

Mr. Chairman,

During this, the first session of the Commission in which I have had the privilege of representing Canada, I have been struck by the atmosphere of expectation attending the lead-up to debate on what is known by everyone simply as "item 12". This comes as no surprise, for the Commission is here engaged in what I assume to be its basic purpose, an examination of situations of flagrant, persistent and systematic violations of human rights that exist throughout the World. As we do so, it is important to review the role and responsibility of the Commission in this respect.

In this connection, Mr. Chairman, we must be concerned that the claim can still be heard that international interest in the condition of human rights in a particular state represents undue interference in its internal affairs. Such a view is, to say the least, out-dated and deserves an unambiguous response from this Commission.

Through the Charter of the United Nations, member states have jointly pledged to promote and encourage respect for human rights as one of their major common objectives, and utilizing this Commission, the international community has developed truly international standards of human rights, standards intended to have universal application. The