

in 11 other countries. In considering the situation in an individual state, it continues to be Canadian policy to avoid as far possible the political aspects of the problem, to concentrate on the plight of the people concerned, and to seek improvements of a pragmatic nature.

The 1975 Helsinki Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) opened a new avenue for the participating states to discuss East-West problems in human rights and humanitarian matters. The Madrid review conference adopted a Canadian proposal that a Human Rights Experts Meeting be held in Ottawa in 1985, and preparations for this meeting have begun. The meeting will provide a further opportunity for a review of the implementation of undertakings under the Final Act, and could also be an important step in the process of reconciling the widely-different concepts of human rights.

### **Commission on the Status of Women**

Canada continued its active role as one of 32 members of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The Commission meets biennially to consider the promotion of women's rights in the political, economic, social and educational fields. At its most recent meeting (February 15-24, 1984), the Commission considered for the first time the question of communications concerning human rights and the status of women. As a member of the Commission, Canada also participated in preparations for the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya.

Canada is seeking re-election to the Commission in 1984, on the expiry of its present three-year term.

### **CEDAW**

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women held its second session in August 1983 and its third session in March-April 1984. The 23-member committee, on which a Canadian representative participates, reviews the reports of signatory countries concerning their implementation of the convention. Canada's report will be presented to the Committee at its fourth session in January 1985.

### **International Youth Year**

The United Nations has designated 1985 as International Youth Year with the sub-theme of Participation, Development and Peace. During 1983-84 Canada participated as an observer at two meetings of the UN Advisory Committee on International Youth Year, as well as at two regional preparatory meetings in Europe and Latin America. As the focus for the Year will be largely on activities at the national and local levels, an International Youth Year Secretariat was established within the Department of the Secretary of State to co-ordinate Canada's observance of the Year.

### **Second World Population Conference**

In preparation for the Second World Population Conference, held under UN auspices in August 1984 in Mexico, an interdepartmental committee was established to develop Canada's position. Due to the sensitive and complex issues involved in population questions, consultations were undertaken with the provinces, federal parliamentarians, non-

governmental organizations and professional associations of demographers. At the international level, two UN Preparatory Committees met in which some 100 countries, including Canada, participated. Canadian concerns on the need for an integrated approach to questions of population and development, primary health care, the carrying capacity of the environment and the full participation of women in the economic, political and cultural aspects of society were reflected in a set of 85 draft recommendations for consideration at the Conference.

### **Drug strategy review**

The year was marked by growing interest in the need for close multilateral co-operation in the area of narcotic drug abuse and control. Foreign policy formulation in this field continued to be influenced by domestic concerns in addressing this problem. The development of interdependent national and international strategies have been directed towards reducing both the demand for, and the traffic in, illicit drugs, particularly heroin and cocaine. Efforts in this field have included a variety of domestic economic, judicial, medical and social programs. Internationally, Canada continued to support the activities of the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control, the International Narcotics Control Board, and the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. In spite of such efforts, illicit drug consumption in Canada continued to grow; the number of heroin addicts in Canada was estimated at approximately 20 000 and cocaine users at some 250 000.

### **Indigenous affairs**

During the year there was a significant increase in the international activities of Canadian aboriginal organizations, through more active co-operation with similar groups in other countries and greater contact with UN bodies concerned with human rights. The Assembly of First Nations played an active part in the founding of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, which has its headquarters in Canada. Similarly, Canadian Inuit have joined groups from Alaska and Greenland to form the Inuit Circumpolar Conference and were hosts for its meeting at Frobisher Bay, Northwest Territories, in July 1983. There has also been a growing participation of indigenous organizations in the work of UN bodies, such as the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities of the Commission on Human Rights. Cases involving discrimination against women under section 12(i)(6) of the Indian Act have been heard by the Human Rights Committee sitting under the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The rapidly increasing involvement of aboriginal groups in international activities of various kinds led the Department, in September 1983, to establish an Indigenous Affairs desk in its Social Affairs and Programs Branch, to assist indigenous groups in pursuing their international objectives.