

36. The United Nations established in the mid-1950s, a modest technical assistance program within its Human Rights Centre (headquarters in Geneva), termed the Advisory Services Program in the Field of Human Rights. The program, intended to provide for the organization of seminars and training courses, fellowships, and the provision of services of experts to governments, has carried out limited but useful activities over the years. The constraints under which it operates include chronic underfunding, the reluctance of governments to seek assistance, and the limitation of activity to the modest common denominator of agreement possible among 160 nations. Notwithstanding such constraints, a few countries emerging from periods of dictatorship have sought and obtained valuable assistance. In addition, some particularly useful workshops, terminated for lack of funding, were organized jointly with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to assist experts from sub-regional groups of countries to respond to the practical implications of ratification of the Human Rights Covenants. If as recommended by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in February 1987, a Voluntary Fund for the Advisory Services Program is established and well funded, the financial constraint on the UN program will be removed. Nonetheless, the political constraints on its possibilities for significant development will remain.

37. The U.N. Human Rights Centre considers the proposal for a Canadian institution valuable and appropriate to the current international pattern. It considers Canada, with its long history of support for international development, one of a small number of countries able to work effectively in this area. It suggests a low-key approach, and anticipates that contacts of an informal nature between the institution and the U.N. Centre would suggest inter alia areas of needs to which the former might be in a position to respond.

38. The U.N. Centre for Social Development with headquarters in Vienna, encompasses the activity of the U.N. in the entire social sector: women's issues, social development, social defence, population, narcotics, etc. The Centre is strongly interested in cooperation with the proposed Canadian institution. With regard to women's issues, it has in mind research concerning political participation and decision-making; the development of networks of cooperation; the development and promotion of comprehensive planning and concerted action at national and local levels; and projects relating to electoral, parliamentary and judicial institutions and the rule of law. With regard to Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the Centre suggests collaboration on the implementation of existing international standards; on the formulation of new standards, for example the role of defence lawyers and prosecutors, and the use of force by law enforcement officials; and the