

After ratifying the international instruments including the Optional Protocol, Canada has encouraged other governments to follow suit. Canada has made efforts to improve UN machinery for human rights work, and has been active on committees such as the Working Group for the Disappeared. The Government has also promoted the development of new instruments such as the International Convention against Torture, which came into force in August 1985. Finally, although it has emphasized themes rather than individual cases in its human rights advocacy, Canada has spoken out bilaterally against certain governments' violations of human rights.

From 7 May to 17 June 1985 Canada hosted the first Human Rights Experts Meeting of the CSCE. The sessions focussed on the implementation of the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Final Act. While pursuing a thematic approach and avoiding confrontation, Canadian representatives nonetheless criticized those member governments which continued to deny their citizens such rights as the right to emigrate, to form free trade unions, to practice their religious faith, and to form human rights monitoring groups. Canada defended the principle that human rights were not solely a matter of domestic jurisdiction.

On 23 August 1985 Canada signed the UN Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

On 5 March 1986 the Chairman of the Canadian Human Rights Commission, Gordon Fairweather, made a statement to the UNHRC on behalf of the Canadian Government. He reiterated Canada's support for the establishment of the position of High Commissioner for Human Rights. He registered Canada's "strong support for the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to develop administrative measures which may assist in averting...mass displacements of populations."¹

¹ DEA, Statement, 86/19, 20 Mar. 1986.