



STATEMENT BY MR. SHRIPAD YASSO NAIK, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION, ON AGENDA ITEM 30: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION IN THE FOURTH COMMITTEE [SPECIAL POLITICAL AND DECOLONIZATION] OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 29, 2007

Mr. Chairman,

India welcomes the election of the distinguished representatives of Canada, Germany and Egypt as Chairman, Vice Chairman and Rapporteur of UNSCEAR for its 56th and 57th session. India reiterates its recognition of the important scientific work of UNSCEAR (United Nations Scientific Committee on Effects of Atomic Radiation) which has immense implications for the health of thousands of occupational workers and people undergoing radiation treatment, the general public as well as the persons who are living in high natural radiation areas and last but not least, our environment.

India is appreciative of UNSCEAR's work as reflected in the completion of the review of the 5 scientific annexes i.e. 'Epidemiological studies of radiation and cancer', 'Epidemiological evaluation of cardiovascular disease and other non-cancer diseases following radiation exposure', 'Non-targeted and delayed effects of exposure to ionizing radiation', 'Effects of ionizing radiation on the immune system' and 'Sources to effects assessment of radon in work places and homes'.

We note that UNSCEAR is also in the process of completing its review of additional issues such as 'Radiation exposure of public and workers', 'Accidental radiation exposure', 'Exposure arising from medical uses of radiation', 'Effects of radiation on non-human biota' and 'Health effects due to the Chernobyl accident' etc. UNSCEAR has to verify the authenticity of scientific data, critically apply statistical analyses and develop models for that

purpose. Often, there are no proper systems for collection of such data in many countries. In this connection, it may be pointed out that though the use of radiation for medical purposes such as X-ray examinations, computerized tomography and nuclear medicine is on the rise in many countries, proper documentation of patient or attendees' exposure and monitoring of these facilities is not being done. It must be borne in mind that today medical radiation exposure contributes next only to the natural radiation exposure.

The biological and health effects of natural radiation exposure require continuous monitoring and international agencies should step in to ensure critical assessment of these effects. In view of the uncertainties regarding the biological effects of low dose and low dose rate radiation exposure, natural laboratories like the one existing in Kerala's south western coast should be the focus of detailed scientific enquiry. There is as yet no evidence of any significant deleterious effect of this enhanced natural exposure. Unfortunately, only deleterious effects attract public attention. Therefore, such data, though very important to radiation risk evaluation for nuclear power plants, is ignored.

The dogmatic adherence to the Linear No Threshold (LNT) hypothesis as a corner stone for radiation protection, has put an unnecessary economic burden on the increasing number of countries that are seeking to develop nuclear electricity generation as a cleaner and cheaper (in the long run) option. It is high time that these regimes are revisited.

Central to this reevaluation of the LNT is the "attributability" of radiation effects. Biological and health effects are very complex. More than one type of agent and signaling processes may trigger the same effect eg. cancer. The non-radiation causes such as smoking, diet etc may synergize or add to a marginal radiation effect. Therefore, the analysis of confounding factors is very critical and how much of an effect can be attributed to radiation exposure is a matter of serious discussion. India understands that a debate and discussion has started in the UNSCEAR on this aspect. India would also desire that the cancer centric consideration of deleterious health effects of radiation exposure should not overshadow the other possible effects such as congenital malformations, in utero effects and cardiovascular effects etc. in deciding the exposure limits.

In order to engage highly qualified and eminent scientists in different areas of radiation effect assessment as consultants to prepare the draft documents, UNSCEAR needs adequate budgetary support. The organization of the annual scientific sessions of UNSCEAR which are essential to fulfil its

mandate also require adequate funding. It is, therefore, essential that funding of UNSCEAR through UN be enhanced.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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