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Agenda item 74

EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Report of the Special Political Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Jean Michel VERANNEMAN de WATERVLIET (Belgium)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Effects of atomic radiation" was included in the provisional agenda of the forty-third session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 42/67 of 2 December 1987.
2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 23 September 1988, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the Special Political Committee.
3. The Special Political Committee considered the item at its 3rd and 4th meetings, on 12 and 13 October (see A/SPC/43/SR.3 and 4). It had before it the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation. 1/
4. Further, there was a letter dated 6 October 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Zimbabwe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/43/709), which, inter alia, pertained to this item.

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/43/45).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/SPC/43/L.2

5. At the 3rd meeting, on 12 October 1988, the representative of Australia introduced a draft resolution (A/SPC/43/L.2), sponsored by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Federal Republic of, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

6. At the 4th meeting, on 13 October, it was announced that Costa Rica, Swaziland and Uruguay had joined as sponsors of the draft resolution.

7. The representative of Iraq, in the course of his statement, expressed his delegation's reservations on the draft resolution.

8. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote (see para. 9).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

9. The Special Political Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Effects of atomic radiation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955, by which it established the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and its subsequent resolutions on the subject, including resolution 42/67 of 2 December 1987, by which it, inter alia, requested the Scientific Committee to continue its work,

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, 2/

Reaffirming the desirability of the Scientific Committee continuing its work,

Concerned about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations, resulting from the levels of radiation to which man is exposed,

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 45 (A/43/45).

Conscious of the continued need to examine and compile information about atomic and ionizing radiation and to analyse its effects on man and his environment,

Bearing in mind the decision of the Scientific Committee to submit, as soon as the relevant studies are completed, shorter reports with supporting scientific documents on the specialized topics mentioned by the Committee, 3/

1. Commends the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for the valuable contribution it has been making in the course of the past thirty-three years, since its inception, to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of atomic radiation and for fulfilling its original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgement;

2. Notes with satisfaction the continued and growing scientific co-operation between the Scientific Committee and the United Nations Environment Programme;

3. Requests the Scientific Committee 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;

4. Endorses the Scientific Committee's intentions and plans for its future activities of scientific review and assessment on behalf of the General Assembly;

5. Requests the Scientific Committee to continue at its next session the review of the important problems in the field of radiation and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session;

6. Requests the United Nations Environment Programme to continue providing support for the effective conduct of the Scientific Committee's work and for the dissemination of its findings to the General Assembly, the scientific community and the public;

7. Expresses its appreciation for the assistance rendered to the Scientific Committee by Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and non-governmental organizations, and invites them to increase their co-operation in this field;

8. Invites Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations concerned to provide further relevant data about doses, effects and risks from various sources of radiation, which would greatly help in the preparation of the Scientific Committee's future reports to the General Assembly.
