

The Canadian government considers that an immediate investigation of the human rights situation in Democratic Kampuchea should take place. I urge members of this Assembly to support our recommendation to the Commission on Human Rights to take such action. I also ask members of the Assembly to consider their obligations to the increasing numbers of refugees from Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea that are now under the care of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Human rights is a problem of international dimensions. Their recognition and promotion, as the Secretary General reminds us, "is a legitimate concern of the world community". The new prominence that human rights has acquired is part of the natural evolution of an international system. Like so many other concerns, the concern about human rights can no longer be contained behind national boundaries. It is not a matter of laying down to governments how they should fashion their political or economic systems. It is simply a matter of making certain that governments observe the fundamental decencies of civilized life to which they have all pledged allegiance.

The issue of human rights will not go away. We have a clear choice. We can decide that the United Nations must face the issue squarely, or we will be forced to go elsewhere to seek a tolerable international consensus. In the view of the Canadian government the choice is clear. We believe that the United Nations is ideally equipped to evaluate objectively, dispassionately and impartially allegations of human rights violations. The better it is seen to function, the more confidence this Organization will command and the less individual governments will feel bound to call for action against others for gross and persistent violations of human rights.

Human rights can be violated in many ways, but surely one of the most despicable is international terrorism. Resolution 32/8 adopted by consensus at the last session of the General Assembly dealt with a specific aspect of terrorism -- hijacking. That resolution called on governments to take joint and separate action to ensure the safety of civil aviation and it was strongly endorsed by the Canadian delegation. We have continued to stress the need for further international action to combat terrorism in all its manifestations. Prime Minister Trudeau's initiative in developing and presenting a declaration on hijacking at the Bonn Summit in July clearly underlined Canada's commitment to take action to deal with this problem. The declaration commits the seven governments to suspend air links with countries which do not extradite or prosecute hijackers who come within their jurisdictions. Participants at the Bonn meeting urged other governments to associate themselves with this commitment. Many governments have indicated that they are prepared to do so. We urge all other members of the international community to follow this course as well.

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Canada was elected to its fourth term (1977-78) as a member of the Security Council. Previous Canadian membership was in 1948-49, 1958-59 and 1967-68. The Secretary of State for External Affairs continued his speech by criticizing the passivity of the Security Council. He proposed periodic meetings of the Security Council at the ministerial level and suggested the size of the Council be reconsidered. Mr. Jamieson's remarks follow.