

the umbilical cord of a newborn baby instead of unnatural objects, like scissors; and, the hanging of the dried umbilical cord "pusod" of a newborn baby beneath the doorway or window in the belief that this will keep the infant safe from accident or harm.

The government acknowledged the need to modify the lifestyle of indigenous cultural communities while at the same time preserving their culture. The Office of the Northern Cultural Communities, the Office of the Southern Cultural Communities and the Office of Muslim Affairs have been established in order to promote and protect their rights to health. The report notes that these offices have agreed that some traditional practices are harmless and consistent with the promotion of the indigenous people's health. The health programmes initiated by the offices do not have as an objective the elimination of traditional practices having a harmless effect on the health of women and children and have led to a significant improvement in the way in which women's and children's health are viewed as compared with the traditional and limited focus on maternal health alone, since the programmes meet the needs of women at all stages of their life cycle and do not simply focus on maternal health.

The government also referred to its Plan of Action for Children (PPAC) 2000 and Beyond which aims to: reduce the number of infants, children and mothers who die each year; reduce malnutrition among children; and, provide safe water and toilet facilities to all. PPAC areas of concern are, among others: family care and alternative parental arrangements; basic health and nutrition; welfare and social security; and safe environment.

The report notes that the Department of Health (DOH) is responsible for providing assistance to children necessary for their survival and normal development, in addition to other benefits provided for under existing laws. The promotion and maintenance of the child's health through strengthened safe motherhood, breastfeeding, and improved weaning, universal immunization, control of diarrhoeal diseases and respiratory infections, and other existing public health programmes are areas handled. Other measures have been taken through additional offices and departments to coordinate programmes and projects relating to women's health with the aim of institutionalizing an integrated approach to women's health service delivery.

#### *Other Reports*

##### **Detention of international civil servants, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/25, paras. 3 & 79)**

The report of the Secretary-General notes that a Philippines national with the UN mission in Iraq was killed in an explosion in December 1995 while on posting.

##### **Environment, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/18, Section I, D)**

The report of the Secretary-General included information provided by the government setting out various constitutional provisions related to the environment such as the right to a balanced and healthful ecology and the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands, and their economic, social and cultural well-being. The government stated that, within the international context, there is a need to

identify or provide mechanisms to monitor and assess the implementation of human rights and environmental concerns.

##### **HIV/AIDS, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/37, paras. 6)**

The report of the Secretary-General on the Second International Consultation on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights (Geneva, September 1996) refers to a background paper prepared for the consultation by the Alternative Law Research and Development Center (ALTERLAW) in the Philippines. The group was asked to prepare the paper identifying the most important human rights principles and concerns in the context of HIV/AIDS, as well as concrete measures that states could take to protect HIV-related human rights.

##### **Indigenous and tribal peoples, Memorandum by the ILO: (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1997/25, paras. 27-29)**

The information provided included reference to: a national workshop in May 1996 which was held to review, jointly with selected indigenous organizations and relevant government agencies, existing legislation and policies so as to identify areas for reform, and to devise mechanisms and strategies to enhance the participation of indigenous representatives in national decision-making; a series of focus group discussions to review the impact of past and present environmental impact assessment (EIA) approaches and practices on the lives and the environment of indigenous communities and contribute to the formulation of a draft policy outlining an EIA which is friendly to indigenous communities and takes into account their characteristics, specific needs and rights; and, the collection of data, through participatory action-oriented research methodologies, on the most common practices of a number of indigenous peoples in the Philippines in a broad range of domains, including fishing, farming, traditional handicraft production, and land and natural resource management, to assist in the preparation of ancestral domain management plans.

##### **International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, Report of the HCHR to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/101, para. 29)**

The report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights includes a summary of information from the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its interregional programme to support self-reliance on the part of indigenous and tribal communities through cooperatives and other self-help organizations. The report notes that the programme has been operating since 1993 and has 17 pilot projects in three countries, including the Philippines.

##### **Migrant workers, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/65, para. 4)**

The report of the Secretary-General on the status of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families notes that the Philippines has ratified the Convention.

##### **Minimum humanitarian standards, Report of the S-G to the CHR: (E/CN.4/1997/77, Sections I & III)**

The report of the Secretary-General refers to information provided by the government, noting two bills related to national emergencies, the first on disaster preparedness and prevention and the second on the placement of one-half of the