

Secondly, Mr. Chairman, as a number of speakers have noted, rationalization of agendas and procedures is an important objective of this exercise. For instance, the draft report prepared by the Secretariat suggests the increased resort to the clustering of agenda items for purposes of debate in the Commission. This technique has been used very successfully in the Third Committee of the General Assembly to ensure a smooth flow of discussion on related items and to provide adequate opportunity for delegations to address all subjects in which they are interested. Perhaps the Secretariat should be authorized to develop some proposals along these lines for consideration at the outset of the Commission's next session.

There is thus, in my delegation's view, considerable scope for rationalization of the Commission's methods. However -- and this brings me to my third point -- it is my Government's very strongly held view that, during this review of the United Nation's social and economic work, paramount attention must be accorded to the objective of strengthening the organization's efforts in the human rights field. Canada and other governments have repeatedly noted that human rights activities in the United Nations, responding to one of our central Charter goals, have been badly underfunded for a long time, and that they were badly overpenalized in the austerity measures adopted in 1986. We consequently welcomed the Secretary-General's acknowledgement of this problem last year and his assurances regarding the future financial integrity of the Human Rights Program. This is a point that must not be understated in the Commission's report to the Special Commission of ECOSOC. Commitment to the strength and integrity of the Human Rights Program is a fundamental tenet of Canada's foreign policy, and we will be actively pursuing this commitment in the context of the important challenges facing the United Nations in the coming months.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say a few words about one additional topic which is regularly discussed under the present agenda item. Public information in the field of human rights was addressed at some length in the opening remarks of UnderSecretary-General Martenson to this session. And as the Under-Secretary-General proceeds with plans to enhance the Centre's capacity in this area and to elaborate the outlines of a possible world information campaign, we offer the following tentative views for his consideration.