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EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Report of the Special Political Committee (Part I)

Rapporteur: Mr. Massimo CASTALDO (Italy)

1. In a letter dated 1 October 1973 (A/9192), the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations proposed the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Effects of atomic radiation: report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation", which, the letter noted, had appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly from the sixteenth session onwards. Referring to anxieties expressed during the general debate at the twenty-eighth session, the letter expressed the view of the French Government that the Scientific Committee should be asked to meet as a matter of urgency to take cognizance of additional documentation that had become available and to supplement thereby its report to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh session. 1/
2. At its 208th meeting, on 3 October, the General Committee recommended the inclusion of the item in the agenda and its allocation to the Special Political Committee for consideration and report. At its 214⁴th plenary meeting, on 9 October, the General Assembly adopted the recommendation of the General Committee.
3. The Special Political Committee began consideration of the item at its 860th meeting, on 10 October 1973. The Committee had before it a draft resolution submitted by France (A/SPC/L.262), the operative paragraphs of which read:

"1. Requests the United Nations Scientific Committee to meet as soon as possible in order to make a study of the most recent documents which have been or may shortly be transmitted to the Secretariat and to update, with a view to their resubmission to this session of the General Assembly, the conclusions contained in its latest report (A/8725), for which the General Assembly again commends the Scientific Committee;

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

"2. Requests the Scientific Committee to transmit to it, on that occasion, any opinions and suggestions which it may have regarding the further enhancement of its effectiveness."

Also before the Committee was a statement by the Secretary-General (A/SPC/L.263), in accordance with rule 155 of the rules of procedure, on the administrative and financial implications of the draft resolution.

4. On a motion by Peru, the Committee decided to adjourn its consideration of the item. Consideration of the item was resumed at the 876th meeting, on 1 November 1973. At that meeting, in addition to the draft resolution referred to above, the Committee had also before it the following amendments:

(a) An amendment submitted by New Zealand (A/SPC/L.267), subsequently co-sponsored by the Philippines, to replace the final preambular paragraph by the following:

"Convinced of the advisability of continuing to review the levels of atomic radiation, particularly of radiation resulting from uncontrolled sources such as nuclear tests and to study the effects on populations and living natural resources exposed to such radiation,";

(b) An amendment submitted by Fiji (A/SPC/L.268), subsequently co-sponsored by the Philippines, to insert a new third preambular paragraph reading:

"Noting with regret that nuclear tests in the atmosphere and elsewhere have been conducted since resolution 2905 (XXVII) and resolution 2934 (XXVII) were adopted,";

(c) Three amendments submitted by Peru (A/SPC/L.272), subsequently co-sponsored by the Philippines, providing for:

(i) The insertion of a new preambular paragraph reading:

"Convinced of the need to enhance the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee,";

(ii) The replacement in operative paragraph 1 of the words "again commends" by the words "expresses its gratitude to";

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

"2. Decides to consider, at an early date, the need to enhance the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee."

5. At the 876th meeting, the representative of Fiji modified his amendment by replacing the word "elsewhere" by the words "in other environments". Likewise, the representative of Peru modified his amendments by deleting the second amendment and replacing the words "need to enhance" in the third amendment by the words "means of enhancing".

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6. At the same meeting the Committee proceeded to the vote and adopted the draft resolution and the amendments thereto (see para. 12 below).

7. The amendment submitted by New Zealand and the Philippines (A/SPC/L.267) was adopted by 97 votes to none, with 10 abstentions.

8. The amendment submitted by Fiji and the Philippines (A/SPC/L.268), as orally modified, was adopted by a roll-call vote of 64 to 2, with 39 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Botswana, Brazil, Burma, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Khmer Republic, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Republic, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Upper Volta, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire, Zambia.

Against: France, Portugal.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Central African Republic, Chad, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Democratic Yemen, Gabon, German Democratic Republic, Germany (Federal Republic of), Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Morocco, Pakistan, Panama, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tunisia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen.

9. The amendment submitted by Peru and the Philippines (A/SPC/L.272), as orally modified, was adopted by 85 votes to 4, with 16 abstentions.

10. The draft resolution submitted by France (A/SCP/L.262), as amended, was adopted by 105 votes to none, with 9 abstentions.

11. At the same meeting, the Committee decided to retain the item on its agenda pending receipt of the report requested from the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE

12. 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,

Recalling in particular paragraph 4 of its resolution 2905 (XXVII) of 17 October 1972,

Noting with regret that nuclear tests in the atmosphere and in other environments have been conducted since the adoption of resolution 2905 (XXVII) and resolution 2934 (XXVII) of 29 November 1972,

Convinced of the advisability of continuing to review the levels of atomic radiation, particularly of radiation resulting from uncontrolled sources such as nuclear tests, and to study the effects on populations and living natural resources exposed to such radiation,

Convinced of the need to enhance the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee,

1. Requests the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation to meet as soon as possible in order to make a study of the most recent documents which have been or may shortly be transmitted to the Secretariat and to update, with a view to their resubmission to the General Assembly at its current session, the conclusions contained in its latest report, 2/ for which the Assembly again commends the Scientific Committee;

2. Decides to consider, at an early date, the means of enhancing the effectiveness of the Scientific Committee.

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