

in international bodies that a majority of under-developed states are more concerned with alleviating starvation and promoting their development and, in so doing, attaching a greater priority to the duties of citizens than to their rights.

Although Canada's approach to international human rights reflects our traditions, the ethics and moral codes of a Western Christian society, our approach is *only one of many*, and, I should add, *not* an approach that enjoys majority support internationally.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is *not* a binding legal instrument, and other covenants and conventions that may have enforcement provisions are binding only upon their signatories. Even when a state accedes to a convention or signs an agreement, it does not necessarily mean that it accepts its obligations immediately. Not all the parties who signed the Helsinki Final Act feel bounds to accept its provisions at once; rather, it is regarded as a long-term program towards which participants should strive. Moreover, even when states disregard their obligations, there is frequently little that can be done to urge compliance. The UN Commission on Human Rights has a fairly cumbersome procedure for dealing with gross and persistent violations of human rights, while other bodies, like the new Human Rights Committee, on which there is a Canadian, and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, consist of independent experts serving in their personal capacities; the Canadian Government, as such, can therefore take no official action in these bodies.

In the absence of consensus and of effective enforcement machinery at the international level, therefore, we have been forced to rely upon other methods, essentially political and diplomatic, in which to convey to other governments our concerns about human rights. Canada can use multilateral bodies, such as the Commission on Human Rights, to make known our attitude towards events in other countries; at such meetings, we can vote on resolutions varying in tone and substance from mild requests for information to denunciations and condemnations. Multilateral bodies may impose sanctions dealing with trade, aid, or trade in specific types of goods; such sanctions may be legally binding (as are Security Council sanctions) or voluntary (as are resolutions of the General Assembly). States may, of course, also impose sanctions unilaterally or jointly with other states, by curtailing aid, ending trade relations, or by going as far as suspending diplomatic relations. We can also make direct representations on a bilateral basis; such representations may range from expressions of concern, to requests for redress of specific grievances, to formal protests.