

rights will rely on a variety of means, including dialogue and co-ordinated efforts through multilateral forums.

The United Nations clearly has a central role to play in advancing these ideals. The promotion of respect for human rights is, after all, a UN Charter purpose.

But freedom and democracy command our attention not only as goals in their own right. They are also instruments, indispensable agents of progress towards the UN's other basic aims, in the security, development and humanitarian fields. Through his work on the Agendas for Peace and for Development, the Secretary General has reminded us of the interdependence of the fundamental purposes of the United Nations. Canada agrees with his analysis. And we believe that the implications for our work here are clear: we must ensure that the UN's human rights program serves all of the goals of the organization — peace, freedom and prosperity for all.

Particular responsibility to this end falls upon the new post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, with its broad mandate for promotion, protection, prevention and technical assistance, and for co-ordination of human rights activities throughout the UN system. Canada was honoured to play an active role in the creation of this office and in supporting Mr. Ayala Lasso's response, so early in his tenure, to the unprecedented catastrophe in Rwanda. We commend the High Commissioner on the initial steps taken to launch his operations, and we pledge our continued support for his efforts to meet the tasks ahead.

The responsibility borne by this Commission is no less crucial: we must provide the direction and political impetus needed to give practical effect to the High Commissioner's mandate and to the Program of Action set down by the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. I would like now to review a few of the directions in which Canada believes the Commission should focus its efforts.

A central preoccupation of Canada's foreign policy is to enhance the capacity of the international community to identify and address potential causes of instability before they lead to violent conflict. Clearly this Commission has a crucial contribution to make in the fields of early warning and preventive diplomacy.

My own travels this past year have made me painfully aware of the direct connection between peace and security and respect for human rights. This is a two-way street: war and civil unrest clearly produce major violations of human rights at the most basic level. This we are reminded of daily by graphic television images of the violence and continued suffering in the former Yugoslavia, or in central Africa — where I will next week attend a conference to consider the plight of some two million refugees of the tragedy in Rwanda.