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EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Report of the Special Political Committee (Part II)

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 2164th plenary meeting, on 9 November 1973, the General Assembly considered part I of the present report and, on the recommendation of the Special Political Committee, adopted resolution 3063 (XXVIII). In that resolution, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to meet as soon as possible in order to update, with a view to their submission to the General Assembly at its current session, the conclusions contained in its report presented to the twenty-seventh session. <sup>1/</sup> Pending receipt of the report requested from the Scientific Committee, the Special Political Committee decided to retain the item on its agenda.
2. In accordance with resolution 3063 (XXVIII), the Scientific Committee held a special session at Headquarters on 26 and 27 November and submitted the report requested under that resolution (A/9349).
3. The Special Political Committee continued its consideration of the item on the basis of this report at its 902nd and 903rd meetings, on 30 November and 3 December. Three draft resolutions and one amendment were submitted in connexion with the item.

## II. PROPOSALS

### A. Draft resolution A/SPC/L.294

4. The first draft resolution, submitted on 28 November (A/SPC/L.294), was sponsored by Australia, Fiji, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Liberia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines and Venezuela. Subsequently, Costa Rica joined the list of sponsors. At the 903rd meeting, on 3 December, the representative of Australia stated that in the first preambular paragraph the word "and" should be inserted before the words "in view of the anxieties expressed".
5. At the same meeting, the draft resolution was adopted by a recorded vote of 71 to none, with 22 abstentions (see paragraph 15 below, draft resolution A). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, German Democratic Republic, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Khmer Republic,

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<sup>1/</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/8725 and Corr.1).

Laos, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Belgium, Chad, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Gabon, Germany (Federal Republic of), Greece, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

B. Draft resolution A/SPC/L.295

6. The second draft resolution, submitted on 28 November (A/SPC/L.295), was sponsored by France. It read as follows:

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955, which established the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and its subsequent resolutions on the subject, in particular its resolution 3063 (XXVIII),

"Emphasizing the necessity of maintaining a constant check on the dangerous effects for man and his environment which might result from the levels of radiation to which they are exposed,

"Conscious of the need to keep information and observations concerning atomic radiation up to date,

"1. Takes note with appreciation of the special report submitted by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/9349);

"2. Notes that, according to the estimates made by the Committee in this report, after consideration of the data available as of 1 January 1973, the total doses to which the world population is and will be exposed as a result of atomic radiation until the end of this century, as estimated in its previous report (A/8725), require no revision, as the increase in the doses of radiation is smaller than the uncertainties in the estimates;

/...

"3. Further notes that, according to the same report, the additions of long-lived radio-active materials are small in the southern hemisphere and even smaller in the northern hemisphere;

"4. Notes that doses of iodine-131 in 1973 were of the same order of magnitude as in 1972 and that, in the southern hemisphere, these doses were equal to or lower than those observed in 1970 and 1971;

"5. Takes note with appreciation of the conclusions of the Scientific Committee;

"6. Commends the Scientific Committee for having successfully carried out the task assigned to it and requests it to pursue that task with the same objectivity in the future and to furnish each year a supplementary report on the most recent observations concerning the levels and effects of atomic radiation;

"7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Scientific Committee with the assistance necessary for the conduct of its work and the dissemination of its findings to the public."

7. On 30 November, Peru submitted amendments (A/SPC/L.298) to the French draft resolution (A/SPC/L.295). These amendments provided for:

(a) The replacement of operative paragraph 2 by the following:

"Notes that the paucity of data available permitted a preliminary assessment of levels, but did not allow the broader review of information;"

(b) The deletion of operative paragraphs 3 and 4, and the renumbering of the remaining paragraphs.

8. On 3 December, France submitted a revised text (A/SPC/L.295/Rev.1) of the draft resolution.

9. At the 903rd meeting, on 3 December, the representative of Peru stated that, in view of the revision of the French draft resolution, the amendment submitted by Peru was withdrawn.

10. At the same meeting, the revised draft resolution submitted by France (A/SPC/L.295/Rev.1) was adopted by a recorded vote of 91 to none, with 7 abstentions (see paragraph 15 below, draft resolution B). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Yemen, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Greece, Guatemala,

/...

Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia.

C. Draft resolution A/SPC/L.296

11. The third draft resolution, submitted on 29 November (A/SPC/L.296), was sponsored by Australia, Ecuador, Peru, the Philippines and Yugoslavia. Subsequently, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Liberia, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Venezuela joined the list of sponsors.

12. On 29 November, a statement (A/SPC/L.297) was submitted to the Committee by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 155 of the rules of procedure concerning the administrative and financial implications of draft resolution A/SPC/L.296.

13. At the 903rd meeting, on 3 December, the representative of Peru revised operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/SPC/L.296 by adding at the end of that paragraph the words "while reaffirming the need for members of the Committee to be represented by scientists".

14. At the same meeting, the draft resolution, as orally revised, was put to the vote, with the following results:

(a) At the request of the representative of Fiji, a separate vote was taken on the words "at the latter's expense" in operative paragraph 4; these words were retained by 21 votes to 18, with 57 abstentions.

(b) The draft resolution as a whole was adopted by a recorded vote of 72 to none, with 29 abstentions (see paragraph 15 below, draft resolution C). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Cameroon, Canada, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Yemen, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany (Federal Republic of), Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jamaica, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Belgium, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chad, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Hungary, India, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Malawi, Mongolia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

15. The Special Political Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

#### Effects of atomic radiation

##### A

#### The General Assembly,

Recalling resolution 3063 (XXVIII) of 9 November 1973, by which it requested a special report from the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and in view of the anxieties expressed by the representatives of various Member States concerning pollution of the environment by ionizing radiation emanating from tests of nuclear weapons,

Noting with appreciation the report submitted by the Scientific Committee, 2/

Noting with concern that there has been additional radio-active fall-out resulting in additions to the total doses of ionizing radiation since the Scientific Committee prepared its last report, 3/

Reaffirming its deep apprehension concerning the harmful consequences of nuclear weapon tests for the acceleration of the arms race and for the health of present and future generations of mankind,

1. Deplores environmental pollution by ionizing radiation from the testing of nuclear weapons;

2. Requests the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to continue its work, including its co-ordination activities, to increase knowledge of the levels and effects of atomic radiation from all sources.

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling 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, in particular resolution 3063 (XXVIII) of 9 November 1973,

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,

Conscious of the continued need for compiling information about atomic radiation and for analysing its effects on man and his environment,

Recalling that, as is recognized in resolution 2905 (XXVII) of 17 October 1972, the Scientific Committee can become an element of value in the United Nations Environment Programme,

Expressing regret at the fact that the Scientific Committee had very little time and information available to it in preparing for its special session,

1. Notes with appreciation the additional report submitted by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation; 4/

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3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/8725 and Corr.1).

4/ A/9349.

2. Commends the Scientific Committee for the valuable contributions it has made since its inception to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels and effects of atomic radiation;

3. Requests the Scientific Committee to continue its work, including its co-ordinating activities, to increase knowledge of the levels and effects of atomic radiation from all sources;

4. Requests the Scientific Committee in particular to continue, at its twenty-third session to be held in October 1974, to review and assess the levels, effects and risks of radiation from all sources and to report to the General Assembly at its twenty-ninth session;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Scientific Committee with the assistance necessary for the conduct of its work and the dissemination of its findings to the public.

C

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,

Recognizing the valuable contribution made by the Scientific Committee to wider knowledge and understanding of the levels and effects of atomic radiation,

Concerned about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations resulting from the atomic radiation to which man and natural resources are exposed,

Noting with concern that nuclear weapons tests are still being conducted in the atmosphere and other environments,

Conscious of the need for the Governments of Member States to commit themselves to giving the Scientific Committee the greatest possible co-operation in order that its work may be more effective,

Recalling its resolution 3063 (XXVIII) of 9 November 1973, by which it decided to consider means of enhancing the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee,

1. Decides to increase the membership of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to a maximum of 20 members, while reaffirming the need for members of the Committee to be represented by scientists;

/...



2. Invites the Governments which desire to participate in the Scientific Committee and are able to contribute to its work to inform the President of the General Assembly, through the Secretary-General, before 15 February 1974; in the event that more than five Governments inform the President of the Assembly of their desire to become part of the Scientific Committee, the selection of the new members of the Committee will be decided by the President of the Assembly, in consultation with the Chairmen of the regional groups, on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution;

3. Urges the Scientific Committee to request from Member States, as frequently as may be necessary, the detailed information which it needs to assist it in its work;

4. Authorizes the Scientific Committee, in response to a request by the Government of a country which is situated in an area of nuclear arms testing or which considers that it is exposed to atomic radiation by reason of such testing, to appoint a group of experts from among its members for the purpose of visiting that country, at the latter's expense, and of consulting with its scientific authorities and informing the Committee of the consultations;

5. Urges the specialized agencies and other United Nations bodies, and invites the non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, to assist the Scientific Committee in its work;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to provide the Scientific Committee with the administrative assistance necessary for the efficient conduct of its work.

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