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We do however recognize -- and I want to underline this point -- the tremendous challenges which many developing countries face in improving their human rights performance. Canada regards all of its development cooperation activities, aimed at creating an environment for sustainable development, as means of assisting less developed countries to fulfil their human rights obligations in all spheres - economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political. Our decision to increasingly channel such assistance to governments that respect the rights and freedoms of their people is not intended to interfere in the internal affairs of others. It reflects our desire to support those who are committed to strengthen their capacity to protect human rights, and the belief of our taxpayers that their limited resources will be put to most effective and lasting use in countries which pursue their economic goals in the context of a genuine commitment to respect the human rights of their citizens. Conversely, we will not give aid to governments which flagrantly abuse the rights of their citizens.

At the same time we attach high priority to assistance in the development of institutions for the protection of basic human rights. This is a fundamental element in our bilateral programmes, and we believe the UN needs to continue developing and strengthening its programmes to assist developing countries which are committed to improving their institutional infrastructures to protect human rights. A growing number of practical, concrete proposals in this regard are emerging from various quarters.

Last year, at Brazil's initiative, the Commission adopted a resolution on "strengthening the rule of law", which called for the World Conference on Human Rights to focus on the means for the UN to provide more effective assistance in this area.

In November, the African regional meeting in Tunis noted that the proper administration of justice and an independent judiciary are crucial to the full realization of human rights, and called for both states themselves and the international community to allocate more resources to the administration of justice.

In January, the Latin American and Caribbean regional meeting in Costa Rica emphasized the need for international cooperation in assisting states to strengthen institutions which uphold the rule of law - such as the administration of justice, police and prison systems, and human rights education. It suggested that one of the most substantial contributions the World Conference could make to the cause of human rights would be the establishment of a United Nations programme of technical and financial assistance under the auspices of the Centre for Human Rights to cooperate at the request of governments with national