

MR. CHAIRMAN,

SOME 40 YEARS AGO, THE ADOPTION BY THE UNITED NATIONS OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BROUGHT HOPE TO MILLIONS THAT THE RIGHTS ENUMERATED THERE WERE NOT JUST PIOUS INVOCATION BUT TRUE STANDARDS FOR GOVERNANCE BY NATION STATES.

IN THE 40 YEARS SINCE, WE HAVE SEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COVENANTS, CONVENTIONS AND DECLARATIONS, BUILDING ON THE STANDARDS SET OUT IN THE DECLARATION, AS WELL AS PROCEDURES FOR ENSURING THAT VIOLATIONS OF THOSE STANDARDS ARE MONITORED. COUNTRIES CAN NOT PICK AND CHOOSE AMONG THE RIGHTS TO WHICH THEY WILL ASSIGN PRECEDENCE. CANADA'S POSITION IS THAT THERE MUST BE FULL ADHERENCE TO ALL THE PROVISIONS OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS TO WHICH STATES ARE OBLIGATED.

MY DELEGATION ASSIGNS THE HIGHEST IMPORTANCE TO MOVING FORWARD IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND TO BUILDING THE MECHANISMS WHICH INHIBIT REGRESSION. EARLIER COMMISSION TEXTS ON EQUATORIAL GUINEA ARE CLEARLY AIMED IN THIS DIRECTION, AS IS THE WHOLE PROGRAM OF ADVISORY SERVICES TO BE DISCUSSED AT A LATER DATE ON ANOTHER AGENDA ITEM. FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS CANADA HAS EMPHASIZED THE PHENOMENON OF MASS EXODUSES AND THE NEED TO BUILD UP AN EARLY-WARNING CAPACITY WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS WHICH WOULD ALERT US TO INCIPIENT PROBLEMS