

Canada has been particularly concerned about the implications in Article 9, sub-paragraph 3 since it could have been interpreted as restricting such well established rights as freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of association. We fully recognize the aims of those who wish to provide new safeguards against the evil of racial discrimination, but we must guard against the temptation to pursue one desirable aim at the expense of others equally desirable. The laws of Canada have long provided for the punishment of those who would incite or use violence in pursuit of racial discrimination. To contemplate in addition the persecution and punishment of groups or individuals, on the ground that they seek to promote any particular view even one as offensive as racial discrimination, is to go too far. This would encroach on one of the most cherished human rights in our society, the right to express opinion freely. Moreover, such an approach can hardly be reconciled with Articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by which everyone has a right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

For these reasons and in the hope of persuading the General Assembly to modify this article, the Canadian Delegation in the Third Committee abstained in the vote on the declaration as a whole. On the other hand we in Canada have always fully supported the intent and purposes of the declaration and for this reason the Canadian Delegation has voted for the declaration in this Assembly. It would have been a sad reflection on the United Nations if the declaration could not have been adopted (unanimously). Lack of complete agreement would only serve to encourage those who would practice racial discrimination.

Thank you, Mr. President.