

Ongoing Global and Human Security Issues

Democracy, Human Rights and Peacebuilding

Canada has succeeded in convincing previous summits to address global human rights issues. This year's G-8 Summit will underscore the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which marks its 50th anniversary this year. The Declaration was drafted in part by a Canadian, John Humphreys, and Canada will mark the anniversary with a number of events.

In June, Canada and a consortium of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are sponsoring a conference for NGOs from around the globe. They will discuss progress made since the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. Canada is also publishing a global human rights assessment based on reports of the United Nations' independent experts and treaty bodies. In September 1998, Canada will sponsor Human Rights and the Internet, a conference that will look at ways in which new information technologies can be used to defend and promote human rights worldwide.

Canada believes that to make certain the standards of the Universal Declaration are translated into action, the international community must ensure accountability for gross violations of human rights. In the G-7 and G-8 summit process and elsewhere, Canada has been advocating the establishment of an independent and effective international criminal court with jurisdiction over genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Children's rights are central to Canada's foreign policy. Canada is working to focus international attention on the impact of armed conflict on children. More specifically, Canada wants to minimize the use of boys and girls as soldiers in conflicts and is pressing governments and rebel groups, through the UN Special Representative on Children's Rights, to protect children when conflict breaks out. Canada is also working within the G-8 and with other countries for the speedy adoption of the International Labour Organization's Convention on Extreme Forms of Child Labour.

The Birmingham G-8 Summit will address the links between democracy, development, respect for human rights and peace. G-8 leaders will look at ways to improve co-operation on conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs focused on restoring stability and on reconciliation.