



## General Assembly

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Forty-fifth session  
Item 74 of the preliminary list\*

## EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Report of the United Nations Scientific Committee  
on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

1. The United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation **1/** held its thirty-ninth session at the Vienna International Centre from 14 to 18 May 1990. Mr. K. H. Lokan (Australia), Mr. J. Maisin (Belgium) and Mr. E. Létourneau (Canada) served as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively.
2. The Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 44/45 of 8 December 1989, by which, inter alia, the Assembly endorsed the plans for future activities and requested the Committee to continue the review of important problems on radiation doses and effects and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-fifth session.
3. In technical discussions, the Committee considered recent information on sources of radiation, exposures and their effects. Those deliberations focused on a review of 12 documents prepared by the Secretariat on subjects that the Committee had selected as the most important topics for further study. Those included : natural radiation exposures, man-made environmental radiation exposures, medical radiation exposures, occupational radiation exposures, radiation effects on the environment, epidemiological evaluations of radiation effects, radiation effects on the developing human brain, dose and dose-rate effects on radiation response, mechanisms of radiation oncogenesis, hereditary effects of radiation, stimulation effects from low-level radiation, and perception of radiation risks. The Committee made suggestions for the further development of those topics, in particular pointing out new and additional information to be considered.

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\* A/45/50.

4. The Committee discussed its efforts to obtain more extensive data for exposure evaluations. A questionnaire on medical radiation usage has been distributed to the Ministries of Health in all States Members of the United Nations. Further data on natural radiation exposures, in particular levels of radon indoors, and on occupational radiation exposures are also required.

5. The Committee expressed the hope that States Members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency would continue to assist in this work, especially by providing relevant information on the subjects of interest for the future programme of study, so that its deliberations could be based on the broadest and most up-to-date scientific and technical information.

6. The Committee has noted that there are discussions and preoccupations throughout the world regarding the potential and the perceived effects caused by natural sources of radiation as well as by man-made practices. From its review of the various sources of radiation exposure, the Committee concludes that natural sources of radiation are the main contributor to the collective dose. The Committee is concerned about the number of unproven claims relative to the radiobiological effects of the Chernobyl accident. In this regard, the Committee is continuing its work on the report entitled "Radiation effects on the environment" and realizes the need for timely and authoritative scientific reports and studies in order to avoid misinterpretations of radiation effects.

7. The Committee decided to hold its fortieth session at the Vienna International Centre from 13 to 17 May 1991.

#### Notes

1/ The terms of reference of the Committee, which was established by the General Assembly at its tenth session in 1955, are set out in resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955. The Committee was originally composed of the following Member States: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Sweden, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. By resolution 3154 C (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973, the Assembly decided to increase the Committee's membership by up to five additional members, and the following Member States were appointed by the President of the Assembly in consultation with the Chairmen of the regional groups: Federal Republic of Germany, Indonesia, Peru, Poland and Sudan. By its resolution 41/62 B of 3 December 1986, the Assembly decided to increase the membership to a maximum of 21 members and invited the People's Republic of China to become a member of the Committee.

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