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INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS - Item 67

Text of Statement on the International Year
for Human Rights, to be delivered in the
Third Committee by the Canadian
Representative, Prof. R. St. John
Macdonald, on Friday, December 10, 1965.

Mr. Chairman, the Canadian delegation supports the proposal to dedicate 1968 as International Year for Human Rights, as well as the suggestion that an international conference be held during that year. We congratulate our friends and colleagues from Jamaica and from other parts of the world for the welcome initiatives which they have taken in regard to these two matters, and we can assure them that Canada is ready and willing to do what it can to ensure the success of both programmes. Our position is a fairly flexible one, and we are anxious to be as helpful and useful as we can be to those who are charged with the task of developing the necessary arrangements.

We believe, Sir, that both proposals before us--the international year and the conference--hold promise of promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in a meaningful and practical way. And it is indeed with the practical rather than the more ceremonial side of things that our delegation wishes to concern itself at this time. As a major contributor to the regular budget of the United Nations, Canada is naturally anxious to insure a maximum return for the expenditures incurred, and we are interested therefore in contributing to the task of articulating attainable and specific goals against a background of careful preparation.

We would hope of course that governments would send to the conference qualified experts who are normally involved in work relating to the human rights field in their home states. And we would reiterate our concern that the emphasis throughout 1968, as well as in the conference, should be on practical, down-to-earth steps for the here-and-now, rather than on the ceremonials of the situation.