

Human Rights

In the field of human rights, Mr. President, I am pleased to say that Canada has signed the Convention on Racial Discrimination. We regard this as an important addition to the body of law on human rights, because, for the first time, implementation measures have been incorporated which we believe might form a pattern for future legislation in this field.

It is our hope that the adoption of this Convention will be followed by the completion of the draft covenants on human rights and by the adoption of the convention on religious intolerance and the establishment of a United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. These additional measures would be a worthy accomplishment for 1968, the International Year for Human Rights.

We have given much thought to our contribution to the programme for the International Year for Human Rights in 1968. We have decided that the most useful contribution we could make would be to subject our own record and practices to critical examination, drawing on all the resources of the community for this purpose. Complacency is a disease we all suffer from. Our objective, therefore, will be to remove the vestiges of discrimination involving race, creed, or sex, and to strengthen protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms by a continuing process of education and by subjecting violations to exposure and public attention. I am confident that we will be able to carry out a programme of this kind successfully because of the enthusiastic support for the cause of human rights which is displayed by voluntary organizations in Canada.

Southern Africa

A principal area of conflict over racial discrimination, and the denial of human rights, is unquestionably southern Africa. As a signatory to the Charter, we are concerned over the absence of progress towards acceptance of the principle of self-determination in other non-self-governing territories in Africa and by the stubborn denial by the South African Government of political and human rights. Non-self-governing peoples should enjoy those basic political, social and economic rights promised to them under the Charter and by those who have been given a sacred trust to help them towards self-government.

Canada is deeply concerned about the situation in Rhodesia. Since the illegal declaration of independence by the Smith regime,