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Chairperson: Mr. Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe)
later: Mr. Flisiuk (Vice-Chairperson) (Poland)
later: Mr. Chipaziwa (Chairperson) (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 49: Effects of atomic radiation
(A/65/46 and Add.1)

1. **Mr. Gentner** (Canada), speaking as Chairman of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and accompanying his statement with a computerized slide presentation, introduced the report of the Scientific Committee on its fifty-seventh session (A/65/46 and Add.1). Chapter III of document A/65/46 contained a scientific report summarizing the effects of low-dose radiation on health, a topic of great concern and also of great scientific uncertainty. The communication of hereditary disease from one generation to the next occurred in the general population in 5 to 10 per cent of live births as a rule. The risk of heritable chronic multifactorial diseases like heart disease or diabetes in the next generation due to low-dose radiation exposure of the parent population, estimated in table 2 of the report, seemed to be within standard limits and fairly low when compared to the risk of radiation-induced cancers.

2. The risk of cancer mortality from exposure to moderately low doses of radiation — such as would be experienced over a lifetime — could be estimated fairly well (table 1). At the lower doses characteristic of most human exposure to radiation, however, there was considerable uncertainty as to the risk and not much in the way of available data. Studies of Japanese survivors of high-dose exposure to the atomic bombings in 1945 (figures 1 and 2) had not shown very high excess cancer mortality — only about one twentieth of the total cases observed; but it was difficult to extrapolate from their atypical experience to that of the general population. A different study in 1995 by the International Agency for Research in Cancer (IARC) of occupational exposure to low-dose radiation of workers in the atomic industries in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, which had been extended in 2005 to cover workers in 15 countries, had shown barely significant excess rates of deaths from cancer. At first the risk had appeared to be higher among the Canadian workers than among the atomic bomb survivors, but when the Canadian data were interpreted more carefully, those studies as well seemed to show a negligible number of observed over expected cancers due to the low-dose exposure.

3. It was on the basis of all those considerations that the Scientific Committee had produced its scientific report for submission to the General Assembly.

4. The Scientific Committee had considered four other areas at its latest session. One had been the assessment of levels of radiation from electrical energy production, a timely topic because of the interest in the development of new electricity generation by nuclear means. The documentation there had been less developed than it had hoped, and it estimated that the study would take two to three years. It had spent time discussing what boundaries it would set for its assessment, both in space and in time. It had agreed that restricting the assessment to radiation would exclude consideration of other energy production risks such as those from hydrocarbons produced by fossil fuel combustion and had decided to study all existing nuclear energy technologies, both old and more modern.

5. Another area studied was uncertainty in radiation risk estimation. The eventual report would be a technical one for expert epidemiologists, with perhaps a summary for non-experts. Most of the available data related to uncertainties in radiation risk estimates for cancer. Diseases, other than cancer, like heart disease, could not be included because of insufficient data.

6. Another closely linked topic studied had been the attributability of subsequent health effects to radiation exposure. The impetus for the study had been the wide differences of public and expert opinion on the number of deaths to be expected as a result of the Chernobyl accident, even though the Chernobyl Forum set up in 2005 with seven other United Nations agencies and the three Republics involved had come to the conclusion that the Scientific Committee's 2000 report on the health effects of Chernobyl had been accurate. Nevertheless, enormous uncertainty remained, as in the low-dose issue. The Scientific Committee's document would have to sort out the limits of attributability, given the complex nature of cancer itself as a disease and its many possible causes, the fact that results for a population differed from those for an individual, and the distinction that must be drawn between prospective risks of health effects and retrospective health effects from exposures that had occurred. The crux of the matter was whether a microdose of radiation to large numbers of people was to be treated in the same way as a macrodose to a small number of people. Currently, a new consultant was reviewing the documentation for

the Scientific Committee and clarifying and building on the work of previous consultants.

7. The Scientific Committee was also involved in updating the methodology for estimating radiological exposures due to discharges from nuclear installations, which represented only a minute fraction of radiation exposure worldwide but generated huge public interest. It had decided to limit its detailed calculations for estimates, based on current levels of energy generation, to about 100 years to make the study manageable.

8. Also under consideration was what would eventually be an internal working document on improving data collection, analysis and dissemination on levels and sources of radiation and their effects and risks, a field complicated by the unavailability of the information requested in different countries, the fact that many other agencies were making the same requests and the absence of an agreed method for data compilation. As a result, the current data were insufficiently representative of the global population. In the case of medical radiation exposure, there was no information at all on a huge fraction of the world's population, even though medical exposure had increased sixfold over the past 25 years and was 200 times greater than all other man-made sources of radiation exposure combined. In the case of occupational exposure, about one fifth of the countries had provided data but only 10 per cent of the worker population had been reported on. And in the case of exposure to natural sources of radiation, the data covered only 40 per cent of the world population. The solution was: collaboration with other networks and agencies to obtain specialized data; the use of electronic questionnaires; and reliance on expert groups to sort through the information obtained.

9. In its report (para. 4), the Scientific Committee had expressed its dissatisfaction over the delayed publication of its 2006 and 2008 scientific reports, each containing several scientific annexes that either had become outdated by the time they were published or still had not been published. One of the three annexes to volume II of its 2008 report provided an update on the health effects from radiation due to the Chernobyl accident, which absolutely must be published before the twenty-fifth anniversary of the accident in April 2011.

10. If the Scientific Committee had one wish, it would be that a signature of radiogenic cancer could be discovered.

11. **Mr. Windsor** (Australia) asked the Chairman of the Scientific Committee to confirm his own understanding that, when the distorted Canadian data had been removed from the calculations in the IARC studies, the result had been to bring the health effects among those working in the atomic industries more into line with those among the atomic bomb survivors.

12. **Mr. Gentner** (Canada) said that was indeed the expectation, but it could not be said with absolute certainty until the full correction of the data was done, which would take four to five years. However, the reasons for disbelieving the data were solid and, moreover, other workers in the same field in Canada, who had not been part of the studies in question, had shown no excess risk.

13. **Mr. Zdorov** (Belarus) underscored the need to issue the updated report in time for the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. Also, it was not clear why the membership of the Scientific Committee had remained unchanged even as the demand for nuclear energy had risen and been accompanied by some major accidents. With reference to the conclusions of the Scientific Committee regarding paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 64/85 in the report (A/65/46/Add.1), he asked how the current membership of the Committee could be said to be best supporting its essential work (para. 1) when it was also stated (para. 6) that one of the current members had not made any contribution during the past 10 years. He would also appreciate comment on the Scientific Committee's consideration of the indicators to be applied to the members of the Committee and the six observer countries in determining the optimal size of the Committee.

14. **Mr. Gentner** (Canada) said that the growth in the use of nuclear power did not mean that there had been a commensurate increase in the ability to assess its health effects. The Scientific Committee tried to assess them and to learn from accidents where health effects had occurred, but it could only do so over time.

15. Regarding the membership of the Scientific Committee, it was the General Assembly which decided that question, and had over the years expanded it from the 15 original members to the current 21. The Scientific Committee's own views on the best process

to be followed with respect to membership — first developed among the 21 members and revised after careful consultation with each one and with the six observer countries — had been set out in the annex to the report of the Secretary-General relating, inter alia, to its membership (A/63/478). The Scientific Committee had taken the position that it functioned efficiently with its current size although it welcomed in principle the interest of some States in becoming members. It had suggested ways of incorporating them on the basis of criteria such as specific abilities to contribute to its work. The Scientific Committee had, for instance, asked all current members and the six applicant countries to identify which authors from their nations were listed in the reference list of experts included in the 2006 and 2008 scientific reports. The indicators it had developed were more difficult to apply: letters had been sent to five countries that had not attended recent sessions and only one had replied. The annual questionnaires sent to Scientific Committee members were very important and it had been found that some members had never returned them. All relevant data of that sort were being explored in an attempt to establish the best process for dealing with the membership question.

16. The Scientific Committee operated by consensus, and all current members had said that they were interested in belonging to it. The next relevant General Assembly resolution would request responses from States on the question, and the Scientific Committee's following report should reflect the responses. He would prefer to let the process work itself out in 2011.

17. **Ms. Deman** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate countries Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro; and, in addition, Armenia, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, stressed the importance of the role played by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation in supplying the international community with information on the sources, exposures and effects of ionizing radiation. The European Union underscored that medical exposure to atomic radiation, which represented by far the population's largest source of artificial radiation exposure, was an international priority with respect to radiation protection. The European Union welcomed the report of the Scientific Committee and commended the

scientific report, which provided a summary of low-dose radiation effects on health, contained therein.

18. Noting that the first volume of the report "Sources and effects of ionizing radiation", approved by the General Assembly in 2008, had been published in July 2010, she said that delays in the publication of the Scientific Committee's reports were regrettable. The European Union looked forward to timely publication of the second volume later in 2010, well before the twenty-fifth anniversary in April 2011 of the tragic Chernobyl accident, as new material on the accident was contained in that volume. The European Union took note of the Scientific Committee's strategy for streamlining the collection, analysis and dissemination of data provided by Member States and international organizations and of the increased interest of relevant international organizations in cooperating with the Scientific Committee. The European Union reaffirmed the continued willingness of its member States to provide all relevant new information to the Scientific Committee for its examination and welcomed and encouraged maintaining close cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

19. The European Union took note of the addendum to the report, which was dedicated to the question of membership and the Scientific Committee's reflection on how the membership could best contribute to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of its work. It looked forward to the participation of Belarus, Finland, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Spain and Ukraine as observers at the fifty-eighth session of the Scientific Committee. It also looked forward to the report of the Secretary-General on the objective criteria and indicators to be applied to determine membership. The report should contribute to a comprehensive discussion to address how the scientific team could be assisted to achieve greater efficiency, in line with the increased importance of the Scientific Committee's activities and its budgetary constraints.

20. **Mr. Prates** (Brazil), speaking on behalf of the States members and associated States of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), said that the MERCOSUR countries took note of the Scientific Committee's research on the low-dose radiation effects on health, heritable effects and the incidence of cancer and non-cancer diseases. The MERCOSUR countries accepted the decision of the Scientific Committee to continue with its research at its fifty-eighth session, in

particular, with regard to the attributability of health effects to radiation exposure in populations and in individuals and to submit its report at the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

21. The MERCOSUR countries were concerned about the practical issues that had arisen in connection with the Scientific Committee's sessions in recent years, as well as with the delays in the publication of its reports. They commended the Scientific Committee's secretariat for acting quickly in publishing high-quality documentation for the current session and noted with satisfaction that an additional post had been created in the secretariat. They wished to reiterate the importance of guaranteeing stable, permanent and regular support to the Scientific Committee to enable it to discharge its responsibilities. Voluntary contributions to the general trust fund established by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme were important, but extrabudgetary funds would not solve the basic problem. A rapid and lasting solution must be found to the Scientific Committee's budgetary and administrative crisis.

22. Discussions regarding the membership of the Scientific Committee should not affect current members whose contributions and commitment had been well established for many years. The Scientific Committee must be placed on a sound financial footing before consideration was given to expanding its membership. Scientists representing the member States of regional groups must be selected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution for participation not only in the Scientific Committee's deliberations but also in the Bureau.

23. **Mr. Windsor** (Australia) said that his delegation welcomed the establishment of an additional scientific post in the secretariat which would assist the work of the Scientific Committee through improved support for its activities. The Scientific Committee only operated effectively due to the large in kind contribution from Member States, which provided collectively over 100 scientific experts to participate in the annual meetings at no cost to the wider United Nations membership. Australia welcomed the attendance of observers at the Scientific Committee's sessions. It likewise welcomed other arrangements for drawing on international expertise, where appropriate, such as the various bilateral arrangements. Decisions concerning membership of the Scientific Committee should be based on sustainable knowledge in a broad range of

issues in the field of radiation levels and effects. Efficient and expedient delivery of scientific assessments was of utmost importance.

24. Recalling that the first two substantive reports of the Scientific Committee submitted to the General Assembly, in 1958 and 1962, had laid the scientific grounds on which the Partial Test Ban Treaty banning nuclear weapon tests in the atmosphere had been negotiated and signed in 1963, he said that it was tragic, but fitting, that the resolution to be adopted during the current session of the General Assembly should include a recognition of the ongoing effects of nuclear tests that the Marshall Islands were experiencing. Australia strongly welcomed the call at the current session for the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, within existing resources, at its sixty-sixth session, regarding the effects of atomic radiation in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, taking into account analysis by recognized experts, including the Scientific Committee, and previously published studies on the topic. Some work remained to be done on the draft resolution, but he was confident that a consensus text would be adopted.

25. **Ms. Hernández Toledano** (Cuba), noting that there were still 26,000 nuclear weapons in the world, reiterated Cuba's firm commitment to the prohibition and elimination of all nuclear weapons and its opposition to the use of nuclear energy for military purposes.

26. Stressing the importance of the Scientific Committee's work as a source of reliable and unbiased information on matters relating to atomic radiation, she said that collaboration between the Scientific Committee, Member States and the organizations and institutions of the United Nations system was of the utmost importance and should be maintained and strengthened. Cuba had offered significant assistance to Ukraine to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, and the two countries were carrying out a rehabilitation programme for the victims, especially children. In addition to its humanitarian component, the programme had also had a significant scientific impact, as it had made it possible to obtain primary data on contamination of children in areas affected by the accident. The data had been disseminated at scientific meetings and had also been used by organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, such as IAEA and the Scientific Committee.

27. Cuba was pleased that the Scientific Committee was considering expanding its membership. The request made by six Member States to join the Scientific Committee should be analysed and resolved as soon as possible.

28. **Mr. Baig** (Pakistan), recalling that Pakistan had attended the fifty-seventh session of the Scientific Committee as an observer, said that Pakistan had half a century of experience operating radiation facilities and nuclear installations, including research reactors and nuclear power plants. Pakistan had contributed to the Scientific Committee global survey of medical radiation usage and exposures in 2006. In addition, two scientific papers from Pakistan had been published in international scientific journals and had been referred to in a Scientific Committee report. Pakistan had also participated in other international studies and had started a programme to assess radiation doses to patients in diagnostic as well as interventional radiology. Its scientists were working on a study of the sources of naturally occurring radioactive materials in the country.

29. The work of the Scientific Committee would increase as the use of radiation in daily life expanded. Upgrading and disseminating more widely the knowledge base regarding ionizing radiation and its effects on human beings and the environment were therefore imperative. The vast expertise existing in the world was there to be tapped to further enrich the work of the Scientific Committee. Accordingly, expansion of the Scientific Committee was necessary. Moreover, membership of the United Nations had expanded since 1973, whereas that of the Scientific Committee had not and currently represented a far smaller fraction of the United Nations membership than in earlier years.

30. Another point that merited attention was the imbalance in equitable geographical distribution in the membership of the Scientific Committee. To rectify that situation, General Assembly resolution 61/109 had addressed the question of an increase in the membership of the Scientific Committee and had specified a timeline for all Member States to express their intent of joining the Scientific Committee. Pakistan and five other countries had duly expressed such intent within the timeline. Since then, they had attended the past two sessions of the Scientific Committee as observers. Pakistan believed that the Scientific Committee should be expanded through the inclusion of six observers as full members. A major

portion of the financial implications for such an expansion had already been factored into the approved budget for the biennium 2010-2011. The prerogative of the General Assembly to decide on the matter could not be delayed by financial impediments, which unfortunately were a question of interpretation and drafting and not exactly a matter of resources.

31. At its fifty-seventh session, the Scientific Committee had drawn certain conclusions on increased membership, as mentioned in the addendum to the report (A/65/46/Add.1). The report noted that participation of scientists from six countries would be beneficial to the work of the Scientific Committee. It also mentioned that not all members of the Scientific Committee had been making contributions to its work. The conclusions of the report on criteria and indicators were therefore untenable. Moreover, the conclusions had been drawn without the participation of the observers, contrary to paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 64/85.

32. **Mr. Zdorov** (Belarus) said that Belarus was gratified to have been able to participate as an observer at the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Scientific Committee, thereby demonstrating its commitment to the criteria for membership, and looked forward to becoming a full member. He recalled that, as the country which had suffered worst from the Chernobyl accident, Belarus had unparalleled experience in dealing with the effects of radiation and had carried out extensive research into those effects both on human health and on the environment. Among the country's wide range of State-funded research activities, he drew attention, in particular, to the State programme on Chernobyl, under which some US\$ 24 million had been budgeted for scientific research, and expressed the hope, accordingly, that Belarus would make a substantial contribution to the work of the Scientific Committee.

33. Welcoming the decision to develop objective and transparent criteria for membership of the Scientific Committee, which were to be applied equitably to current and future members alike, he regretted that the report on the application of those criteria had not been submitted in time for consideration by the Assembly at its current session and conveyed his delegation's view that the application of the criteria for membership should be reviewed on a regular basis, thereby enhancing the transparency of the Scientific Committee's work.

34. **Mr. Beg** (India) said that his country supported the work of the Scientific Committee and would carefully examine the political issues involved in revising its membership. Six United Nations Member States had expressed their wish to become members and had been participating as observers since 2008, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/100. During informal discussions held in accordance with General Assembly resolution 63/89, members of the Scientific Committee had considered several options for revising the membership, including: a continuation of observer status for the six States in question; partly permanent and partly rotating membership; mixed delegations based on regional understandings; certain members not participating in sessions regularly or opting out of membership. In that regard, India wished to make it clear that it could not agree to share its membership with another nation on the basis of regional representation.

35. The existing membership had been assessed based on criteria developed in informal discussions, including attendance at the session, response to surveys on exposure, and scientific papers cited in the Scientific Committee's 2006 and 2008 reports to the General Assembly. Six countries that had not fully met those criteria had been requested to make presentations on their scientific strength and contributions to the work of the Scientific Committee. India had been one of the countries asked to make a presentation because even though it had proven scientific capabilities, it had not provided the data requested by the Scientific Committee's surveys in time for the 2000, 2006 and 2008 reports. India's representative on the Scientific Committee had stated during his presentation that although he agreed with the criteria, it was beyond the mandate of the Scientific Committee to single out any State, and the issue of membership was in all likelihood a political one. The six observer States wishing to join the Scientific Committee had also been asked to make presentations at the fifty-seventh session.

36. The main reason India had not responded to the Scientific Committee's surveys was that the formats were not acceptable. The Scientific Committee's expectations regarding data collection were understandable, but not all States could participate immediately or at the required level. Information on radioactivity released from different types of reactors, though it could be well within regulatory limits, might

create unnecessary fear among the general public. Furthermore, sovereign member States might decide to withhold certain information for its own national security interests. Those factors should be taken into account in the consideration of the issue.

37. India strongly supported the Scientific Committee's new programme of work, which covered several areas of re-emerging interest, including radiation-induced cataracts and the cancer risk of low-dose and low-dose-rate radiation. While some studies suggested a positive cancer risk following low-dose exposure, studies into how high levels of natural background radiation in Kerala related to congenital malformations in newborns and cancer risk assessments of the populations exposed to high background radiation in India and China did not indicate an increased risk due to exposure. It was satisfying to note that, while continuing to analyse the global data on the sources and effects of radiation exposure, the Scientific Committee was also addressing specific issues on which scientific documents could be published in a short time.

38. India supported the draft resolution on the effects of atomic radiation and recommended that sufficient financial resources should be made available for the effective functioning of the Scientific Committee.

39. *Mr. Chipaziwa (Zimbabwe) resumed the Chair.*

40. **Ms. Ventura** (Canada) said that Canada had been participating actively in the work of the Scientific Committee since its inception. The Scientific Committee had approved the publication of a number of important scientific reports in 2009 and the General Assembly had endorsed its programme of work covering new topics of study. The Scientific Committee's activities, particularly its work relating to the use of nuclear energy, continued to demonstrate its important role in providing authoritative scientific assessments of the sources and effects of atomic radiation. The information it provided was a vital tool allowing non-governmental organizations, the International Atomic Energy Agency, member State Governments and users of nuclear energy to evaluate the risks of radiation and establish appropriate safety and protection standards.

41. In view of the fact that a number of additional countries had expressed interest in becoming members of the Scientific Committee, criteria should be developed to evaluate the ability of member States to

contribute. Canada supported the participation of the six candidate countries at the fifty-eighth session as observers and looked forward to their continued positive contribution to the Scientific Committee's work. It welcomed the establishment of a new professional post for the Scientific Committee secretariat in response to the concerns expressed in the reports on the fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions.

42. Canada was confident that the draft resolution would build on previous efforts to help strengthen and revitalize the Scientific Committee while allowing for further discussion on the issue of membership. She urged all Member States to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

43. **Mr. Silk** (Marshall Islands) said that his country, during its status as a United Nations Trust Territory, had been the site of 67 large-scale atmospheric nuclear tests between 1946 and 1958. The tests had left a complex legacy of effects, including local communities still in exile, serious health issues passed down over generations and adjudicated but unmet compensation claims. On 1 August 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had designated Bikini Atoll as a World Heritage Site for the role that the tests there had played in shaping global culture in the second half of the twentieth century.

44. In 1954, the Marshall Islands had petitioned the United Nations to request a halt to further testing, explaining not only that exposure to radioactive material was dangerous, but also that the displaced communities had become dispirited as a result of being removed from their land. The United Nations then explicitly authorized further testing in two resolutions, in 1954 and 1956, while providing a range of specific assurances to the people of the Marshall Islands.

45. It was important to acknowledge the range of actions that had already been taken by the Administering Authority, the United States, and to emphasize the ongoing bilateral engagement. However, the effects of atomic radiation were far more complex than had been originally anticipated and had become a defining factor of Marshallese national identity. There were significant outstanding issues that required appropriate response and redress. In that regard, the Marshall Islands called for the United States to consider its Changed Circumstances Petition. There was also a need for a more focused and specific response on the multilateral aspects of the issue, since

the international community also bore a fiduciary responsibility.

46. The Marshall Islands welcomed the consensus of Member States on the draft resolution, which called for a report by the Secretary-General on the effects of atomic radiation in the Marshall Islands, taking into account the views of experts, including the Scientific Committee, which would amount to the most significant treatment of the issue at the United Nations in over 50 years. The report would be an opportunity for the United Nations to consider a neutral analysis of the scientific issues, much of which might relate to the effects of exposure to background radiation, although there was also a need for information leading to a comprehensive understanding of the effects of atomic radiation on the Marshall Islands to be considered.

47. **Mr. Tsybaliuk** (Ukraine) commended the Scientific Committee for making a valuable contribution to a wider understanding of ionizing radiation and for fulfilling its mandate with scientific authority and independence. There was a continuing need to compile information about atomic and ionizing radiation and analyse its effects on humankind and the environment, particularly since the complexity of such information had increased considerably in recent years. Without the Scientific Committee's work, the necessary international harmonization on safety matters could not have been achieved. The twenty-first century would present even more challenges, and the Scientific Committee should make itself and its work better known.

48. Progress had been made on such issues as assessing the levels of radiation from energy production and its effects on human health and the environment, reducing uncertainty in radiation risk estimation, attributing the health effects of radiation exposure and updating the methodology for estimating exposure resulting from discharges from nuclear installations. Ukraine welcomed the reflection of its proposals and data in the three annexes published in 2009, which demonstrated that increasing attention was being paid to occupational exposure, exposure to naturally occurring radioactive materials and new diagnostic procedures.

49. The Scientific Committee had been involved from the outset in evaluating the radiation exposure and health effects of the Chernobyl accident and its impact on future generations. Ukraine remained

committed to cooperating with the Scientific Committee and all parties concerned in order to counter and minimize the consequences through a common scientific understanding of its causes. The Scientific Committee should continue its practical involvement, in particular through the calculation of collective doses of radiation, work that had started during the preparatory phase of construction for the new safe confinement, and would continue for another 50 months.

50. Ukraine welcomed the invitation to participate as an observer in the work of the Scientific Committee, but noted that the limitations associated with that status restricted its ability to contribute substantially to the discussions and the decision-making process. Ukraine therefore hoped that the General Assembly would approve its full membership, as envisaged in Assembly resolution 63/89.

51. The Scientific Committee needed additional funding and strengthened human resources in order to carry out its work and implement its strategic plan for 2009-2013. It was of concern that it could not begin work on some topics due to a lack of resources within its secretariat. The United Nations Environment Programme should continue to boost its allocations for the Scientific Committee, since they had been decreasing in real terms in recent years and were not commensurate with the Scientific Committee's responsibilities and the need to meet the financial and administrative implications of increased membership.

52. **Mr. Hamed** (Syrian Arab Republic), commending the Scientific Committee for the competent and objective manner in which it discharged its duties, called for greater efforts to promote awareness of the harmful effects of atomic radiation on health and the environment. Speaking as the representative of a country which advocated the use of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes and viewed nuclear energy as a resource which could be deployed to further development and prosperity, he expressed concern about the efforts to restrict access by developing countries to nuclear technologies, under the guise of applying verification and non-proliferation measures.

53. The Syrian Arab Republic was at the forefront of States calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East region. Indeed, it had submitted a draft resolution on the subject to the

Security Council and had acceded to various international treaties on nuclear disarmament. By contrast, Israel maintained a stock of nuclear weapons yet was not subject to any international monitoring, had not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and refused to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA comprehensive safeguards, thereby posing a threat to regional security and undermining the credibility of international disarmament efforts.

54. Expressing grave concern at the potential for a major disaster posed by the existence of Israeli nuclear facilities in the region without the imposition of any controls, he urged the international community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA monitoring and eliminate its nuclear weapons. Israel had buried nuclear waste in the occupied Syrian Golan but the international community had remained silent on the matter, thereby failing to live up to its own calls for nuclear non-proliferation. Lastly, he emphasized the need for greater international cooperation to draw attention to the dangerous effects of atomic radiation.

55. **Mr. Simanjuntak** (Indonesia) welcomed the efforts made by Canada to ensure that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus. Indonesia had become a member of the Scientific Committee in 1973, had never wavered in its commitment to the Committee and would welcome increased participation.

56. The Scientific Committee was a scientific body which, to be scientifically credible, must strengthen its activity while remaining within the limits of its mandate. Any attempt to go beyond that mandate by assessing which countries should or should not be members could be interpreted as an attempt to politicize its work. Indonesia was ready to participate in constructive consultations on future membership during the current and future sessions of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.