

countries Canadian aid will be directed. Both the need of the country and the readiness of its government to deliver assistance to its neediest populations are important factors in determining eligibility for aid. In addition, we exclude from consideration that tiny number of countries whose government's excesses have resulted in social breakdown as occurred in Uganda under Idi Amin.

Obviously, to respond to a human rights problem, we must first ensure that we know the facts. The government receives with interest the comments of important Canadian and international non-governmental organizations. In fact, we have instituted annual consultations with them. We also have other sources of information, including reports from our embassies and exchanges of views with governments of dozens of countries of various political perspectives. We take note particular of the views of countries in the regions in which problems occur.

Within the Department of External Affairs there is a division which co-ordinates and harmonizes our responses in international human rights. But in our bilateral relationships, human rights considerations are factored in at the desk level in the geographic divisions of the department.

Regularly, we make known our concerns and those of Canadians about human rights problems to the governments responsible -- through our representatives in their capitals and through their representatives in Ottawa. When our bilateral relationship is strong, our views may gain a hearing; when it is weak, they have little impact. When many other governments express similar views, the impact will be greater.

Sometimes we make our concerns public, but more frequently we do not. Why? Not because our conviction is weak. Rather, we have found that our views are likely to have a more positive impact when expressed in terms of humanitarian concern and of our wish to resolve a serious impediment to the normal evolution and potential development of bilateral relations.

Our approach at the United Nations -- and that of all Western countries -- lies along the same lines. Within the confidential procedures of the Commission on Human Rights, we attempt to initiate contacts with governments in order to obtain restraint or resolution of a human rights issue. If the government refuses to co-operate, the issue can be moved into public session. Confrontational tactics and condemnation are avoided, as they will be unproductive. Indeed, they may have a counterproductive impact on the very victims we are trying to protect. This can happen because nations -- large or small, rich or poor -- are like human beings: proud and sometimes arrogant. They resent criticism from other nations who cannot view the situation from their own perspective. Only when all positive international approaches and attempts at persuasion have had no impact, do responsible governments publicly deplore or condemn the practices of an offender in human rights.