

since 1993, causing serious soil and water pollution. Reportedly the damage could not be properly assessed because of lack of funding to undertake such an exercise. The government replied, stating: environmental protection is taken seriously and strict limits are imposed on the dumping and incineration of toxic wastes and on environmental pollution; since March 1991, the Environmental Protection Bureau and the General Customs Office, among other authorities, have promulgated regulations such as a circular concerning strict controls on the transfer of toxic substances from abroad into China and temporary provisions governing environmental protection during the import of toxic substances; through these regulations the government closely controls imports of toxic substances from abroad and pollution of the environment; the importation of a small number of recyclable materials is authorized only after an appraisal of the environmental risk and when the approval of the Environmental Protection Bureau has been secured; any transfer of materials to China without such approval constitutes illegal importation; and, such cases, when discovered, entail removal of the materials from the country and severe penalties for those responsible.

In response to the specific case raised by the Special Rapporteur (SR), the government noted: between 1993 and 1995, the Hualong ("Splendid") Chemicals Corporation in Jiangxi province illegally imported over 40,000 tons of mixed plastic waste from Germany; the waste polluted the local soil and water, and adversely affected people's health; the Environmental Protection Bureau dealt severely with this case; part of the waste was returned to Germany; and the remainder was appropriately managed under the supervision of the local Department of the Environment.

With regard to information contained in the SR's report to the 1997 Commission on Human Rights (E/CN.4/1997/19, para. 39), the government stated that the National Environment Protection Agency had never approved the shipment of two containers of computer scrap from Australia, nor did regulations allow waste to be imported from abroad in order to be burned.

Violence against women, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/54, Sections I.A, III.C)

In commentary on violence against women in time of armed conflict, the report refers to the case of a 20-year-old nun in Tibet who was serving a five-year sentence after having participated in a demonstration in 1992. Information indicated: she was beaten, along with other imprisoned nuns, by prison guards after they sang nationalist songs; prison medical staff gave her medication which left her unconscious; she was later diagnosed with tuberculoma and died; and even though the death occurred in custody the authorities did not investigate.



COOK ISLANDS

Date of Admission to UN: Cook Islands is not a member of the UN.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

Land and People: Cook Islands has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Rights of the Child

Acceded: 6 June 1997.

Cook Islands' initial report is due 5 June 1999.

Reservations and Declarations: Articles 2, 10 and 37.



CYPRUS

Date of admission to UN: 20 September 1960.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

Land and People: Cyprus has submitted a revised core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.28/Rev.1) for use by the treaty bodies. The report prepared by the government contains demographic and statistical data and information on the general political structure and the general legal framework within which human rights are protected. The 1960 Constitution is the central instrument that recognizes and protects human rights and, in Part II, incorporates and expands upon the Universal Declaration and the European Convention on Human Rights. The remedies available to individuals who claim that their rights have been violated include: right of petition and hierarchical recourse; recourse to the Supreme Court; challenges to the constitutionality of any law or decision; civil action for compensation, restitution and declaratory judgement; private criminal prosecution; right of appeal in both civil and criminal cases; habeas corpus and other forms of writs; in response to serious allegations, a decision by the Council of Ministers to establish a Commission of Inquiry; and, complaints to the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) who has competence to investigate grievances by an individual that the Administration has violated the individual's rights or acted contrary to law or in circumstances amounting to mal-administration. In cases where domestic remedies have been exhausted, the optional procedures established under various international human rights instruments may be used. Cyprus has also accepted the compulsory jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights and the optional clause of compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. International conventions ratified or acceded to are incorporated into municipal law and have, as from their publication in the Official Gazette, superior force to any