

any other international instrument with the possible exception of the Charter itself. The adoption of the Declaration, as were the inclusion of the Human Rights provisions in the Charter and the subsequent drafting and coming into force of the covenants, was a reaction of the world community to unspeakable violations of the most fundamental rights during and immediately before the Second World War. That was the catalyst that prepared world public opinion and made it possible for the United Nations to undertake its revolutionary Human Rights Programme. There is now in most parts of the world an awareness in these matters for which there is no precedent even though human rights may not always be respected. Let me mention only the three most obvious examples: current attitudes towards racial discrimination and discrimination against women and the general acceptance of the proposition that economic and social rights are as important as the traditional civil and political rights. There is now general acceptance everywhere of this new morality which has also become an international morality. Human rights have even become a factor in the foreign policy of certain states. These changes in attitudes didn't just happen and they are probably the result of more than one social cause; but one of them was undoubtedly the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and this Assembly can claim some credit for what has happened. The educational and moral impact of the Declaration has been immense, and in the final analysis that may be more important than anything else that has happened as a result of the decision taken by the Assembly on 10 December 1948.

The Declaration was meant to become and has become all these things. It may have become something more. The General Assembly and other bodies began to use the Declaration as a standard for judging the conduct of states in their relations with individual men and women and groups of individuals. In resolution after resolution the Assembly either asserted that the Declaration must be strictly observed or invoked the Declaration when condemning a state for violating its obligations under the human rights provisions of the Charter. The Declaration is now being used and has been used for many years to interpret the human rights provisions of the Charter - so much so indeed that it is now possible to suggest that, whatever the intentions of its authors may have been in 1948, the Universal Declaration or in any event the justiciable parts of it, have now become part of the customary law of nations and are therefore binding on all states. If that is so, the achievement we are celebrating today was a much greater one and, I suggest, a more revolutionary achievement than anyone could have imagined on the night of 10 December 1948. But whether that is so or not - and it seems to me that there is a kind of logical necessity about the proposition that it is so - the Universal Declaration remains an instrument of the greatest moral and political authority which unequivocally states the necessary conditions of human dignity and of human aspirations and which is both a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations and a hope for the future.

## 2. CANADA'S HUMAN RIGHTS POSITION

Ambassador Roger Rousseau outlined Canada's human rights position on December 7, 1978 in the Third Committee of the General Assembly. Mr. Rousseau dealt with the prerogative of states to concern themselves with human rights violations elsewhere. He also referred to the human rights situation in Chile and in Democratic Kampuchea and discussed the problem of Indochinese refugees. Ambassador Rousseau pledged Canada's full and