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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 twenty-fifth session at the Redoutensaal, Hofburg, in Vienna, from 6 to 15 September 1976. Mr. F. H. Sobels (Belgium), Mr. M. Klímek (Czechoslovakia) and Mr. Z. Jaworowski (Poland) served as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively.

2. During the session the Committee, after taking note of General Assembly resolution 3410 (XXX) of 28 November 1975, discussed, on the basis of drafts prepared in the Secretariat, the scientific annexes of the comprehensive report to be submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-second session. In its discussions, the Committee reviewed the information available on the following subjects: population exposures from natural radiation sources, from the production of power by nuclear fission, and from the environmental contamination due to nuclear explosions; occupational exposure to radiation; and medical irradiation. The Committee also reviewed recent information on the effects of ionizing radiation, including early effects, effects on embryogenesis, genetic effects and the induction of malignancies, covering both risk assessments in man and results of experimental studies.

1/ The Scientific Committee was established by the General Assembly at its tenth session in 1955. Its terms of reference are set out in resolution 913 (X). 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) the General Assembly decided to increase the Committee's membership by up to five additional members, and the following Member States were appointed members of the Committee by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with the Chairmen of the regional groups: Germany (Federal Republic of), Indonesia, Peru, Poland and Sudan.

3. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the amount of data on exposures from various radiation sources received in response to the Committee's request from Member States of the United Nations, from the specialized agencies and from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Committee stressed that further information of this kind, if received before the end of the year, would be of great value in the preparation of its comprehensive report to the General Assembly at its thirty-second session.

4. The Committee planned to continue in the future its activity of review and assessment of doses, effects and risks of radiation from all sources. It felt that such activity could contribute significantly to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), particularly in the preparation of criteria documents for selected radionuclides planned by UNEP, and considered it desirable to establish an active co-operation in these matters.

5. The Committee elected Mr. M. Klímek (Czechoslovakia), Mr. F. E. Stieve (Federal Republic of Germany) and Mr. K. Sundaram (India) to serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively, at the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions of the Committee.

6. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the facilities provided by the Government of Austria for the holding of its twenty-fifth session.

7. The Committee decided to hold its twenty-sixth session at Vienna from 13 to 22 April 1977.