

Introduction

1. On January 28, 1987, you asked us to examine how the Government might proceed with the creation of an institution which would have as its objective the development, strengthening and promotion of democratic institutions and human rights in developing countries and of submitting to you our recommendations by June 30, 1987. To this end, we were asked to examine what is being done by the Government of Canada in this area and to consult a large range of interested organizations and individuals. Our task derived from recommendation No. 87 of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations and the Canadian Government's positive response to it. The full text of the mandate given us is found at Appendix A.

2. Within the time allowed, we have consulted the largest possible range of Canadians: individuals, federal, provincial and municipal bodies, non-governmental organizations, organizations active in the area of human rights and international development, trade unions, business organizations at the national level, universities and journalists. A significant number of them responded to our invitation and provided written comments and suggestions. In addition we travelled to Ottawa and Hull, Halifax, Quebec, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver where we held round tables of academics, of individuals active in the fields of human rights and international development or other areas related to the proposal. We also travelled to Washington for meetings with representatives of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank and the Organization of American States, and to New York for meetings with certain developing country personalities, namely Ambassadors accredited to the United Nations and senior officials of the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Secretariat. In these two major American cities we also met with certain large foundations active in areas of interest. Appendix B provides a summary of such consultations.

Part I: The Present Conjuncture

3. What we heard during the course of our consultations, the interest expressed by our interlocutors and the vigor of debate in which we participated, has convinced us of one thing: the will expressed by the Special Joint Committee to see Canada offer to its developing country partners assistance in the area of human rights