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Effects of atomic radiation

Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Malta, Monaco, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Singapore, Spain, Sweden and Thailand: draft resolution

Effects of atomic radiation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 913 (X) of 3 December 1955, by which it established the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and its subsequent resolutions on the subject, in which, *inter alia*, it requested the Scientific Committee to continue its work,

Concerned about the potentially harmful effects on present and future generations resulting from the levels of ionizing radiation to which humankind and the environment are exposed,

Conscious of the continuing need to examine and compile information about the levels of exposure to ionizing radiation and to analyse its effects on humankind and the environment, and conscious also of the increasing volume, complexity and diversity of that information,

Acknowledging the concerns about the radiological consequences of nuclear accidents and other incidents involving ionizing radiation exposure,

Reaffirming the desirability of the Scientific Committee continuing its work, and welcoming the increased commitment of States members of the Committee,

Emphasizing the vital need for sufficient, assured and predictable funding, as well as the efficient management of the work of the secretariat of the Scientific Committee to arrange for its annual sessions and coordinate the development of documents based on scientific reviews of the exposures to sources of ionizing radiation and its effects on human health and the environment,

Recognizing the importance of the scientific work of the Scientific Committee and the possible need to carry out unforeseen additional work, such as after nuclear accidents,



Considering that the high quality of the work and the scientific rigour of the Scientific Committee need to be maintained in the future,

Recognizing the importance of disseminating the findings of the Scientific Committee to the scientific community and the public, and widely publicizing scientific knowledge about ionizing radiation, and recalling in that context principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,¹

Noting the need to allocate sufficient and predictable resources to support the Scientific Committee, while recognizing the importance of voluntary contributions, both in kind and to the general trust fund established by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to support the work of the Committee,

Recognizing that sufficient staffing of the secretariat is essential to support the work of the Scientific Committee,

Welcoming the recruitment process for the fixed-term positions approved by the General Assembly,

Understanding that a continued freeze on appointments in respect of these fixed-term positions will impair the operation of the Scientific Committee and delay the delivery of its programme of work,

Commending the secretariat of the Scientific Committee for its ongoing efforts to ensure the sustainable and effective work of the Committee, and encouraging all States in a position to do so to provide support to the secretariat of the Committee,

Recalling the support expressed by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organization for the work of the Scientific Committee on producing the most reliable and comprehensive review of sources of scientific information about the levels and effects of ionizing radiation, including at low levels, which continue to provide the scientific basis for the development of international safety standards and for the identification of priorities for research in several areas of ionizing radiation sciences,

Recognizing the importance of close cooperation between the Scientific Committee and other relevant international organizations, and noting the research framework agreement signed with the European Commission and the memorandums of understanding signed with the International Commission on Radiological Protection and with the Nuclear Energy Agency of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development,

1. *Commends the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, on its seventieth anniversary, for the valuable contribution that it has made since its inception to improve knowledge and understanding of the levels, effects and risks of exposure to ionizing radiation and for fulfilling its mandate with scientific authority and independence of judgment;*

2. *Reaffirms the decision to maintain the present functions and independent role of the Scientific Committee;*

3. *Re-emphasizes the need for the Scientific Committee to hold regular sessions on an annual basis so that its report will be able to reflect the latest developments and findings in the field of ionizing radiation and thereby provide updated information for dissemination among all States;*

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

4. *Notes with appreciation* the work of the Scientific Committee, takes note of the report on its seventy-second session,² and encourages the Committee, over its coming sessions, to continue to work towards implementing strategies to support its long-term efforts to serve the scientific community, as well as wider audiences;

5. *Welcomes* the decisions on the outlined future programme of work for the period 2025–2029, provided that sufficient resources are available in the secretariat, that will serve to guide the priority areas of the Scientific Committee;

6. *Notes with appreciation* the implementation of the 2022 strategy to improve collection, analysis and dissemination of data on exposure to ionizing radiation aimed at seeking widespread participation in the Scientific Committee's surveys and ensuring that future surveys adapt to changing data sources on the use of ionizing radiation across the world;

7. *Welcomes* the extension of the mandate of the ad hoc working group on effects and mechanisms and the ad hoc working group on sources and exposure to assist the Scientific Committee in supporting and monitoring progress in the implementation of its programme of work, to evaluate new scientific developments relevant to the Committee and to monitor the implementation of the updated strategy for data collection;

8. *Supports* the Scientific Committee in continuing to conduct its programme of work of scientific review and assessment on behalf of the General Assembly, and welcomes further progress, in particular on its evaluation on effects of ionizing radiation on the nervous system, and recognizes the decision of the Committee to defer the completion of the evaluation to 2029;

9. *Welcomes* the two substantive scientific reports adopted by the Scientific Committee during its seventy-second session, on epidemiological studies of ionizing radiation and cancer and on the evaluation of effects of ionizing radiation on the circulatory system, and looks forward to the timely publication of the supporting scientific annexes thereto as their outcomes are relied upon by other international organizations;

10. *Also welcomes* the initiation of the evaluation of effects of ionizing radiation on the eye in 2025, and the planned commencement of the data collection for the evaluation on medical exposure in 2026, subject to the availability of resources in the secretariat;

11. *Recognizes* the intention of the Scientific Committee to postpone to its seventy-third session the decision on the starting date of the upcoming evaluations on effects of ionizing radiation on the immune system and on levels of radiation exposure to and effects on wildlife populations and ecosystems, subject to the availability of resources in the secretariat;

12. *Requests* the Scientific Committee to continue its work, including its important activities to disseminate knowledge of the levels, effects and risks of ionizing radiation from all sources, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session;

13. *Acknowledges* the importance of sharing data with the Scientific Committee as appropriate, and the central role played by the increasing number of National Contact Persons and Alternate National Contact Persons in order to coordinate data collection at the country level and to cooperate with technical experts to complete Committee questionnaires;

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Eightieth Session, Supplement No. 46 (A/80/46).*

14. *Encourages* National Contact Persons and their alternates to take part in the Scientific Committee's global surveys and submit available scientific data on radiation exposure of patients, workers and the general public as appropriate;
15. *Recalls* the strategy of the Scientific Committee to improve data collection, encourages in this regard Member States, the organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations concerned to provide further relevant data about levels, effects and risks of exposure to ionizing radiation from various sources, which would greatly help in the preparation of future reports of the Committee to the General Assembly, and encourages relevant organizations to further collaborate with the secretariat on arrangements for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on radiation exposures of patients, workers and the general public;
16. *Welcomes* the planned development of an online platform for collecting data on the exposure of patients, workers and the general public, subject to the availability of resources in the secretariat, and urges Member States to take part in the Scientific Committee's planned global survey on medical exposure and to nominate National Contact Persons to facilitate coordination of the collection and submission of data on the radiation exposure of patients;
17. *Invites* the Scientific Committee to continue its consultations with scientists and experts from interested Member States in the process of preparing its future scientific reports, and requests the secretariat to continue to facilitate such consultations;
18. *Welcomes*, in this context, the readiness of Member States to provide the Scientific Committee with relevant information on the levels and effects of ionizing radiation, and invites the Committee to analyse and give due consideration to such information, particularly in the light of its own findings;
19. *Requests* the secretariat to monitor the timely publication of approved reports and to strive to publish them within 12 months of their approval;
20. *Encourages* the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, and other international bodies, to continue to use the Scientific Committee's evaluations as the scientific basis for the establishment of international safety standards;
21. *Welcomes* the Scientific Committee's outreach strategy for the period 2025–2029, focusing on strengthening the Committee's input to the science-policy interface within and outside the extensive United Nations network, enhancing engagement with scientific, diplomatic, academic and professional communities, subject to the availability of resources in the secretariat and encouraging the involvement of young professionals in the work of the Committee;
22. *Notes* the online publication of the United Nations Environment Programme booklet entitled *Radiation: Effects and Sources* in 16 different languages, and encourages its wide dissemination and periodic update, as appropriate, on the basis of the most recent Scientific Committee reports and annexes;
23. *Welcomes* the ongoing work of the secretariat to publish the website of the Scientific Committee in all official languages of the United Nations;
24. *Requests* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue, within existing United Nations resources, to provide the secretariat for the Scientific Committee, while respecting the Committee's independent mandate and methods of operation, and to disseminate its findings to Member States, the scientific community and the public and to ensure that the administrative measures in place are appropriate

so that the secretariat is able to adequately and efficiently service the Committee in a predictable and sustainable manner;

25. *Requests* the Secretary-General to assess possible options for servicing arrangements for the secretariat in the framework of the UN80 Initiative and to keep Member States informed;

26. *Encourages* the Scientific Committee to stand ready to carry out unplanned additional work, in strict compliance with its mandate, and in coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency and other relevant international organizations, as appropriate, such as after nuclear accidents, that could include those in the context of military actions or natural disasters;

27. *Welcomes* the augmentation of the regular budget of the Scientific Committee in 2023 as decided after the seventy-eighth session of the General Assembly, allowing in particular to sustain the capacities of the secretariat to support the Committee, and acknowledges the temporary hiring freeze, due to the ongoing liquidity crisis faced by the United Nations;

28. *Expresses strong expectations* that, subject to measures required to manage the liquidity constraints, the regular budget of the Scientific Committee will remain in full, and that the United Nations Environment Programme will finalize the recruitment process for the fixed-term positions allocated to the secretariat, to implement the Committee's programme of work as referred to above;

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen support for the secretariat, as decided in 2023, in order to adequately and efficiently provide service to the Scientific Committee in a predictable and sustainable manner, and to effectively facilitate the use of the invaluable expertise offered to the Committee by its members, and to report to the General Assembly at its eighty-first session on these issues;

30. *Understands* that, as the budgetary situation becomes increasingly challenging, extrabudgetary support continues to be crucial for the timely implementation of the programme of work to deliver on the mandate of the Scientific Committee, which would require the provision of additional professional and administrative secretariat services;

31. *Acknowledges* the contributions to the general trust fund by Member States and the contribution of cost-free experts and technical officers;

32. *Encourages* Member States in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the general trust fund established by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme and also to make contributions in kind, in order to support the work of the Scientific Committee, and the dissemination of its findings, in a sustainable manner.
