

WE HAVE HAD WITH THOSE COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS WITH MEXICO, FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS TO PROVIDE NEEDED EMPLOYMENT FOR THOSE CITIZENS.

A KEY INTEREST FOR US IN THE REGION, AS INDEED GLOBALLY, IS THE PROMOTION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE. COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE NOT YET ACHIEVED A REASONABLE MEASURE OF PROGRESS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES SUFFER NOT ONLY FROM THE LIMITATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND ECONOMIC INEFFICIENCIES BUT ALSO, AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL, DEVELOP DEPENDENCIES AND LINKAGES WHICH ARE NOT OPTIMAL FOR THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HEALTH OF THE HEMISPHERE. THE PLIGHT OF THE POOREST POPULATION STRATA IN THE POOREST COUNTRIES IS ALSO OF KEY CONCERN TO CANADIANS. SO TOO IS RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. FEW GOVERNMENTS CAN BE TOTALLY ABOVE CRITICISM IN THIS RESPECT, WHICH IS A COMPELLING REASON WHY WE SEE THE NEED AND POSSIBILITY FOR CLOSE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION TO STRENGTHEN HUMAN RIGHTS. CANADA HAS ALSO BEEN A HAVEN FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FELT IT NECESSARY TO SEEK INTERNATIONAL REFUGE FROM POLITICAL OR MILITARY TURMOIL. APPROXIMATELY 17,000 REFUGEES HAVE COME TO CANADA FROM THE REGION OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, MOSTLY FROM CENTRAL AMERICA WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AT THE FOREFRONT OF EFFORTS TO ASSIST. CANADA HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED OVER THE SAME PERIOD MORE THAN 22 MILLION CANADIAN DOLLARS TO THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES, THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AGENCIES FOR THEIR