

At the same time, it is often unchecked violations of human rights that lead to such tragic conflicts in the first place.

A wealth of valuable information and analysis, which can assist in identifying and responding to early signs of potential conflict, is regularly produced by the Commission's rapporteurs and working groups, and by the committees charged with monitoring human rights treaties. In his opening remarks to this session, the High Commissioner emphasized the potential for progress in this area through improved co-ordination and information sharing and through effective action on recommendations of rapporteurs. Canada will pursue consultations on how to develop this potential, whether through the annual Canadian-led resolutions on mass exoduses and on human rights treaty bodies, or through a new resolution focussed on early warning and preventive action.

Human rights is also fundamental to creating an environment for sustainable development. In this connection I want to commend the Secretary General for the central importance he has accorded to national human rights institutions and systems of democratic and accountable government in his Agenda for Development.

In its foreign policy statement this week, the Canadian government identified human rights and democracy as a priority for its official development assistance program. We will pursue this priority through both bilateral and multilateral channels. And we urge the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in seeking to refurbish the UN's programs in this area, to work closely with those agencies, like UNDP [United Nations Development Program], which are best equipped to deliver effective projects. At a later stage in this session, Canada's Chief Human Rights Commissioner will report on the activities of an international committee of independent human rights institutions. We urge the Commission to support their work.

Mr. Chairman, when it comes to human rights, there can be no second-class citizens anywhere. Clearly, the UN Charter's promise of "human rights and fundamental freedoms for all" will not be fulfilled until the rights and equality of half the world's population are recognized and respected, in law and in practice, in all countries. Over the past two years, Canada has worked closely with other governments and with the non-governmental community to bring the struggle for women's equality and human rights into the mainstream of this Commission's deliberations.

We will continue this enterprise at the present session by introducing two resolutions. The resolution on the integration of women's rights into UN human rights activities should this year provide direction on how the High Commissioner and the various human rights mechanisms of the UN can contribute in practical terms to the success of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing this September.