

I would like to mention three other areas in which Canada sees scope for important progress.

First, new information technologies should be an important part of our strategy for the future promotion of human rights. The Internet can give human rights advocates increased access to information and an improved capacity to communicate. Information technologies can also be tools in human rights education which will help ensure the commitment of the next generation to human rights. Canada intends to play a leadership role in this area.

Second, Canada has for several years advocated efforts to make the work of this Commission, of its many mechanisms, and of the human rights treaty bodies better known and more accessible to the media and the general public. The many rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission, and the various committees do superb work with the resources available to them -- but it is frankly among the best kept secrets of the United Nations.

One vehicle to help remedy this would be an Annual Report on the State of Human Rights worldwide, based on the findings of the UN's independent human rights mechanisms. As part of our commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Canada will sponsor the development and publication of a prototype for such a Report.

Finally, and in the same vein, Canada believes the time is long past due for this Commission to mobilize the great interest shown in its work by political figures and other distinguished personalities from all parts of the world.

A high-level segment of the Commission, bringing leaders, ministers, and top representatives of civil society together at the same time would go a long way toward carrying the Commission's message beyond the basement of the Palais, and out to the real world and to the people whose well-being we seek to advance. Canada thus strongly urges the holding of a high-level segment at the 54th session of the Commission on Human Rights.

To conclude Mr. Chairman, the quest for human freedom and justice is a noble cause -- a UN Charter obligation in its own right. But it is even more. It is, in Canada's view, an indispensable instrument in the pursuit of all of the basic purposes of the United Nation: peace, justice and prosperity for all. We believe that the United Nations' human rights machinery can and must serve all of these goals. And to that end, Mr. Chairman, we pledge our full cooperation to you and to all participants in this session of the Commission on Human Rights.