

end at home but they do begin there. Thus our immediate duty is to preserve and expand our heritage of freedom in Canada. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which you have been discussing today, is a great milestone in this regard. Its origins and objectives are Canadian but it also bears upon our international obligations. For one thing, it is our domestic record that -- despite its blemishes -- gives us a credible voice in the field of human rights within the wider forum of the international community.

In that wider forum, Canada has been mindful of the watchword enunciated by Maritain. In the U.N. context, both at the General Assembly in New York and in the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Canada has been active on three fronts. First, we have supported the elaboration of new international instruments for the protection of human rights, focusing on particular types of violations or victims. Second, we have explored creative ways to promote the observance of existing rights and freedoms. And finally, we have initiated a study that seeks to analyse the causes of certain human rights abuses, in the hope of preventing their recurrence.

On the first front -- the development of new international instruments -- the General Assembly last December unanimously adopted the Declaration Against All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. This declaration, 20 years in the making, spells out in detail the right to freedom of religion that was first enunciated in general terms in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. When the Declaration on Religions Intolerance was finally adopted, a number of delegations paid tribute to the important role played by Canada in the elaboration of this instrument.

Again in December of last year, Canada ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We were one of the principal drafters and supporters of this convention, and a Canadian has been elected to sit on the committee that will monitor its implementation.

Canada is also actively participating in a working group that is elaborating a draft convention against torture. I am optimistic that the working group will submit a final draft of the convention to the Human Rights Commission in the very near future. The terrible practice of torture cannot be