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SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Thursday, 6 October 1983
at 10.30 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA (Colombia)

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The meeting was called to order at 11 a.m.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIRMEN

1. Mr. ACERO-MONTEJO (Colombia) nominated Mr. Starčević (Yugoslavia) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
2. Mr. Starčević (Yugoslavia) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
3. The CHAIRMAN said that, since there were no other nominations for the time being, the Committee would postpone the election of the second Vice-Chairman until a later meeting.

ELECTION OF THE RAPPORTEUR

4. Mr. LOGOĞLU (Turkey) nominated Mr. Lingani (Upper Volta) for the office of Rapporteur.
5. Mr. Lingani (Upper Volta) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

6. The CHAIRMAN, referring to agenda item 72 entitled "Questions relating to information", suggested that, as in previous years, the Committee should set up an informal open-ended working group to prepare the draft resolution on that item.
7. Mr. MUSTAPHA (Tunisia) said that his delegation hoped the membership of the working group would be expanded to include a number of other members, including his delegation.
8. The CHAIRMAN stressed that, like the Committee on Information itself, the informal working group was open to all interested delegations. A small group of countries from within the Group of 77 had been designated to form the nucleus of the working group so that it could begin its work immediately. Since Tunisia was particularly interested and had special influence in the field of information, he would ask the Group of 77 to include Tunisia, together with Ecuador, in the working-group nucleus.

AGENDA ITEM 68: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/38/142; A/SPC/38/L.2)

9. The CHAIRMAN announced that Australia, Austria, Chile, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Uruguay wished to join the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2.
10. Mr. CAPPAGLI (Argentina) said that his country was deeply interested in all types of information and studies concerning the effects of radiation on living beings and on the human environment. His delegation therefore appreciated the great scientific value of the studies and findings of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation which, moreover, had always pursued its activities in an absolutely independent manner.

(Mr. Cappagli, Argentina)

11. Argentina had been a member of that Committee since its establishment and, had consistently provided it with information on natural radiation, on contamination resulting from nuclear explosions and on the impact of the different stages of the nuclear fuel cycle. In addition, it would continue to furnish information on occupational radiation and on the radiation exposure of the population at large.

12. In the context of its own energy plan, Argentina had attached particular importance to nuclear energy and already had two fully operational nuclear power plants. Nuclear energy helped to stimulate development and to promote the economic well-being of nations. His delegation therefore regretted the fact that nuclear energy was viewed with such distrust throughout the world, generally as a result of distorted information.

13. With regard to the report of the Scientific Committee, his delegation supported the decision to submit to the Assembly shorter reports with scientific supporting documents on specialized topics (A/38/L42, para. 5), a step which would surely further enhance the scientific value of its work.

14. Introducing draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2, he pointed out that it contained no substantive changes compared to similar resolutions adopted at previous sessions, except that a sixth preambular paragraph had been added to take into account the decision to submit shorter reports. Therefore, his delegation, together with all the other sponsors, hoped that, as at previous sessions, the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

15. Mrs. HEPTULLA (India) noted that the work of the Scientific Committee had helped to widen knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources. She also welcomed the growing co-operation between the Scientific Committee and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Her Government was committed to using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and would continue to co-operate in the peaceful exploitation of the atom.

16. In addition, her delegation supported the Scientific Committee's decision to submit shorter reports. She expressed the hope that State members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), would continue to assist the Scientific Committee in its work, as her Government would do to the fullest extent possible.

17. Mr. WARD (New Zealand) said that his delegation noted the Scientific Committee's intention to submit shorter reports and welcomed the comprehensive list of proposed topics for studies.

18. The conclusions contained in the Scientific Committee's report to the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly (A/37/45) concerning nuclear explosions had been of particular interest to his Government. Moreover, the finding that the level of radiation resulting from atmospheric nuclear testing had continued to decline had been corroborated by the 1982 annual report of the National Radiation Laboratory of New Zealand. Nevertheless, there was strong public concern in New Zealand about nuclear testing, especially in regard to the development and production of nuclear weapons, and his Government was firmly opposed to all forms of nuclear testing, whether above or below ground.

(Mr. Ward, New Zealand)

19. Concern about the use of the South Pacific for nuclear purposes was shared by the entire community of the area. The Heads of Government of the States members of the South Pacific Forum meeting, at Canberra in August 1983, had reiterated their strong opposition to nuclear testing and to proposals for the storage and dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific, as well as their strong condemnation of nuclear testing by France, or any other country, in the South Pacific region.

20. Because of national and regional concern about the effects that the French nuclear-testing programme might be having on the environment and on health, his Government had for a number of years been urging the French Government to allow a scientific fact-finding mission to visit its test site. His delegation therefore welcomed France's decision to allow such a visit next month, as the French President had announced to the General Assembly on 28 September. The mission would be composed of members from countries in the South Pacific and would be headed by the Director of New Zealand's National Radiation Laboratory. Its findings would be made public.

21. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that France's example would be followed by others and that the Scientific Committee would continue to bear in mind the concerns of the countries and peoples of the South Pacific in its study of the doses, effects and risks of atomic radiation. His delegation's support for the Scientific Committee's work was demonstrated by the fact that it was again co-sponsoring the draft resolution on the item.

22. Mr. LINDAHL (United States of America) said that his country had always taken a great interest in the work of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. Through governmental and private agencies, it had made substantial efforts to supply the Committee with the data it needed to carry out its functions. The Committee had consistently done work of the highest quality, and its current report lived up to its traditionally objective standards. It was satisfying to note that co-operation among the Scientific Committee, UNEP and IAEA was growing, and his delegation looked forward to seeing other manifestations of such co-operation in the future. For those reasons, his delegation was co-sponsoring draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2.

23. Mr. GIAMBRUNO (Uruguay) said that his delegation wished again to stress the importance for mankind of all the scientific studies being done on the effects of atomic radiation. The Scientific Committee's reports were therefore sorely needed, and his delegation especially supported that body in its choice, at its thirty-second session, of the subject-matter for the studies. It was to be hoped that the Scientific Committee would continue to report annually to the General Assembly, through substantive reports, on the progress made. The reports achieved two purposes: to convey objectively the risks involved in exposure to radiation, and to stimulate confidence in those countries which were devoting special attention to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Uruguay was such a country.

24. The time had now come to put forward initiatives which would give the Scientific Committee the power to formulate general and specific recommendations on measures to prevent or mitigate the effects of atomic radiation. His delegation had reached that conclusion on the basis of its moral duty to the international

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(Mr. Giambruno, Uruguay)

community as a signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which had enabled Latin America to become the only denuclearized zone in the world.

25. His delegation welcomed the continuing co-operation among the Scientific Committee, UNEP and IAEA.

26. Mr. OKI (Japan) said that his country had always attached great importance to the activities of the Scientific Committee. The Japanese representative on that Committee had continued to participate actively in its work and, at its latest session, had served as its Vice-Chairman. Because Japan was concerned about the potentially harmful effects of atomic radiation, it believed that the subject should be thoroughly investigated and objectively assessed. His Government therefore highly appreciated the Scientific Committee's ongoing efforts to study atomic radiation from a purely scientific viewpoint. At its most recent session, the Scientific Committee had had fruitful discussions of the physical and biological aspects of atomic radiation. His Government supported the Committee's report (A/38/142) and hoped that States members of the United Nations, IAEA, other specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations would continue to co-operate by providing the Scientific Committee with relevant information. His delegation was co-sponsoring draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2 and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

27. Mr. HISHAM (Iraq) said that his delegation endorsed draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2 but had hoped to see in it a clear indication of the great dangers inherent in attacking nuclear installations used for peaceful purposes. Even if an attack was carried out by means of conventional weapons, it risked setting off a nuclear explosion. His delegation appealed to the Scientific Committee to take that problem into account at its next session.

28. Mr. RAHMAN (Sudan) said that his country had always followed with interest the work of the Scientific Committee and shared the concern of the international community that nuclear power should be used for peaceful purposes.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.

