

E/1990/5/Add.43
20 September 1999

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1999

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON ECONOMIC,
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Initial reports submitted by States parties
under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant

Addendum
CHINA:

REPORT OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA */

[4 June 1999]

*/ The information submitted by China in accordance with the guidelines concerning the initial part of reports of States parties is contained in the core document (HRI/CORE/1/Add.21/Rev.1).

The annexes referred to in the present report are available for consultation in the secretariat.

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Science and technology

Policy on promotion of science and technology

605. Article 139 of the Basic Law provides that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on science and technology and protect by law achievements in scientific and technological research, patents, discoveries and inventions.

The role of the Government

606. The Government encourages the development of high technology and high value-added business in Hong Kong. It facilitates technology transfer and development through the provision of appropriate infrastructure, human resources, funding support and other programmes. Infrastructural support includes the provisions of industrial estates and such institutions as the Hong Kong Productivity Council 6/ and the Industrial Technology Centre 7/. Projects currently in train include a Science Park 8/ and a second Industrial Technology Centre. Funding support is provided mainly through the Industrial Support Fund 9/, the Applied Research Fund 10/ and the Services Support Fund 11/.

607. The Government also engages in international science and technology exchanges through its participation in the Industrial Science and Technology Working Group of the Asia-Pacific Economic

Cooperation and the Science and Technology Task Force of the Pacific Economic Co-operation Council.

Role of the Research Grants Council

608. The Research Grants Council was established in 1991 to advise the Government, through the University Grants Committee, on the needs of the higher education institutions in Hong Kong in respect of academic research, including the identification of priority areas. The intention was to develop a research base adequate for the maintenance of academic vigour and pertinent to the needs of Hong Kong. The Council provides grants for research projects on a competitive basis. Between 1991-1992 and 1997-1998, the funds available to the Council for this purpose have increased from \$100 million to \$423 million. The grants are allocated to research projects divided broadly into four major disciplines: Engineering; Biology and Medicine; Physical Science; Humanities, Social Science and Business Studies. The distribution is roughly 38 per cent; 27 per cent; 16 per cent and 19 per cent respectively.

609. The Council's Co-operative Research Centres Scheme - established in 1993 - encourages university-industry collaboration in research. It also operates joint research schemes with the United Kingdom, Germany and France in partnership with the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service and the French National Centre for Scientific Research respectively. These schemes increase academic exchanges and collaboration in research between academics in Hong Kong and their counterparts overseas, so helping to develop a local culture of research and enquiry.

Prevention of the use of scientific/technological developments for purposes contrary to the enjoyment of human rights

610. As explained in paragraphs 405 to 406 of the previous report, the Government is aware of the need to prevent the use of scientific and technical progress for purposes contrary to the enjoyment of human rights. Article 3 of the BOR - which gives effect in domestic law to article 7 of the ICCPR - provides that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, it prohibits the subjection of persons to medical or scientific experimentation without their free consent. Additionally, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment applies to the HKSAR: our report under that Convention is to be submitted to the Committee against Torture as part of China's third report.

Data privacy protection

611. Developments in information technology and the resulting widespread usage of computers and telecommunication equipment mean that personal data can now easily be collected, accessed and processed. This poses a threat to the individual's right to privacy in respect of personal data. As part of his statutory functions, the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data - an independent statutory authority appointed under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance of August 1995 12/ - has been conducting studies on the impact of such developments in relation to that right. In this respect, his Office has issued guidelines on the protection of personal data privacy on the Internet.

Council on Reproductive Technology

612. In paragraph 407 of the previous report, we explained that, in 1993, we published for public comment recommendations made by the Committee on Scientifically Assisted Human Reproduction for the regulation of the practice of reproductive technology. At the time of submitting the previous report, legislation was being drafted to establish a Council on Reproductive Technology. This was to be a regulatory, licensing and monitoring body with authority over all medical treatment or scientific intervention directed at assisting human reproduction by artificial means (including in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, sex selection and manipulation of gametes or embryos outside the body). The legislation is now at an advanced stage, pending its enactment, a Provisional Council on Reproductive Technology was appointed in December 1995 to advise on the drafting of the Human Reproductive Technology Bill and of a related Code of Practice. The bill - which will formally establish the Council proper - will be introduced into the Legislative Council in September 1998.

6/ The Hong Kong Productivity Council promotes industrial productivity and the efficient utilization of resources.

7/ The Industrial Technology Centre facilitates the promotion of technological innovation and the application of new technologies in Hong Kong industries.

8/ The Science Park will provide infrastructural support to foster the development of technology-intensive, high value-added industries.

9/ The Industrial Support Fund provides support to industrial projects that are likely to benefit the industrial and technological development of Hong Kong.

10/ The Applied Research Fund provides support to technology ventures and applied research and development activities that have the potential to yield commercially exploitable results.

11/ The Services Support Fund provides financial support for projects that are beneficial to the overall development of Hong Kong as a service centre or that contribute to the further development of one or more service sectors.

12/ See paragraph 307 of ICCPR1 in relation to article 17 of that Covenant.