

11. In light of the important multilateral dimensions of international human rights issues, it is pertinent to take into account current directions within the UN system.

12. The Assistant-Secretary General for Human Rights of the United Nations, Mr. Kurt Herndl, commented in his address to the February 1987 session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights that there have been two great historical phases in the United Nations Organization's effort of fostering human rights and creating an international system of promotion and protection of the freedoms of the individual. The first phase, during the period 1946 to 1966, witnessed the development of the landmark codifications of international human rights law, termed the International Bill of Rights, comprising the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Optional Protocol; and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. To these subsequently were added a number of other instruments of great importance relating, for example, to the rights of women, racial discrimination and torture. Work is continuing in the area of the rights of the child, minorities, migrant workers, indigenous populations, the disabled, as well as the right to food and other essentials. The second phase of the International Human Rights Program witnessed a concerted effort to develop the organs of supervision as well as procedures and mechanisms for responding to allegations of violations of human rights. Treaty-based organs such as the Human Rights Committee established under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and a number of others have broken new ground by developing a dialogue between the international community and individual governments on measures to be taken by States in the framework of their own legal order to implement the international human rights norms to which they have committed themselves. In addition, a wide variety of procedures and mechanisms have been developed to respond to situations of gross abuses of human rights.

13. Of particular relevance to our exercise was Mr. Herndl's emphasis on the importance of convincing governments of the need to ratify the essential human rights treaties and to realize it is in their best interest to base their policies on the values underlying the International Bill of Rights. He indicated we are entering a new and third phase of U.N. action no less significant than those which preceded it and of which it is the natural consequence. This phase relates to the linkage between the provision of advisory services or technical assistance to States and the implementation by those States of norms to which they have committed themselves. He quoted the U.N. Secretary General's repeated assertions of this linkage made in the following terms: