

ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE EXPERIENCES OF THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN MIXED. AFGHANISTAN MIGHT WELL BE A TEST CASE THIS YEAR, AS WE MUST ENSURE THAT TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS ARE NOT ACCOMPANIED BY A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAT TORTURED COUNTRY.

ALL OF US RECOGNIZE AS WELL THAT THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF THE SYSTEM OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS HAS BROUGHT MIXED BENEFITS. THE RESOLUTE SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN FAVOUR OF SPECIAL RAPPORTEURS HAS HELPED THE PROCESS OF ENGENDERING RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOME COUNTRIES. BUT OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE SHIED AWAY FROM COOPERATION WITH THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS BECAUSE OF THE PERCEIVED IMPLICATIONS OF SPECIAL PROCEDURES. THE STRUCTURE OF THE COMMISSION'S AGENDA, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS NOW BECOME A MAJOR BATTLEGROUND, LARGELY BECAUSE OF MISPLACED PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ITEM 12. FOR OUR PART, WE WOULD FAVOUR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ITEM ON COUNTRY SITUATIONS, WITH AN OBJECTIVE, NON-PEJORATIVE TITLE, WHICH WOULD AVOID THE TWIN EXCESSES OF, ON THE ONE HAND, SEPARATE ITEMS ON PARTICULAR COUNTRIES SUCH AS CHILE AND CUBA AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE PLACING OF COUNTRY SITUATIONS UNDER INAPPROPRIATE ITEMS SUCH AS DISCUSSION OF THE ADVISORY SERVICES PROGRAM.