at the very special interest shown by the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in the population of the South Pacific. He hoped, for the sake of the inhabitants of that region, that such interest would not be manifested in the same way as the Jamahiriya showed vis-à-vis some of its neighbours. The remarks of the Libyan delegation, whose concern for a region so far away remained mysterious - although the political motivations and the desire for destabilization which inspired it were obvious - were devoid of any basis and did not deserve to have time wasted on them.

70. Mr. MUNTASSER (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the arguments advanced by the representative of France were not very convincing. A country's interest in the region did not depend on its distance from that region. The world, as typified by the United Nations, was today an interdependent whole and everything which influenced one region had repercussions on the others. Furthermore, ionizing radiation knew no frontiers. As a Member of the United Nations, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had the duty to concern itself with international affairs. Moreover, many popular groups and personalities of the region had applied in person or by correspondence to the Libyan Government requesting it to protest in international forums against the nuclear tests carried out by France in the South Pacific.

71. Mr. GAUSSOT (France) said he had no intention of denying the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya the right to interest itself in other regions of the world. He simply hoped that that interest would not end in harm for the population in question. He assured the Libyan delegation that its country was hardly in danger of being exposed to ionizing radiation coming from Mururoa.

72. The CHAIRMAN, noting that the Committee had concluded consideration of item 74, suggested that the Committee should take up draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2.

73. Mr. AL-HADDAWI (Iraq) requested the sponsors of the draft resolution to include, after paragraph 1, a paragraph in which the General Assembly would call for the elaboration of an international convention categorically prohibiting armed attacks against nuclear installations designed for peaceful or other purposes. That task could be entrusted to the Assembly or to the Conference on Disarmament, although Iraq had little confidence in that body, which had had many failures. The proposed paragraph would read:

"Expresses its serious concern at the armed attacks against nuclear installations in the world and invites the Conference on Disarmament to undertake immediately the elaboration of a draft convention prohibiting such attacks."

74. Mr. LIDNER (Sweden) said that the sponsors would like consideration of the draft resolution to be postponed so as to enable them to study the Iraqi amendment.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that, if he had no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to postpone consideration of draft resolution A/SPC/42/L.2 to the following meeting.

76. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.