

Accepted in part

The Government is of the opinion that it is difficult to establish strict theoretical criteria in the field of human rights which would be operationally effective in development policy. As the Committee itself has emphasized, human rights questions are often intertwined in ideological or strategic issues. Such standards as currently exist internationally, in particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, are very general in nature. Because of the diversity of legal systems, social values and traditional structures in the countries in which CIDA functions, it is difficult to draw fixed and coherent rules in an area as controversial as human rights.

Moreover, the attitudes of other countries and peoples are not identical to those of Canada in the field of human rights, and these differences of emphasis and value cannot easily be reconciled within a global framework. To the extent that criteria can be established against which to judge the performance of other countries, the most valuable guide is to focus on those violations of human rights which are patently systematic, gross and continuous, whether in the area of civil and political rights, or in the field of economic, social and cultural rights.

Canadian development assistance programs take this approach into account in three ways:

- 1) The degree to which human rights are respected is a factor in determining eligibility for Canadian development assistance;
- 2) In situations where there is concern about adherence to the universally accepted concepts of human rights, the content and channels through which development assistance is directed are chosen to alleviate the condition of those oppressed;
- 3) Policy discussions with developing countries on development cooperation include discussion of the human rights situation where this is warranted.

While it is not easy to make a definitive and coherent categorization in the majority of cases, it is generally possible to identify those extreme situations where violations of human rights are so flagrant that they call