

Human Security and Human Rights

Canada's commitment to human security responds to new global realities. This constitutes a major and necessary shift in traditional approaches to international relations and world affairs, which have long taken the state as the principal actor and object of concern.

As a member of the UN Security Council during 1999 and 2000, Canada has launched debate on such human security and human rights issues as physical and legal protection for civilians and the need for more ways to ensure humanitarian and effective sanctions. Canada welcomes and supports the emphasis on the individual in the UN Secretary-General's millennium report, *We the Peoples*.

Human rights are fundamental to human security. Promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is one of the goals set out in the UN Charter. From the start of his appointment, the Secretary-General undertook to make human rights one of the central pillars of the work of the UN. Since its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN has adopted a series of conventions and declarations for protecting and promoting human rights. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, along with the 1948 Universal Declaration, form the International Bill of Human Rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN body that serves as the focal point on human rights, has the job of making human rights a mainstream concern throughout the UN system.

Canada is a recognized leader on many human rights issues at the United Nations and has recently been re-elected to the Commission on Human Rights. Canada has led resolutions at the Commission on issues such as the human rights situation in Rwanda and in Sierra Leone, violence against women, war-affected children, mass exoduses, impunity, freedom of opinion and expression, and on the working group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Within the United Nations, Canada has advocated strengthening the UN human rights system, better co-ordination between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other parts of the UN system, and more systematic integration of human rights with peace and security and development activities. Canada recognizes that all this will require more resources, particularly an increased budget for the agencies and mechanisms that comprise the human rights program.