

Bahai community. The fatwa against British author Salman Rushdie is an outrage against the fundamental values of the United Nations.

We continue to be disappointed by Cuba's refusal to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights. We hope, however, that the recent visit to Cuba of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which we welcome, will lead to greater Cuban cooperation with the UN system on human rights issues. Cuba's achievements in many areas of economic and social rights, including recent reforms, are noteworthy. They may be lost, however, if not reinforced by progress in civil and political rights.

Mr. Chairman,

In the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, Member States reaffirmed the mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy, development and respect for human rights. Indeed, it has always been Canada's basic premise that respect for human rights is integral to human development. Economic and social development is reinforced by a vigorous civil society, where political parties, labour unions, private enterprise, non-governmental organisations and community groups give people a voice and the opportunity to articulate their needs and preferences.

Several country situations can serve to illustrate the crucial link between democracy and respect for human rights.

In Burma, the CHR Special Rapporteur continues to document callous disregard for human rights and the democratic process. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi continues to be under arrest. The beginnings of a dialogue are encouraging but her unconditional release, along with that of the other political detainees, is essential to the process of reconciliation and democratic reform. The international community must monitor the situation in Burma through the elaboration of clear and timeframed benchmarks to measure progress. Canada will work with others, especially neighbouring countries, in pursuing initiatives to promote greater respect for human rights in Burma.

We are encouraged that Vietnam has adopted modest measures of administrative and legal reform. Nevertheless, we continue to have grave concerns that religious leaders continue to be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention and imprisonment under harsh conditions. Prominent dissident figures calling for greater individual freedom and democratic reforms have been sentenced to long prison terms. We call on the Government of Vietnam to release these individuals.

Given the progress noted in preceding years, we are concerned about more recent developments in Indonesia, including East Timor, and look forward to the resumption of a more positive trend. Canada looks to Indonesia to comply fully with its commitments made at the last meeting of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, welcoming in this regard the June visit of the Special Rapporteur on Summary or Arbitrary Executions. We call on Indonesia, as a member of the Commission on Human Rights, to ensure speedy ratification of the two

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