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EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

1. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation 1/ held its thirty-second session at the Vienna International Centre from 20 to 24 June 1983. Mr. D. Beninson (Argentina), Mr. T. Kumatori (Japan) and Mr. A. Hidayatalla (Sudan) served as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively.
2. The Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 37/87 of 10 December 1982, in paragraph 3 of which the Committee was requested to continue its work, including its important co-ordinating activities, to increase knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources.
3. On the basis of documents prepared by the Secretariat, the Committee examined a number of problems that might require detailed review and, after exhaustive discussions, decided to undertake studies in the following fields:
 - (a) The scientific bases for the evaluation of radiation risk and detriment, including the recognition that the perception of risk will influence the use that is made of these assessments;
 - (b) Doses from natural sources of radiation with particular emphasis on the variability of such doses as a function of time and location;
 - (c) Doses to the world population from nuclear explosions;

* A/38/150.

(d) The exposure, both general and occupational, arising from the nuclear fuel cycle, with particular emphasis on the problem of radioactive wastes;

(e) Doses from the medical uses of radiation;

(f) The biological effects of pre-natal irradiation with special consideration of findings in man;

(g) The early effects of high doses of radiation on man;

(h) Specialized topics relating to the genetic effects of irradiation;

(i) Radiation-induced tumours in man, with a re-evaluation of the risk factors.

The Committee also reviewed a document on dose-response relationships for radiation-induced cancer the publication of which had been postponed in 1982 pending revisions of the dosimetry in the survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Committee made plans to finalize this document for submission to the General Assembly at the earliest possible time.

4. The Committee discussed the type of information from various sources that it would seek to obtain in order to continue its assessments of radiation exposure and effects, and provided guidance about the format and contents of the documents to be produced by the Secretariat on each of the above-mentioned subjects.

5. The Committee decided that for the near future systematic reports of the type presented to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session would not be warranted. Accordingly, the Committee planned to submit to the Assembly shorter reports with scientific supporting documents on the specialized topics mentioned, as soon as the relevant studies were completed. The Committee would, however, continue to report annually to the General Assembly on its progress.

6. The Committee expressed the hope that Member States of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency would continue to assist in its work, especially by providing relevant information on the subjects of interest for the future programme of study, so that its deliberations could be based on the broadest and most up to date scientific and technical information.

7. The Committee expressed confidence that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) would continue to support the Committee's activities and that the functional relationship with UNEP could be maintained in the future, particularly since the work planned will significantly contribute to UNEP's own objectives.

8. The Committee decided to hold a one-week session at the Vienna International Centre from 25 to 29 June 1984.

Notes

1/ The terms of reference of the Committee, which was established by the General Assembly at its tenth session in 1955, are set out in resolution 913 (X). It was originally composed of the following Member States: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America. By resolution 3154 C (XXVIII), the General Assembly decided to increase the Committee's membership by up to five additional members and the following Member States were appointed by the President of the Assembly in consultation with the Chairmen of the regional groups: Germany, Federal Republic of, Indonesia, Peru, Poland and Sudan.
