

session. The government noted that a draft of the report was submitted for comment to the government's Advisory Committee on the Human Rights Working Group on UN-related Issues. It also referred to a visit to Norway, from 27 June to 6 July 1993, by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The report prepared by the government contains information on, *inter alia*: special investigative bodies (SIB) which were established to ensure that criminal charges against police are investigated impartially and independently; revisions to the Criminal Procedures Act in April 1995; the General Civil Penal Code; provisions in the Immigration Act and the Extradition Act 1975; cooperation with the International Tribunals on the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; child welfare institutions and the Child Welfare Act; the mandate and functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman; the Compensation for Damages Act 1969; the treatment of mentally retarded persons and the Act relating to Social Services; detention of asylum seekers; and, the incorporation of international human rights conventions into domestic law.

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (CAT/C/NOR) welcomed: the government's efforts to secure respect for human rights, including the prohibition of torture, in law and in practice; the creation and constant development of special bodies such as Special Investigation Bodies; and Norway's generous donation to the UN Voluntary Fund for the Victims of Torture.

Concern was expressed over the fact that the offence of torture had not yet been introduced into the penal system, including a definition of torture in conformity with article 1 of the Convention, and the use of solitary confinement, particularly as a preventive measure during pre-trial detention.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- incorporate into domestic law provisions on the crime of torture, in conformity with article 1 of the Convention; and
- abolish the use of solitary confinement — except in exceptional circumstances, *inter alia*, when the safety of persons or property is involved — particularly during pre-trial detention, or at least ensure that its use is strictly and specifically regulated by law and that judicial supervision is strengthened.

## THEMATIC REPORTS

### Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

**Sale of children, child prostitution, child pornography, Special Rapporteur on the:**  
(E/CN.4/1998/101, para. 19)

The report refers to a 40-nation ministerial conference that was hosted by the government in October 1997 —

together with the International Labour Organization and UNICEF — on child labour. The Special Rapporteur noted that the participants agreed that prostitution and pornography, along with the persistent exploitation of children in slave-like and bonded conditions in hazardous and arduous work, constitute the most intolerable forms of child labour, with as many as 250 million young victims worldwide.



## PORTUGAL

**Date of admission to UN:** 14 December 1955.

### TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

**Land and People:** Portugal has submitted a core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.73) for use by the treaty bodies. The report prepared by the government includes demographic data as well as information on the general political structure, the courts, the legal framework for the protection of human rights, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Women's Equality and Rights Commission.

In Portugal human rights are protected by the Constitution, which consistently upholds the principles of equality before the law and non-discrimination, and ordinary legislation. Under article 8 of the Constitution international law is fully incorporated into domestic law and both the Constitution and laws are interpreted and implemented in harmony with the Universal Declaration. Any legislation that contravenes the Declaration is prohibited. The status of treaty law, however, is considered to be below the Constitution but above ordinary legislation. National institutions for ensuring respect for human rights include the Office of the Provedor de Justiça (Ombudsman), the Women's Equality and Rights Commission, the Attorney-General's Department, the Bureau for Documentation and Comparative Law, and the Commission on the Promotion of Human Rights and the Prevention of Educational Inequalities. For a number of years systematic training in the prevention of human rights violations has been carried out at the National College of Magistrates and the Bar, and for police forces, the prison service and the medical profession. The Ministry of Justice has also launched a programme entitled "the citizen and justice"; which is aimed at bringing transparency to the administration of justice and making access to justice easier by setting up reception, information and legal advice offices.

### Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Signed: 7 October 1976; ratified: 31 July 1978.

Portugal's third periodic report (E/1994/104/Add.20) has been submitted and is pending for the Committee's April 2000 session; the fourth periodic report is due 30 June 2001.