The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council Resolution 1296 (XIV).

[14 July 1988]

The island of Annobon forms part of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea; it is situated at 1°25' latitude south and 5°36' longitude east of Greenwich, and has an area of approximately 20 square kilometres and a population of 5,000. This island will soon die. The authorities of Equatorial Guinea have signed a contract with a firm in Buckinghamshire, in Great Britain, to dump one million drums of toxic materials annually, for 10 years, on its territory.

Hitherto, the inhabitants of this little dream island have lived in peace, enjoying good climatic and environmental conditions; they have lived on products of land and sea in quasi-idyllic conditions: the water in the rivers and in the Mazaflin lake is pure...

The Government of Equatorial Guinea, by signing this contract, is making this earthly paradise into a hell of toxic and dangerous wastes.
The international community is gravely concerned by these events and the 
scandals which have recently occurred on the African coast of the 
Atlantic Ocean. While a number of Governments have signed agreements with 
firms for the dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes - as has been 
the case in Equatorial Guinea - thus violating the right of the inhabitants to 
life and health, other Governments have discovered on their own territory 
clandestine deposits of such toxic and dangerous products and wastes, dumped 
by firms which have thus violated the sovereignty of the territory of these 
countries and the right to life and health of their inhabitants, as in the 
cases of Liberia and Nigeria.

All these facts have been confirmed in the Secretary-General's report to 
the Economic and Social Council entitled "Illicit traffic in toxic and 

The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in 
his statement to the Economic and Social Council on 11 July 1988, also 
confirmed the truth of reports regarding this illicit traffic.

The issue has assumed such proportions that not only the Organization of 
African Unity (OAU), but also the West African Economic Community, at their 
most recent summits, held last May and June respectively, discussed the 
problem and adopted resolutions.

It is no secret that most of the African countries suffer from drought, 
continuing desertification, famine and political régimes which show little 
respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. If these evils are 
compounded by others resulting from the dumping of toxic and dangerous 
products and wastes, how is the future of this continent to be safeguarded?

We request that the Governments which have signed contracts with firms 
for the dumping of toxic and dangerous products and wastes should:

Be permitted to revoke them without prejudice;

Register hazardous industrial activities and adopt and implement laws, 
regulations or directives concerning the safe operation of industrial 
plants, as well as the transportation, handling and elimination of 
dangerous materials;

Plan the use of the soil and ensure that such plans are effectively 
applied and respected;

Pledge that their own firms will not threaten the environment or the 
health of their inhabitants.

It is also urgent that the United Nations and the specialized agencies 
should make joint efforts with a view to:

Completing the preparation and signature of a world convention to control 
the transboundary movements of toxic and dangerous products and wastes;

Registering the exact location of earlier dumps of toxic and dangerous 
products and wastes and the materials contained therein in order to save 
the lives of millions of people.