

Statement by Ms. Lenka Mihalikova,
Representative of Slovakia to Fourth Committee
of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

“Effects of Atomic Radiation”

Thank you, Madame Chair.

Slovakia welcomes the latest report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) providing us with an overview of activities and efforts of the Committee in the field of its unique expertise. Once again, it proved the unparalleled role of the Committee as a trusted global authority for assessing the effects of radiation on human health and environment. We note that the 58th session of the Committee held in Vienna from 23 to 27 May 2011, was conducted in efficient and effective manner with commendable results.

Slovakia fully supports the Committee in its task of reviewing the sources and effects of ionizing radiation on human health and the environment, and affirms its preparedness to provide all relevant new information to the Committee for its examination.

Nuclear energy is still an important source of power for many countries. Through careful evaluation of its positive and negative aspects we can learn to understand it better and to explore ways of making it safer. With regard to the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, which affected our country too, we take note with satisfaction of the latest report on this issue.

We appreciate the active engagement of the Committee in assessing the impact of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power reactors on health and environment and publishing the updated information on its website. We convey our sympathy to the people of Japan affected by this accident. We believe that the work of the Committee will help to evaluate further risks for its population.

It is a well known fact, that children are more affected by radiation than adults. Therefore we welcome the decision of the Committee to concentrate in the near future on assessing radiation effects and risks, in particular for children.

Understanding the effects of low dosage exposure will help to formulate international standards and protect the public and professionals. It will contribute to making informed decisions and risks awareness and in some cases to our ability to eliminate them. We welcome the scientific report on low dose radiation effects on health, including a summary of the Committees detailed findings on the mechanisms of radiation actions at low doses.

My delegation welcomes the work of the Committee on a new strategy for improving data collection and we encourage member states and organizations of the United Nations System and other relevant organizations to provide data on risks and effects from various sources of radiation to the Committee. We also encourage the Committee, with assistance of relevant organizations and governments, to share the information not only within scientific community, but also to make it available and understandable to the general public.

Slovak experts have been participating in the work of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation since its establishment. The main

but not the exclusive field of expertise of our scientists is the effects of radiation related to nuclear energy production in nuclear power plants. Slovakia was appointed to fill the seat vacated by former Czechoslovakia. The continuing good cooperation and participation of experts from both successor countries as members of one delegation could serve as an example of how to approach the question of membership of the Committee. We are of the view that for a long time the question of membership has been taking much energy needed for more substantial work. Therefore we are ready to support any cost neutral solution which will help to achieve the wide consensus on this issue without compromising the efficiency of the work of the Committee.

I thank you Madame Chair