

within the framework of the Council of Europe. In Canada, some provinces have set up human rights commissions and others have appointed ombudsmen.

Canada's general approach to human rights issues in the UN has tended to be cautious, in particular with respect to ratification of human rights instruments, mainly because of problems arising as a consequence of divided federal and provincial jurisdiction. A number of the instruments adopted by the United Nations fall, at least partially, within provincial jurisdiction, e.g. the Convention on Racial Discrimination and the Convention on Civil and Political Rights. Deficiencies in the machinery for federal-provincial consultations on these questions have not encouraged wide understanding of the importance of these international undertakings and have hindered attainment of the support required from the provincial governments before Canada could adhere to them.

Canada's future approach to human rights at the United Nations should be both positive and vigorous. Now that it is committed to protect and safeguard the rights of Canadians, both individually and as disadvantaged minorities, it should accept the obligation to participate actively in this important area of the UN's work. The enthusiasm and interest displayed by Canadians in the programme that was carried out in this country as part of the International Year for Human Rights demonstrated that there is an expectation that Canada will participate in international efforts in the human rights field on a more extensive and meaningful scale than in the past. Specifically, urgent attention should be given to the development of effective procedures for consulting with the provinces and securing their support for Canadian signature and ratification of UN instruments in the field of human rights. In situations where, following consultations with the provinces, Canada has either ratified or wishes to adhere to an international instrument dealing with human rights, we should encourage early and concerted action by federal and provincial legislatures to bring Canadian domestic legislation into conformity with the legal obligations of the text.

As the emphasis in the UN in the years ahead will undoubtedly concentrate on the very difficult task of ensuring the implementation and general acceptance of human rights already enunciated in such instruments as the Covenants, Canada should give particular attention to ways in which it can further this process; the Canadian record of implementation will have obvious relevance in this respect.