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4th meeting

held on

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at 10.30 a.m.

New York

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. RODRIGUEZ-MEDINA

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The meeting was called to order at 10.55 a.m.

ITEM 68: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION: REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (continued) (A/38/142;
SPC/38/L.2)

1. Mr. KAZAKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) expressed satisfaction at the contribution made by the Scientific Committee in increasing knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources. The Soviet Union would continue to assist the successful functioning of that important United Nations body. It was gratifying to note the close co-operation between the Scientific Committee, the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Atomic Energy Agency. Such co-operation should continue in view of the great practical importance of the work.
2. He drew attention to the disastrous consequences from atomic radiation caused by a nuclear war and stressed the urgent need to avert such a war. There could be no justification for any actions or doctrines based on the admissibility of conducting a nuclear war and the possibility of winning such a war. Any plans to conduct a nuclear war were criminal and should be condemned in the strongest possible terms. In view of those considerations, the Soviet Union had proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of the General Assembly of the question of condemning nuclear war. That proposal was the best response to the current world situation characterized by the accumulation of enormous nuclear weapon arsenals and delivery systems.
3. The condemnation of nuclear war must be reinforced by practical measures to halt the nuclear-arms race. A freeze on nuclear weapons would be an important step in that direction.
4. The Soviet Union proposed a freeze, under effective controls, on the stockpiling of all nuclear-arsenal components, a freeze on the deployment of new types of nuclear weapons, a freeze on all nuclear-weapon testing, including the testing of new types of weapons and delivery systems, and a freeze on the production of fissionable materials to manufacture weapons. The simultaneous freezing of nuclear weapons, both quantitatively and qualitatively, by all nuclear Powers was the best way to achieve that goal. His country held the view that the Soviet Union and the United States should carry out such a freeze on a bilateral basis as an example for the other nuclear States. If carried out, that initiative would lead to the reduction, and eventually the complete elimination, of nuclear weapons.
5. The destruction, even by means of conventional weapons, of nuclear power stations, research reactors and similar facilities presented a grave danger in view of the possible spreading of enormous quantities of radioactive materials. To avert such a danger the Soviet Union had put forward a proposal on the need for increased efforts to avert the threat of nuclear war and guarantee the safe development of nuclear energy. The ideas set forth in the Soviet proposal had been

(Mr. Kazakov, USSR)

included in a number of resolutions adopted at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly. In that regard, serious consideration should be given to the view expressed at the previous meeting by the representative of Iraq that the Scientific Committee should consider the risks presented by an attack on a peaceful atomic installation.

6. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the co-operative atmosphere which had characterized the work of the Scientific Committee during its last session would continue in the future.

7. Mr. RAPIN (France) said that his delegation had noted with interest the report of the Scientific Committee. The future programme of study would be particularly useful as a follow-up to previous activities. He expressed satisfaction at the co-operation between the Scientific Committee and the United Nations Environment Programme. It was hoped that that co-operation would continue to be as fruitful in the future. His delegation, which was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2, reaffirmed its commitment to co-operate fully with the Scientific Committee; as in the past, France would continue to provide information on radiation in all territories under French sovereignty.

8. With regard to the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of New Zealand, he had noted with interest that the New Zealand national radiation laboratory had reached the same conclusions as the Scientific Committee and that it had been unable to detect radiation from underground nuclear experiments. Those conclusions were in keeping with the conclusions reached in numerous scientific studies. In that regard, he pointed out that his Government continued to impose the strictest security precautions when underground experiments were carried out. It was also gratifying to note the decision taken by New Zealand and other countries of the Pacific region to participate in the regional scientific mission which had been organized on the initiative of the President of the French Republic and would be carried out at the Mururoa testing centre.

9. With regard to the statement made by the representative of New Zealand concerning that country's position on the question of nuclear testing, particularly the underground tests carried out by France, he stressed the objective and scientific nature of the work of the Scientific Committee and stated that the consideration of its work should not be the occasion for expressing political positions, which was more appropriate in other bodies of the General Assembly.

10. Mr. LOGOGLU (Turkey) reiterated his Government's support for the invaluable work of the Scientific Committee in increasing understanding and awareness of the problem of atomic radiation. Radiation from man-made and natural sources posed a danger to both current and future generations, affecting both rich and poor countries. The more advanced countries, which generated most of the man-made radiation, had a particular responsibility in containing and eliminating its harmful effects.

(Mr. Loğoğlu, Turkey)

11. It was gratifying to note that there was a consensus that the Scientific Committee should continue its indispensable work. He expressed the hope that the co-operation between the Scientific Committee, the United Nations Environment Programme, and the International Atomic Energy Agency would be further strengthened in the future. In order to enhance its effectiveness, the Scientific Committee should work in close co-operation with Member States, particularly with regard to the regular and systematic transmission of information concerning matters relating to radiation. In view of the nature of the problem, the response to it should be universal, objective, free from political considerations and sustained. Anything less than full and world-wide co-operation would seriously impair the chances of eventual success in combating the dangerous effects of radiation. Lastly, he stressed that the United Nations should play a pivotal role in co-ordinating efforts to investigate the effects of radiation.

12. Mr. PIMENTEL (Philippines) drew attention to the increasing global concern at the pernicious effects of atomic radiation, particularly those resulting from nuclear explosions and exposure to nuclear fuel. It was regrettable that nuclear tests were still being carried out. The view that more and more sophisticated nuclear weapons were required in order to ensure peace was devoid of logic and reason. The nuclear bombs of today were many times more destructive than the atomic bomb which had devastated Hiroshima in 1945. Many scientists were of the view that just half of the nuclear arsenal of either the Soviet Union or the United States had the potentiality to annihilate all mankind. Indeed, it seemed that humanity was being indirectly ruled by scientists, for it was they who continued to fashion new instruments of death and destruction.

13. His delegation added its voice to the chorus of the hundreds of millions pleading for peace - a chorus which, unfortunately, was drowned in the louder rhetoric of the super-Power leaders, who had assumed powers of life and death over mankind. Lastly, his delegation expressed the hope that the States Members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies, and the International Atomic Energy Agency would continue to assist the work of the Scientific Committee, particularly by providing relevant information on subjects of interest to its future programme of study.

14. Mr. HASHMI (Pakistan) commended the Scientific Committee on its report and on the valuable contribution it had been making for the past 28 years as an independent authority on the effects of radiation. His delegation endorsed its decision to submit shorter reports with scientific supporting documents on specialized topics. Furthermore, his delegation welcomed the co-operation which the Scientific Committee had forged with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and supported its efforts in co-ordinating the research and data-collection activities of Member States, international agencies and non-governmental organizations and in disseminating the relevant information to Member States. That work unquestionably strengthened the universal effort to safeguard mankind and the environment from the effects of atomic radiation.

(Mr. Pimentel, Philippines)

15. As a developing country, Pakistan strongly supported the right of every State to enjoy unfettered access on a non-discriminatory basis to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In that connection, his delegation fully associated itself with the comments made by the representative of Iraq regarding the protection of nuclear installations from armed attack (A/SPC/38/SR.3).

16. Pakistan would continue to extend its full co-operation to the Scientific Committee and, accordingly, would support the adoption of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2 by consensus.

17. Mr. HUTCHENS (Australia) said that his country had been a member of the Scientific Committee since its inception and would continue to give strong support to its work on ionizing radiation. His delegation looked forward to receiving the shorter, more specialized reports which the Special Committee intended to submit to the Assembly.

18. His delegation had listened closely to the statement made by the representative of France earlier in the meeting concerning the French nuclear test programme, which was a matter of particular concern to Australia and other nations in the South Pacific. In that connection, he drew attention to the statement in which the Heads of Government of the States members of the South Pacific Forum, meeting recently at Canberra, had expressed strong opposition to nuclear testing and proposals for the storage and dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific. Accordingly, Australia welcomed, and had accepted, the French President's invitation to send scientific observers to visit the French testing site in order to monitor the impact of the French tests. If appropriate, the observers' report would be made available to the Scientific Committee.

19. Mr. ALMOSLECHNER (Austria) said that his delegation was very interested in the report of the Scientific Committee and appreciated the valuable work it had accomplished during the past year. It was of the greatest importance to increase knowledge about the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources; accordingly, his delegation welcomed the fact that the Scientific Committee would focus on a number of important new developments and that its studies would help to refine existing knowledge.

20. His delegation had also noted with interest the Scientific Committee's decision to prepare studies in a number of well-defined fields and to submit individual reports on specialized topics. His Government would continue fully to support the Scientific Committee in its effort to obtain the information it needed to carry out the in-depth studies it had proposed. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the support extended by the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the Austrian Government's opinion, the studies to be undertaken by the Scientific Committee would make a significant contribution to securing the future well-being of mankind, and it attached great importance to ensuring the broadest possible awareness of the valuable work carried out by that Committee.

21. Ms. ARIAS (Venezuela) supported the comments made by previous speakers in connection with the work of the Scientific Committee. Venezuela had consistently expressed its concern over the harmful effects of ionizing radiation and its opposition to all nuclear testing, wherever it might be conducted. Her delegation was pleased to note that the Scientific Committee intended to study a number of problems of great importance to mankind and welcomed the decision to submit shorter reports with scientific supporting documents. She urged the Scientific Committee to continue its extremely valuable work.
22. Her delegation fully supported the contents of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2 and hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.
23. Mr. STRUCKA (Czechoslovakia) welcomed the Scientific Committee's decision to undertake studies in such important fields as exposure to radiation arising from the nuclear fuel cycle, doses from the medical uses of radiation and doses to the world population from nuclear explosions. His delegation also noted with satisfaction that the level of radiation from nuclear weapon tests had recently declined; that improvement was one of the most important results of the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water.
24. His delegation had long been convinced of the importance of acting on the well-known proposal made by the Soviet Union and the socialist countries, including Czechoslovakia, concerning the need to agree on a complete and general ban of nuclear weapon tests. The Soviet Union had taken another initiative during the current session in calling for the condemnation of nuclear war and a freeze on nuclear weapons; that important proposal, designed to help eliminate the threat of nuclear war, deserved a positive reception from all Member States.
25. His delegation supported the outline for the future studies of the Scientific Committee and would continue actively to participate in its work. Accordingly, his delegation was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2, and he expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.
26. The CHAIRMAN invited the Committee to consider draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2 and announced that Canada, Denmark and Sri Lanka had joined its sponsors.
27. Draft resolution A/SPC/38/L.2 was adopted without a vote.
28. Mr. ABOUL RAHMAN (Sudan) said that, although his delegation supported the content of the draft resolution, it was not pleased with the Arabic translation of it.
29. The CHAIRMAN said that he would ask the Secretariat to take note of the concern expressed by the representative of Sudan.
30. He announced that the Committee had thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 68.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.