



Sixteenth session
Agenda item 24

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

Report of the Special Political Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Shintaro FUKUSHIMA (Japan)

1. The annual progress report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation for 1961 (A/4881 and Corr.1) was placed on the provisional agenda of the sixteenth session of the General Assembly in accordance with resolution 1347 (XIII) of 13 December 1958. At its 1014th plenary meeting on 25 September 1961, the General Assembly included the item in the agenda of the session, and at the 1018th meeting, on 27 September 1961, allocated it to the Special Political Committee for consideration and report.
2. The Special Political Committee considered the question in the course of its 262nd to 266th meetings inclusive, held between 16 and 20 October 1961.
3. On 13 October, Czechoslovakia submitted a draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68), under the terms of which the Assembly, after reaffirming its conviction that the work of the Scientific Committee was useful and necessary and noting with satisfaction that it had continued systematically to carry out its work and to receive the support of Member States, specialized agencies and their members, and individual scientists, would take note of the annual report of the Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/4881 and Corr.1) and of the fact that the Committee would submit a comprehensive report on its work and on the results thereof to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session.
4. On the same date, Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Guatemala, Iran, Japan, New Zealand,

Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Spain, Tunisia, Uruguay and Venezuela also submitted a draft resolution (A/SFC/L.69). On 16 October, Cameroun, the Federation of Malaya, Ghana and Ireland added their names to the list of sponsors (A/SFC/L.69/Add.1). Under part I of that draft resolution, the Assembly would express its deep concern that as a result of the renewed discharge into the earth's environment of radio-active debris there had been sharp increases in the levels of radio-active fall-out in many parts of the world, and its fear that the prolonged exposure of mankind to increasing levels of radio-active fall-out would constitute a growing threat to this and future generations, and would recognize the great importance of the contribution made by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) in the study of the extent and nature of that hazard. Under the operative paragraphs, the Assembly would: (1) declare that both concern for the future of mankind and the fundamental principles of international law imposed a responsibility on all States concerning actions which might have harmful biological consequences for existing and future generations of peoples of other States by increasing the levels of radio-active fall-out; (2) approve the Scientific Committee's annual progress report and draw particular attention to its view that the resumption of nuclear test explosions since its last comprehensive report increased the urgency for intensification of relevant scientific studies; (3) express appreciation for the valuable information on radio-active contamination, radiation levels and radio-biological questions which had been furnished to UNSCEAR by Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Commission on Radiological Protection and on Radiological Units and Measurements; (4) reaffirm the desirability of continuing full international co-operation through UNSCEAR and interchanges of the results and experience of research conducted at the national level, so that man's knowledge of the hazards of radiation would constantly improve and in particular so that the second comprehensive report to be presented in 1962 by UNSCEAR would be as scientifically authoritative and informative as possible; (5) invite countries wishing to do so to take advantage of the offers which had been made of the laboratory facilities of certain Member States, the World Health Organization and IAEA for the analysis of samples of air, water, bone, soil and food collected in their territories as envisaged in section IV of resolution 1376 (XIV); (6) request

UNSCEAR to examine the possibility of accelerating its second comprehensive report and to consider at the earliest possible time whether the facts at its disposal called for the submission of an interim report. Under part II of the proposal, the Assembly would invite the World Meteorological Organization, in consultation with IAEA as necessary, to examine urgently the feasibility of extending the present meteorological reporting system to include measurements of atmospheric radioactivity.

5. On 19 October, Czechoslovakia revised its draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68) to include in the third preambular paragraph after the words "the support of Member States" and before the words "specialized agencies" the words "the International Atomic Energy Agency" (A/SPC/L.68/Rev.1).

6. On the same date, India submitted amendments (A/SPC/L.70) to the revised Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68/Rev.1). The first Indian amendment would add a fourth preambular paragraph: recognizing the urgency of intensification of relevant scientific studies as contemplated by the Scientific Committee in paragraph 6 of its report, and that there was deep concern about the matter. The second Indian amendment would add two further operative paragraphs to the Czechoslovak draft resolution: (1) expressing the hope that the Scientific Committee would be able to submit its report as soon as possible and practicable, and (2) inviting Member States and specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, international non-governmental and national scientific organizations and others to continue and intensify their co-operation and assistance to the Committee. At the 266th meeting on 20 October, the representative of Czechoslovakia agreed to accept and incorporate these amendments in his delegation's draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68/Rev.1).

7. Also at the 266th meeting, the sponsors of the twenty-five-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1) accepted a suggestion by the representative of India to delete the word "certain" referring to "certain Member States" from operative paragraph 5 of part I. They also accepted an oral amendment suggested by Morocco, after it had been reworded by Canada, that the first operative paragraph of part II should read: "Invites the World Meteorological Organization, in consultation with the IAEA and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, as necessary, to examine...".

8. The representative of Canada moved, under rule 132, that the twenty-five-Power draft resolution (A/SPC/L.69 and Add.1) be given priority in the voting. The Committee, by a roll-call vote of 56 to 15, with 21 abstentions, adopted the motion. The voting was as follows:

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In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Cameroun, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Federation of Malaya, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Laos, Liberia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Against: Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ceylon, Congo (Leopoldville), Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Poland, Romania, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Finland, Guinea, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Togo, United Arab Republic, Upper Volta, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

9. The Committee then voted on the twenty-five-Power draft resolution. The voting was as follows: the first operative paragraph of part I was adopted by 74 votes to 12, with 4 abstentions. Part II, as modified, was adopted by 76 votes to 9, with 4 abstentions. The twenty-five-Power draft resolution, as modified, was adopted as a whole by a roll-call vote of 75 to none, with 17 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cameroun, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo (Leopoldville), Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Ivory Coast, Japan, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway,

Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Ceylon, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Poland, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

10. The Committee then voted on the revised Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/SPC/L.68/Rev.1) as modified by the Indian amendments (A/SPC/L.70). It was adopted by a roll-call vote of 33 to 22, with 37 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Bulgaria, Burma, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Ceylon, Chad, Congo (Leopoldville), Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Guinea, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Poland, Romania, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, Yemen, Yugoslavia.

Against: Argentina, Brazil, Cameroun, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, Sweden, Uruguay.

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Federation of Malaya, Finland, France, Ghana, Greece, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Laos, Liberia, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Venezuela.

Recommendations of the Special Political Committee

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

REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE
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A .

I

The General Assembly,

Deeply concerned that as a result of the renewed discharge into the earth's environment of radio-active debris there have been sharp increases in the levels of radio-active fall-out in many parts of the world,

Fearful that the prolonged exposure of mankind to increasing levels of radio-active fall-out would constitute a growing threat to this and future generations,

Recognizing the great importance of the contribution made by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation in the study of the extent and nature of this hazard,

1. Declares that both concern for the future of mankind and the fundamental principles of international law impose a responsibility on all States concerning actions which might have harmful biological consequences for the existing and future generations of peoples of other States, by increasing the levels of radio-active fall-out;

2. Approves the annual progress report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation^{1/} and draws particular attention to the Committee's view that the resumption of nuclear test explosions since the publication of its last comprehensive report increases the urgency for intensification of relevant scientific studies;

3. Expresses appreciation for the valuable information on radio-active contamination, radiation levels and radio-biological questions which has been

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furnished to the Scientific Committee by Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the International Commission on Radiological Protection and on Radiological Units and Measurements in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 1376 (XIV) of 17 November 1959 and 1574 (XV) of 20 December 1960;

4. Reaffirms the desirability of continuing full international co-operation through the Scientific Committee and interchanges of the results and experience of research conducted at the national level, so that man's knowledge of the hazards of radiation will constantly improve and in particular so that the second comprehensive report to be presented in 1962 by the Committee will be as scientifically authoritative and informative as possible;

5. Invites countries wishing to do so to take advantage of the offers which have been made of the laboratory facilities of Member States, the World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency for the analysis of samples of air, water, bone, soil and food collected in their territories as envisaged in section IV of resolution 1376 (XIV);

6. Requests the Scientific Committee to examine the possibility of accelerating its second comprehensive report and to consider at the earliest possible time whether the facts at its disposal call for the submission of an interim report.

II

The General Assembly,

Noting that in accordance with procedures and practices established by the World Meteorological Organization, the countries of the world have for many years operated a system for the routine reporting of atmospheric conditions from a world-wide network of meteorological stations for the prompt dissemination of these reports by telegraphic and other means,

1. Invites the World Meteorological Organization, in consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, as necessary, to examine urgently the feasibility of extending the present meteorological reporting system to include measurements of atmospheric radio-activity with the following aims in mind:

- (a) To ensure that reliable and standardized measurements of atmospheric radio-activity are made at a world-wide network of stations;
 - (b) To ensure the day-to-day exchange of this information by telegraphic and other means with a view to its prompt reception at appointed national centres;
 - (c) To ensure that national and/or international arrangements be made for these observations to be stored as permanent records of atmospheric radio-activity and to be published in suitable forms at suitable intervals;
2. Invites the World Meteorological Organization to implement the above-mentioned scheme, if found feasible, at the earliest possible date.

B

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 1574 (XV) of 20 December 1960,

Reaffirming its conviction that the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation is useful and necessary,

Noting with satisfaction that the Scientific Committee has continued systematically to carry out its work according to plan and has continued to receive the support of Member States, the International Atomic Energy Agency, specialized agencies and their members, and individual scientists,

Recognizing the urgency of intensification of relevant scientific studies as contemplated by the Scientific Committee in paragraph 6 of its report, and that there is deep concern about this matter,

1. Takes note of the annual report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation^{2/} and of the fact that the Committee will submit a comprehensive report on its work and on the results thereof to the General Assembly at its seventeenth session;
2. Expresses the hope that the Scientific Committee will be able to submit its report as soon as possible and practicable;
3. Invites Member States and specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency, international non-governmental and national scientific organizations and others to continue and intensify their co-operation and assistance to the Scientific Committee.
