

Canada will work to advance this process as rapidly as possible, in the hope that we may have a declaration, as a focus for political action, within the next few years.

It is political reality that these processes take time. So I hope that the international community will also explore some more immediate methods by which states might benefit from the experiences of others in developing the rights of minority groups. Professor Capotorti's study of 1979 is an excellent compendium of such experiences, and I think we should look for some mechanism by which such information may continue to be collected, and for means by which it may be made freely available to states. The appropriate agency for such work is the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva which, through its Advisory Services Programme, has expanded its capacity to assist member states.

In some of these situations, and currently in the case of Cyprus, the U.N. Secretary-General has used his good offices to help the parties achieve some accommodation or reconciliation. Canada fully supports such efforts, but member states themselves, acting together, must do more to seek realistic solutions to problems involving the rights of minorities, and to encourage and assist nations to adopt these solutions.

Our clear objective must be to assist nations with their problems rather than to meddle in their internal affairs. Lasting improvements must come from internal processes of accommodation in individual states, as a result of domestic decisions. In seeking to promote such accommodation within individual states, the international community must rely on persuasion, through concerted political pressure mobilized in the United Nations and elsewhere.

You have assembled here experts and practitioners in the rights of minorities, a subject which has been suffering from neglect internationally. I am certain that the records and conclusions of this Conference will themselves be a significant contribution to the development of international standards and action. It will certainly give new, and timely, impetus to the consideration of this matter among nations. It is my intention that Canada contribute actively and compassionately to this work, from which we too will benefit within our own country.