

Nassau, the OAS has proven itself a willing and able guardian of hemispheric democracy. And if we have not quite succeeded with Haiti yet, the fact that it is still an issue in the world's eye is because the OAS has not given up on it. Because we believe that the Haitian people and their elected leaders deserve our continuing support. Because we share a conviction that such a flouting of democracy cannot be tolerated.

Haiti, Peru and Guatemala have taught us another lesson, that democracy -- fragile flower that it is -- must be nurtured. Experience has now shown us very clearly the danger of relying too heavily on elections. Elections alone do not guarantee democracy. They are a beginning, not an end. Secretary-General Baena Soares was recently quoted in a Canadian newspaper as having observed, quite aptly, that, "There is no such thing as instant democracy. It is not coffee."

The OAS has made some very useful and effective contributions in the area of electoral monitoring, most recently in Peru and Paraguay. However, our vision must extend beyond such short-term measures. We must ensure, in all nations of the hemisphere, that the conditions are created, the institutions are built, and the traditions are established that will make it possible for democracy to take root and flourish.

In creating the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy, the OAS has established a special mechanism for such longer-term actions. Canada was proud to have been one of the countries that advocated the creation of this unit. Last year, convinced of the vital importance of its mandate, Canada announced a special \$1-million contribution to the unit to provide it with added impetus.

Regrettably, Canada feels that the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy is still not being used to the fullest. I sincerely hope -- particularly in light of recent events -- that the membership at large will regard the unit as a priority, get behind it, and insist that it be endowed with the resources and the flexibility needed to carry out all aspects of its mandate.

Respect for Human Rights

Inextricably linked to democratic development is respect for human rights, and again we have seen great strides made in the hemisphere over the past few years. Newly democratic governments have quickly come to the realization that not only is respect for human rights a moral obligation to their