

organization they require and on how this organization might function in practice. External Affairs, however, has a number of criteria in mind in framing such a mechanism.

- (a) the creation of a commission or consultative body should not preclude other consultations, either individually or collectively by other NGOs.
- (b) the membership of a consultative body must reflect the diversity of the Canadian nationality; it cannot be restricted to one region, language group, gender, etc.
- (c) the onus for selecting members to any limited-membership body should rest with the NGO community rather than with the Department, in order to preserve a proper arm's length relationship between the Department and the NGO community.
- (d) the functioning of the commission or committee (ie, dates of meetings, sites of meetings, agenda items, etc.) should be determined by a procedure that reflects the partnership between External Affairs and the NGO community.

External Affairs would prefer a relatively simple, informal consultative procedure that is open to all NGOs who work in the field of human rights. Within the framework of consultations that meet the above criteria, External Affairs would be prepared to assume some of the normal secretariat functions of keeping mailing lists, preparing agendas and documentation, and advising members of meeting dates and times. In the view of External Affairs, however, the most effective vehicle is likely to be a committee or commission characterized by simplicity and flexibility.

The views of participants in the NGO consultations are invited.