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**SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING**

Chairman: Mr. NOWORYTA (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

1. MR. HLOPHE (Swaziland) nominated Mr. Veranneman de Watervliet (Belgium) for the office of Rapporteur.
2. Mr. Veranneman de Watervliet (Belgium) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/43/L.1/Rev.2)

3. The CHAIRMAN drew the Committee's attention to the programme of work (A/SPC/43/L.1/Rev.2), which had been slightly revised following consultations. The only amendment related to the timetable for consideration of agenda item 78 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects).
4. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work, as amended.
5. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 74: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/43/45; A/SPC/43/L.2)

6. Mr. AL-KAWARI (Qatar) who had presided over the work of the Committee at the forty-second session, assured the Chairman of his delegation's full co-operation. The current session would be notable for three important events: the uprising of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations peace-keeping forces and the inclusion on the agenda of the item entitled "Science and peace".
7. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia), after briefly reviewing the work carried out by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, as set forth in document A/43/45, introduced the draft resolution contained in document A/SPC/43/L.2 on behalf of its sponsors. The draft resolution requested the Scientific Committee to continue its work. The resources made available to it were insufficient at a time when its services were increasingly required, and it was therefore essential that the Committee should be provided with the necessary financial means. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would, as at the previous session, be adopted by consensus.
8. It would be wrong to consider the work of the Scientific Committee in scientific isolation and to remove it from its real context, that of a world with excessive stocks of nuclear weapons where nuclear testing continued unabated. Her country, which was firmly committed to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament under effective international control, was constantly urging the two super-Powers and other nuclear-weapon countries to negotiate substantial reductions

(Ms. Courtney, Australia)

of their nuclear arsenals as a first step towards general disarmament. It had also consistently called on all States to begin negotiations, as a matter of urgency, with a view to concluding a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

9. The Treaty of Rarotonga, which entered into force in December 1986, established a large area of the South Pacific as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Attached to the Treaty were three Protocols which the five major nuclear Powers had been invited to sign. Her country welcomed the fact that they had been ratified, without reservation, by the Soviet Union. It also welcomed the decision of the Chinese National People's Congress to ratify them. It was, however, disappointing that the United States, the United Kingdom and France had yet to sign or ratify the Protocols.

10. The countries of the South Pacific region were deeply concerned by France's continued nuclear tests in the area, particularly in view of the reports that that country was contemplating the conduct of nuclear tests at other sites because of the possibility of progressive structural damage to Mururoa atoll.

11. Any interpretation of the conclusions of the Atkinson Report as indicating that the tests constituted no danger to the environment was based on a selective and unacceptable reading of that report. Her country was not satisfied that the nuclear tests carried out at Mururoa, or in any other part of the world, were harmless. Australia and the other South Pacific countries called upon France to end its nuclear-testing programme and, if it considered the programme to be indispensable, to conduct it in metropolitan France.

12. Mr. LAGORIO (Argentina) noted that the tenth in a series of technical reports by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had been submitted at a time when there was a tendency in international relations to seek negotiated solutions to the major problems facing mankind. Substantial progress had recently been made in the form of the conclusion, by the United States and the Soviet Union, of agreements to limit nuclear weapons.

13. The Scientific Committee, of which his country had been a member since its establishment 33 years ago, was, by analysing the effects of atomic radiation on man, carrying out a vital task (see in particular paragraph 8 of document A/43/45).

14. His country had developed a nuclear programme which was designed exclusively for the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy and could thus make a major contribution to development and social progress.

15. As a sponsor his country hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. It was, indeed, important to provide unconditional support to the very useful work of the Committee.

16. Mr. NEZERITIS (Greece), speaking on behalf of the twelve States members of the European Community, said that he welcomed the close collaboration existing between the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation and other international bodies such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP) and the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measures (ICRUM).

17. The Committee summarized in its report (A/43/45) the main conclusions drawn from the most recent studies in the fields of radiation physics and biology. Its technical competence and professionalism deserved praise and it could rely on the support of the European Community.

18. Although nuclear accidents were rare, the risks of such accidents could not be excluded. The Twelve believed that in case of a nuclear accident, all States should co-operate. It was worth recalling that the European Community, together with its member States, had acceded to the International Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, adopted in August 1986. After the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in 1986, the Committee had collected useful data and had provided in its report an assessment of the radioactive contamination from the accident.

19. It was to be hoped that the Scientific Committee would continue to carry out its mandate with the support of other relevant international bodies and that draft resolution A/SPC/43/L.2 would be adopted by consensus.

20. Mr. OKUDA (Japan) said that his country had attached great importance to the activities of the Scientific Committee since its establishment in 1955, inasmuch as the Committee provided an ideal framework for international co-operation in the study of the effects of atomic radiation. The task of the Scientific Committee, which was to examine information about atomic and ionizing radiation and to analyse its effects on mankind and the environment, was becoming all the more important with the ever broader use of nuclear energy and the development of nuclear technology. His delegation reaffirmed that it would continue to support the Committee's work.

21. In its last session, the Committee had examined a wide range of topics, including the physical, biological and genetic aspects of the effects of atomic radiation. His Government supported the report relating to that session of the Committee and hoped that its forthcoming publication would contribute to the world-wide dissemination of the fruits of the Committee's work. His delegation was particularly interested in the progress being made in the Committee's work on an assessment of the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl accident. That work had already provided valuable data. It was also pleased to note that the results of the study by Japanese researchers on a re-evaluation of the effects of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been incorporated in the Committee's work on estimating the risk of cancer due to atomic radiation. The report was the result of purely scientific and technical effort, free from any political prejudice, and it was to be hoped that those high professional standards would be

(Mr. Okuda, Japan)

maintained. His delegation earnestly hoped that the States Members of the United Nations, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, other specialized agencies and the non-governmental organizations would continue to co-operate with the Committee by providing it with the information it needed for its activities.

22. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the data and conclusions in the report of the Scientific Committee furthered the dissemination of knowledge concerning the health risks of atomic radiation, and that they constituted a solid scientific basis which confirmed the need to end the nuclear arms race, ban nuclear weapons tests and guarantee the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Committee had performed a useful task by studying the consequences of various nuclear accidents, including the Chernobyl accident. The usefulness of the Committee's activities was also due to its close collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, and his delegation hoped that that constructive collaboration would continue.

23. The current session of the General Assembly was taking place in an international climate much more favourable to détente and to the establishment of a comprehensive system of security under the auspices of the United Nations. The conclusion of the Soviet-United States Treaty on the elimination of medium- and shorter-range missiles was an important step in that direction. The next stage should be the conclusion of an agreement for a 50 per cent reduction in the offensive strategic weapons of the Soviet Union and the United States, pursuant to the ABM Treaty in its 1972 form.

24. The Scientific Committee had played a major role in drawing up the first arms limitation agreement, the 1963 Moscow Treaty Banning Nuclear-Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, which had entered into force twenty-five years ago. The strengthening of international peace and security and disarmament were goals closely linked to the solution of ecological problems. The manufacture, storage and transport of various weapons, as well as the dumping of nuclear wastes, had a negative impact on the environment. Accordingly, the States Parties to the Warsaw Treaty had recently adopted a document entitled "The Implications of the Arms Race to the Natural Environment and Other Aspects of Ecological Security" (A/43/486).

25. The danger which nuclear weapons represented for the very survival of the planet required that all States and international organizations should take vigorous concerted action. His delegation believed that it was necessary to strengthen the role of the United Nations and the Scientific Committee in the safeguard and defence of the environment, the peaceful use of science and technology and nuclear disarmament and, in particular, the conclusion of a universal agreement for a nuclear weapons test ban. It was to be hoped that the Scientific Committee would further the accomplishment of those tasks.

26. Ms. MIAO Zaifang (China) said that the report of the Scientific Committee not only contained new and valuable data on the level of atomic radiation in the world and its effects on health, but also a detailed analysis and a more rational estimation of risk projection. Her delegation warmly welcomed the Committee's new achievement as well as its fruitful co-operation with IAEA, UNEP and other international agencies. Her Government had always attached great importance to nuclear safety in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and had taken a series of concrete measures in that area. On 20 September 1988, her Government and the IAEA had signed an agreement on the implementation of nuclear safeguards in China. Under that agreement, China would voluntarily submit a part of its civilian nuclear facilities to IAEA nuclear safeguards. For its part, the IAEA would apply nuclear safeguards to all raw or special fissionable materials of the peaceful nuclear facilities designated by China, including Chinese-made nuclear facilities and imported nuclear power stations. In addition, China would continue to submit its nuclear exports to the safeguards. Detailed provisions had also been made in the agreement on the scope and modalities of nuclear safety inspections.

27. The Chinese experts who had attended the thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh regular sessions of the Scientific Committee had welcomed the scientific exchanges in the Committee and the achievements of joint research. With a view to promoting international co-operation, they would continue to give full support to the Committee's work.

28. Mr. SUJA (Czechoslovakia) said that for 33 years the Scientific Committee's activities had contributed to the world's efforts to safeguard the environment. The current session of the General Assembly showed that the protection of the environment was regarded by the international community as inseparable from security and development in all parts of the world. His delegation was convinced that the normalization of the political climate in the world would help reduce the risks connected with the nuclear activities of States. Atomic energy used for peaceful purposes also had an enormous potential for destruction because of the human factors involved and the possibility of accident and error. Czechoslovakia welcomed the conclusion of the INF Treaty and had contributed to the start of its implementation. It hoped that it marked the beginning not only of a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive weapons but also the gradual elimination of all nuclear weapons and the achievement of a complete test ban.

29. His delegation was pleased with the high level of professionalism of the Scientific Committee, whose work to establish the risks of various sources of irradiation provided a basis for the political decisions to be taken. That made it possible to ban nuclear tests in the atmosphere and on the Earth's surface. His delegation was pleased with the report prepared at the Committee's thirty-seventh session. It was the first scientific assessment of the radiological effects of the Chernobyl accident made in a world-wide context. The effective dose equivalents had been established for each country of Europe and then for the northern and southern hemispheres. Despite the difficulties posed by the models used, the Scientific Committee's conclusions would make it possible to undertake a more detailed study of the question. It was also encouraging to learn from the report that the effective dose equivalents in Europe coming from the accident were less

(Mr. Suja, Czechoslovakia)

than the doses from natural sources of radiation. The Scientific Committee had carried out a useful and complete international analysis of the problem in collaboration with IAEA, WHO and UNEP.

30. His delegation would continue to participate in the Committee's work and felt that, despite the Organization's difficult situation, the Committee's material and financial needs must be met from the budget with no restriction. It therefore supported draft resolution A/SPC/43/L.2, which it had sponsored.

31. Mr. POERNOMO (Indonesia) said that the report of the Scientific Committee contained, in very readable form, a comprehensive assessment of the sources, effects and risks of ionizing radiation as well as the physical, biological and genetic aspects of radiation. His delegation was convinced that the document would enable the international scientific community and the broader world public to gain a better understanding of the effects of radiation on people and their environment. Apprehensions concerning the effects of radiation were currently spreading to other sources, such as nuclear power production and medical and occupational sources. Given the expectation of a substantial increase in the use of nuclear energy for civilian purposes, it was essential to improve nuclear safety so as to avoid the spread of radioactive material from one country to another. The increased use of radiation for medical purposes would also increase the collective dose. Moreover, the risks posed by occupational radiation exposure, and even by certain consumer products, were of justifiable concern to the public at large. In that context, the Committee had rightly drawn attention, in paragraphs 69 and 70 of its report, to the need to gather more detailed information on artificial sources of radiation in the developing countries where two thirds of the world's population lived.

32. His delegation welcomed the Committee's many contributions in disseminating data on radiation and its deleterious effects as well as the professionalism of its work. It felt that the Committee's mandate should be extended and, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/43/L.2, reaffirmed its support for the Committee's work.

33. Mr. GAUSSOT (France), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said he was surprised that at every session of the General Assembly entirely unfounded criticisms were directed exclusively against French nuclear tests. The underground tests in French Polynesia were the subject of on-site studies made by national and international commissions. The conclusions of those studies had confirmed that the tests were being conducted under completely safe conditions and that their effects on the health of the populations and the environment were harmless. Radioactivity in that part of the Pacific was still much lower than it was in other parts of the world.

34. France deplored that States situated thousands of kilometres from the site reproached it for conducting in its territory an operation which was essential to its security and did them no harm. As for the non-accession of France to the Treaty of Rarotonga, his delegation would state its views on that subject in the First Committee.

35. Ms. COURTNEY (Australia) said that Australia appreciated France's efforts to ensure a high level of safety at its nuclear-test site in the South Pacific. However, the safety of nuclear programmes was never perfect, as the Chernobyl and Three-Mile Island accidents had shown. Australia and the countries of the South Pacific had opposed that nuclear-test programme for two reasons: its objective was to perfect nuclear weapons and it was a radioactive threat to the peoples of the region. That was why those countries were surprised that France was pursuing its tests in the region.

36. Mr. GAUSSOT (France) noted that the examples of accidents cited by the representative of Australia concerned nuclear plants situated in other regions and that such a comparison was therefore unjustified. France had carried out the tests in its own territory and no distinction should be made between French Polynesia and other French territory. France had a sovereign right to pursue those tests. It was doing so under the required conditions of safety and no one could accuse it of having polluted the Pacific Ocean or of having caused loss of radioactivity in the atmosphere since the beginning of the underground tests.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.