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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-eighth session at the Hofburg in Vienna from 11 to 15 June 1979. Mr. F. E. Stieve (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr. Z. Jaworowski (Poland) and Mr. D. Beninson (Argentina) served as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur respectively.
2. During the session the Committee, after taking note of General Assembly resolution A/33/5 of 3 November 1978, discussed, on the basis of drafts prepared by the Secretariat, the scientific annexes of the report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session. In its discussions the Committee reviewed the information available on the following subjects: dose assessment models; population exposures from natural radiation sources, both unmodified by human activity and technologically modified, from radon and its decay products; from medical radiological procedures and from doses of radiation to workers exposed in the course of their work; contamination from nuclear explosions; and doses resulting from nuclear power production. The Committee also reviewed recent information on the effects of ionizing radiation, including genetic effects,

\* A/34/150.

1/ The terms of reference of the Scientific Committee, which was established by the General Assembly at its tenth session in 1955, 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 Assembly in consultation with the Chairmen of the regional groups: Germany, Federal Republic of, Indonesia, Peru, Poland and Sudan.

effects resulting locally from radiation, other than those of neoplastic diseases, and effects of irradiation on the life span. Current knowledge was also reviewed about dose-response relationships for radiation-induced cancer on the basis of available models, with special reference to their influence on estimation of the risk at low doses and dose rates. Finally, a comprehensive paper about contamination of the environment by caesium-137 was considered and discussed. The Committee decided to ask the Secretariat to prepare a document, in such a way that it could be included in the report to the General Assembly, on interaction of ionizing radiation with other agents encountered in the environment.

3. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the amount of data on exposures from various sources of radiation received from Member States of the United Nations, from the specialized agencies and from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Committee reiterated its plea for further relevant information of this kind that would greatly assist the Committee in the preparation of the report to the General Assembly at its thirty-sixth session.

4. The Committee planned to continue in the future its review and assessment of doses, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources. It felt that that activity could contribute significantly to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), particularly in the preparation of criteria documents for selected radionuclides, a list of which was prepared at the twenty-eighth session of the Committee with the object of preparing a comprehensive document for the purposes of UNEP.

5. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the excellent facilities provided by the Government of Austria for the holding of its twenty-eighth session.

6. The Committee decided to hold its twenty-ninth session at Vienna from 1 to 12 September 1980.