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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-ninth session at the International Centre in Vienna from 1 to 12 September 1980. 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. On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of its establishment by the General Assembly, the Committee heard an address by Mr. M. K. Tolba, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), in which he highlighted the role of the Committee in fulfilling the original mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgement.
3. The Committee took note of General Assembly resolution 34/12 of 9 November 1979. On the basis of drafts prepared by the Secretariat, the Committee discussed numerous scientific documents on which the next substantial report to the Assembly will be based. These documents reviewed the information available on the following subjects: models for the assessment of radiation doses to the population exposure from natural radiation sources including those and from technologically-enhanced radiation; doses due to radon and thoron; doses due to the contamination

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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.

of the environment by nuclear explosions; doses resulting from nuclear power production, from medical radiological procedures and from occupational exposure of workers. The Committee also discussed information on the genetic effects of ionizing radiation and on somatic effects, particularly the short- and long-term non-neoplastic action of localized exposure and the effect of life-shortening on experimental animals and man. The current models of tumour induction by radiation, with special reference to their influence on risk estimates in man at low doses and dose-rates, were also considered, as well as preliminary data on the action of radiation given in combination with other physical, chemical or biological agents. Finally, the Committee reviewed a series of criteria documents prepared at the request of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the environmental behaviour and dosimetry of the following radionuclides: strontium-90, caesium-137, radon, krypton-85, carbon-14, plutonium and other transuranic elements.

4. The Committee expressed satisfaction at the amount of information on these subjects received from States Members of the United Nations, from the specialized agencies and from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Committee reiterated its request for further relevant data about doses, effects and risks from various sources of radiation, which would greatly help in the preparation of its next major report to the General Assembly.

5. In view of the amount of work involved in completing the forthcoming substantive report and of the desirability that some of the documents under review should undergo further consideration, the Committee decided to submit the report with scientific annexes to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session rather than at its thirty-sixth session as originally planned.

6. The Committee planned to continue in the future its activity of scientific review and assessment on behalf of the General Assembly. It felt that such activity could also contribute significantly to UNEP, particularly for the preparation of the above-mentioned criteria documents, a first set of which the Committee planned to finalize in the course of its thirtieth session.

7. The Committee elected Mr. Z. Jaworowski (Poland), Mr. D. Beninson (Argentina) and Mr. T. Kumatori to serve as Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Rapporteur, respectively, at its thirtieth and thirty-first sessions.

8. The Committee decided to hold its thirtieth session at the International Centre in Vienna from 6 to 10 July 1981.

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