

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Chairman: Mr. DJALAL ABDUH (Iran).

AGENDA ITEM 57

Effects of atomic radiation (A/3614 and Add.1, A/C.1/L.183, A/C.1/L.187/Rev.1, A/C.1/L.188, A/C.1/L.189) (concluded)

1. The CHAIRMAN announced that, as a result of consultations between various delegations, a new draft resolution (A/C.1/L.189) would be placed before the Committee. He proposed that the meeting should be suspended until the text of the new draft was circulated.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.50 a.m.

2. Mr. WADSWORTH (United States of America) thanked the delegations which had worked to find an acceptable solution to the problem before the Committee. The sponsors of the eight-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.187/Rev.1) would not insist that their draft should be put to a vote, since all of them were among the sponsors of the new text submitted to the Committee (A/C.1/L.189).

3. His delegation would disregard certain arguments of various representatives who had impugned the sincerity of the United States or had quoted incorrect scientific data. It would merely emphasize that in presenting and supporting the new draft resolution, the United States was showing its interest in the question of radiation and its keen desire to extend the frontiers of knowledge in that field.

4. Mr. DAVID (Czechoslovakia) said that, judging by the discussions that had taken place thus far, the idea that the United Nations should devote more attention to the effects of atomic radiation was viewed favourably by most delegations. Differences of opinion turned upon the steps that should be taken forthwith.

5. Many delegations considered that the danger confronting the human race as a result of the increase in radio-activity was an extremely serious one. It was therefore essential to make a detailed study of the probable consequences of that increase to the present and future generations. That need would be met by an international conference, which would supplement the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

6. Several delegations felt that the Scientific Committee should express its views on whether such a con-

ference should be convened. It had also been said that the Scientific Committee should be informed of the arguments and proposals put forward in the First Committee during the debate on the effects of atomic radiation and that the Scientific Committee should state its views on those matters in the report which it would submit to the General Assembly at its thirteenth session.

7. The sixteen-Power draft resolution (A/C.1/L.189) had been based on those considerations. If it was adopted, the Secretary-General and the Scientific Committee would have to take into account the various proposals submitted to the First Committee, including the Czechoslovak draft resolution (A/C.1/L.183). In those circumstances, the Czechoslovak delegation would vote in favour of the new draft resolution (A/C.1/L.189) and would not press for a vote on its own draft resolution.

8. Mr. HAGIWARA (Japan) welcomed the submission of a new draft resolution which the Committee would be able to adopt unanimously. He pointed out that all but two of the members of the Scientific Committee were among the sponsors of that draft. He also noted with satisfaction that his idea of widening scientific activities in the field of the effects of atomic radiation had been incorporated in paragraph 3.

9. Certain representatives had attributed ulterior political motives to the proposal for convening an international conference. The reason for that attitude undoubtedly lay in the fact that the Czechoslovak proposal for such a conference had come directly before the First Committee. If the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Scientific Committee, should take up the proposal with a view to submitting it to the General Assembly at its thirteenth session, the First Committee would probably be more inclined to accept it.

10. Since the Scientific Committee would be informed of all the proposals made, he did not press for inclusion in the new draft resolution of the various types of information enumerated in the first of the Japanese amendments (A/C.1/L.188) to the eight-Power text.

11. Mr. LALL (India) announced that Austria had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution (A/C.1/L.189). The turn which the discussions had taken made it increasingly clear that the matter should be carefully considered. Paragraph 3 of the new draft resolution was meant to meet that need.

12. The various proposals which would not be voted upon at the present session would come before the General Assembly at its thirteenth session, when the Secretary-General would submit to it the report which he had drafted in consultation with the Scientific Committee.

13. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the sponsors of the various draft resolutions circulated prior to the

sixteen-Power draft resolution were not pressing for a vote by the Committee on their proposals.

14. He put to the vote the draft resolution submitted by Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Yugoslavia (A/C.1/L.189).

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

15. The CHAIRMAN was gratified to note that the draft resolution had been adopted unanimously and hoped that the spirit of conciliation would continue to prevail when the Committee considered the other items on its agenda.

16. Mr. SHAHA (Nepal) was happy to note that there was general agreement on the need to study the effects of atomic radiation objectively with a view to taking every possible measure to protect man and his environment. Although there was no unanimity of opinion regarding the extent of the dangers of atomic radiation, all delegations were agreed at least that the rise in the radio-active level in the world was deleterious to human health and well-being.

17. After hearing the various speakers who had participated in the debate, his delegation had concluded that that was a matter which should be approached neither in a spirit of panic nor of self-complacency. It also believed that the Scientific Committee had already accomplished important work. The report it would submit in 1958 would greatly help to enlighten public opinion on the true effects of atomic radiation.

18. A question such as that of the effects of atomic radiation was of a purely scientific nature and should be studied objectively and apart from any political or other consideration. His delegation believed that the First Committee had acted very wisely in adopting unanimously a draft resolution which was acceptable to all its members and hoped that the draft resolution would stimulate effort and enterprise in the study of the effects of atomic radiation, a problem of concern to all peoples.

19. Mr. ILLUECA (Panama) stated that Panama, together with the other Latin-American countries, was deeply concerned with the effects of atomic radiation upon man and his environment.

20. The delegation of Panama was most gratified to note that, through the efforts of the Indian representative, the sponsors of the various draft resolutions and amendments had agreed upon a single text. The dangers which humanity faced at present were no less great than those which the General Assembly had sought to avert when it adopted resolution 913 (X) at its tenth session. They were more serious than could be expressed in any resolution; studies published by experts of various nationalities who examined the problem from the purely scientific standpoint were confronting the reader with a terrifying reality, the least indifference to which would be a betrayal of humanity.

21. As many representatives had stated during the debate, the question was closely bound up with disarmament, and the increase in artificial radio-activity was mainly due to nuclear tests. It had to be admitted then that persons who ardently hoped for an agreement to suspend nuclear tests, for the protection of their descendents and of children throughout the world, were

right in doing so. But before such an agreement could be reached and before the armaments race could be arrested there would have to be mutual confidence in all peoples; that was an indispensable requirement for a full agreement that would contain guarantees for all parties.

22. The delegation of Panama noted with satisfaction that the sponsors of the drafts which had led to the text which the Committee had just adopted were all members of the Scientific Committee. That fact endowed the draft resolution with considerable scientific and moral significance. The first step towards restoring the confidence which humanity so greatly needed had perhaps been taken. The delegation of Panama had therefore voted for that draft.

Order of discussion of agenda items (A/C.1/792 and Add.1) (concluded) 1/

23. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of the item entitled "Effects of atomic radiation" [item 57*] and that, in accordance with the decision it had taken at its 894th meeting, it would take up the Korean question [item 23*] at its next meeting.

24. He invited the Committee to decide on the order in which it would take up the remaining items on the agenda.

25. Mr. ENTEZAM (Iran) stated that the delegations of the African and Asian countries had unanimously decided to propose that the Committee should consider the question of West Irian [item 62*] immediately after the Korean question and then take up the question of Algeria [item 59*]. If that proposal was accepted, the question of West Irian would become item 4 on the Committee's agenda, and the question of Algeria would become item 5.

26. He wished to add that, in the opinion of the delegations on whose behalf he was speaking, all the questions submitted for study by the Committee were important and urgent, but there were certain factors which had to be taken into consideration, such as the available time and the arrangements made by the parties concerned.

27. Other delegations would no doubt wish to submit proposals on the other items to be considered.

28. Mr. DE LA COLINA (Mexico) proposed, on behalf of several delegations which were directly concerned, that after the two questions just mentioned by the representative of Iran, the Committee should consider the Cyprus question [item 58*] as item 6 on its agenda and the question entitled "Declaration concerning the peaceful coexistence of States" [item 66*] as item 7.

29. Mr. STRATOS (Greece) believed that, in accordance with rule 100 of the rules of procedure, the Committee should examine all the questions which the General Assembly had allocated to it and devote the necessary amount of time to each question. The order in which the Committee took up the items on its agenda was important only if a delegation had weighty reasons for requesting priority for a specific item. The Greek

1/Resumed from the 894th meeting.

*/Indicates the item number on the agenda of the General Assembly.

delegation did not feel that it was in a position to withstand the friendly pressure that had been placed on it to the effect that the Committee should consider the questions of West Irian and Algeria before the Cyprus question. However, in order to ensure the observance of the afore-mentioned rule, the Greek delegation requested that not more than a week should be spent in the consideration of each of the remaining agenda items.

30. Mr. BELAUNDE (Peru) noted with great satisfaction the spirit of compromise in the Committee, which would no doubt promote the success of its work. The order in which the Committee took up the items which the General Assembly had allocated to it did not represent a scale of values, for all the items were important. The question involved was rather one of timeliness and perhaps of urgency.

31. He therefore supported the proposals of the representatives of Iran and Mexico and hoped that the representative of the Soviet Union would not oppose the suggested order of priority. It would be most auspicious if the Committee could complete its work with a discussion on coexistence that would lead to an agreement with the Soviet Union.

32. The CHAIRMAN said that, if there were no objections, the Committee would take up the points remaining after the consideration of the Korean question in the following order: (4) The question of West Irian; (5) The question of Algeria; (6) The Cyprus question; (7) Declaration concerning the peaceful coexistence of States.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.