

It is Canada's policy, especially in the human rights field, to restrict the number of reservations to treaties and to limit their scope, as a means to prevent international human rights standards, intended to apply universally, from being undermined. Accession to the Convention with numerous reservations and statements of understanding would be inconsistent with Canada's position as a leader in the field of human rights. It could also undermine Canada's efforts to persuade other states to refrain from entering reservations when becoming parties to human rights treaties.

Non-governmental organizations have had, and continue to have, the opportunity to discuss this issue with the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and International Women's Equality Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade as part of its ongoing consultation process with NGOs. Representatives of Amnesty International and Rights and Democracy have also met with representatives of the United Nations, Criminal and Treaty Law Division. These same NGOs also met with Minister Manley last February, when they were given the opportunity to raise this issue. Accession to the Convention is also discussed at the annual human rights consultations, the most recent of which took place in February.

TRANSPARENCY AND CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

(RECOMMENDATION 3)

“THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA CONTINUE TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND COOPERATION WITH CIVIL SOCIETY, BY: RELEASING ITS WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS TO TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND ARGUING FOR ITS PARTNERS TO DO LIKEWISE; ARGUING FOR THE RELEASE WHENEVER POSSIBLE OF DRAFT NEGOTIATING TEXTS; CONTINUING TO SUPPORT SUCH EXPRESSIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTION AS THE PEOPLES SUMMIT; AND ENCOURAGING FUTURE HOSTS OF THE SUMMITS OF THE AMERICAS TO FOLLOW THE PRACTICES OF TRANSPARENCY AND ENGAGEMENT PIONEERED BY CANADA IN QUEBEC, INCLUDING THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION (NGO) SUMMIT CONSULTATION.”

The Government fully agrees with this recommendation. It wishes to thank the Committee for its valuable support of the Government's efforts in promoting engagement and transparency in the development of its hemispheric agenda and for the Committee's encouragement to continue in this direction in the future. The Government is committed to working with other governments of the Americas toward a coherent and collective approach to increasing opportunities for citizens and improving their quality of life. The Government will keep Canadians informed of its positions with regard to trade negotiations and will continue to advocate, as appropriate, the publication of trade negotiation texts at the hemispheric level.

