

work undertaken by the UN that focuses on constitutions, electoral systems, and judicial and human rights institutions and training.

The Canadian government raises human rights issues at every appropriate opportunity at the international level. We must go beyond the rhetoric, however, and give substance to our words by offering creative and practical assistance to other countries - as we are doing in Haiti, for example, through institution building, police training and support for a truth commission. We run the risk of being hypocritical unless we address all the elements that make up a free and democratic society that puts respect for human rights high on its list of priorities.

As you know, Mr. Léonard Legault, one of the most experienced and distinguished members of the Foreign Service, has been appointed Canada's new representative to the Human Rights Commission. I have met Mr. Legault and have the utmost confidence that he will do a good job. He is hoping you will take the opportunity at these consultations to meet with him and discuss your particular concerns. We as a government, and you, the NGO community, must continue to work together to promote and protect human rights throughout the world. I am sure these two days of consultation will assist in furthering this goal during the 51st session of the Commission on Human Rights.

Thank you.