

connection, Mr. Chairman, we wish particularly to commend the Government of Guatemala for its cooperation in receiving a mission composed of two members of the Working Group. In consequence, the Commission has been provided with an evidently thorough, balanced and constructive assessment that should be of much value to all concerned with alleviating the difficult circumstances in that country. Finally, on this subject, we encourage the Commission to extend the mandate of the Working Group for a further two years, in order to give the group adequate time to plan its work programme.

My delegation believes that the elaboration of new and stricter standards in the area of detention would materially help to eliminate the practice of disappearances. As many non-governmental organizations have pointed out in submissions to the Commission, the first few hours of detention are critical to detainees and often determine whether they will receive justice or suffer arbitrary and summary punishment. In this respect, we emphasize the importance of work currently under way in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly to finalize a body of principles for persons subject to detention. That exercise is crucial to building more comprehensive, effective standards in this area.

Mr. Chairman, many of the issues considered under this agenda item are also under review in the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities. Without going into detail regarding the work of the Sub-Commission, we wish to commend its efforts in such areas as human rights in the administration of justice and the independence and impartiality of the judiciary. We value highly the constructive role which the Sub-Commission continues to play in the search for more comprehensive standards in the area of human rights, and we urge the Sub-Commission to continue to channel its energies in these longer-term directions.

Before closing, Mr. Chairman, I wish to signal Canada's continuing preoccupation with the welfare of persons who are confronted with obstacles in seeking to exercise the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The development of effective protection for this right must go hand in hand with the process of democratization in any society, and national efforts in this regard would be well served if the Commission and its subsidiary bodies dedicated more focussed attention to the topic. My delegation will again this year be consulting members on possible ways of achieving this end.