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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-eighth session at the Vienna International Centre from 8 to 12 May 1989. 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 43/55 of 6 December 1988, by which, *inter alia*, the Assembly endorsed the plans for future activities of the Scientific Committee and requested the Committee to continue the review of important problems on radiation doses and effects and to report to the Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

3. In technical discussions the Committee considered its programme of future work. The Committee examined a number of problems that might require detailed review, based on documents prepared by the secretariat and further discussion, and it decided to undertake studies in the following fields: doses from natural sources of radiation] doses from man-made sources of radiation in the environment) medical radiation exposures, their world-wide usage and impact; occupational radiation exposures and trends; effects of radiation exposures on plants and animals in the environment; epidemiological study of radiation effects in human populations; effects on the developing human brain from pre-natal radiation exposures; dose and dose-rate effects on radiation response; mechanisms by which radiation causes cancer; stimulation effects of low doses of radiation; hereditary effects of radiation in human populationst and perception of radiation risks. Other topics were identified in which the Committee has an interest and could make a scientific contribution. The concepts and methodologies for comparative assessment of effects, interactions and risks of toxic chemicals and radiation is one such subject which the Committee will keep under consideration, using the experience developed in international organizations and scientific bodies.

4. The Committee discussed the type of information from various sources that it would seek to obtain in order to continue its assessments of radiation exposures and effects, and provided guidance about the format and contents of the documents to be produced by the secretariat on each of the above-mentioned subjects.

5. The Committee expressed the hope that States Members of the United Nations, the specialised 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 noted with satisfaction that its 1988 report to the General Assembly ^{1/} with scientific annexes had been issued as a United Nations sales publication and in this way that the world community is informed of its basic radiation evaluations. The large number of topics included in the Committee's future programme of work reflects the continuing need to report on the sources, effects and risks of ionising radiation.

7. The Committee recognised that its future plans would place great demands on the present resources available in the Committee secretariat. The Committee therefore reiterates its earlier request that more adequate support be given to the secretariat in that the full authorised complement of staff be appointed with expediency.

8. The Committee decided to hold its thirty-ninth session at the Vienna International Centre from 14 to 18 May 1990.

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. It 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 United States of America. By resolution 3154 C (XXVIII) of 14 December 1973, the General Assembly decided to increase the Committee's membership by up to five additional members, and the following Member States were appointed: Federal Republic of Germany, Indonesia, Peru, Poland and Sudan. By resolution 41/62 B of 3 December 1986, the General Assembly decided to increase the membership to a maximum of 21 and invited China to become a member of the Committee.

2/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No.45 (A/43/45).