

The Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, P.C., M.P.
Secretary of State for External Affairs



Le très hon. Joe Clark, C.P., député
Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires extérieures

OTTAWA, ONTARIO
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Dear Participants:

I take pleasure in welcoming you to this year's consultations in the field of human rights. Unfortunately, problems of scheduling preclude my participation, as well as the participation of Mme Landry, but I am pleased that Canada's representative to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Mr. Gordon Fairweather, will be on hand throughout the session.

1988 will see Canada seek a three-year term on the Commission, not having served on it since 1984. The election to the Commission will take place in May at the Spring ECOSOC. Canada has played an active role as an observer at each session of the Commission. We will do so again this year in February and March, as we prepare for what we hope will be full membership during the period 1989 to 1991.

This year will be an especially critical year. In addition to the usual range of thematic and country situations, the Commission must deal with the difficult problem of adjusting its working methods to new financial stringencies. Canada has taken a lead role in ensuring that budgetary problems do not harm the vital role of the United Nations in the human rights field. The Canadian Delegation will have clear instructions to maintain this leadership, even in our current observer capacity.

I value these annual consultations. Members of the Department from geographical and functional bureaux have been instructed to attend the sessions and establish close contact with all Canadian groups interested in human rights matters. These meetings provide a sound basis for continuing cooperation and consultation which should take place throughout the rest of the year. I look forward to your participation.

Yours sincerely,

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