

- Second, Canadians have been no more dismayed about the many situations I have mentioned than they have by the rise of new forms of racism and extremism in parts of Eastern and Western Europe. At the same time, we have been impressed with the manner in which citizens of those regions have consistently and strongly reiterated their determination to resist such developments. All societies are susceptible to the evils of racism and extremism: governments which are determined to deal with such problems deserve the international community's support.

- Third, Canada has on various occasions been criticised by human rights treaty bodies for its performance on one count or another. We have not always agreed with the specific conclusions of such committees; but our approach has been to co-operate and maintain a fully open dialogue with UN authorities. We are convinced that if all governments would co-operate and maintain such a dialogue, there would be less need for this debate.

Mr. Chairman,

I want to conclude by observing that our deliberations this year assume special importance as they occur shortly after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights.

All 171 States represented in Vienna endorsed the human rights principles defined in the Universal Declaration and other major instruments, and reaffirmed the duty of all States, regardless of their political, economic or social systems, to protect those rights. And in affirming the crucial linkages between human rights and the other central purposes of the United Nations, they embraced a vision set out for the Organisation by Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali last year: that of "an integrated approach to the objectives of peace, democracy and human rights and the requirements of development". The Secretary-General's subsequent call, in a speech in Québec, for "a new diplomacy for democracy and human rights" stands as a fitting challenge to all of us as we take up the task of follow-up to Vienna.

The outcomes of Vienna represent considerable achievements indeed, but their ultimate significance can only be assured through action by relevant organs, such as the Commission on Human Rights, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the human rights treaty bodies, to which so many of Vienna's specific recommendations were directed.

Much responsibility rests also with this Assembly, where the most immediate, crucial challenge lies in our work to create a High Commissioner for Human Rights. International human rights institutions have marked many advances in recent years, but they remain fragile and limited in reach and in overall impact. A High Commissioner, endowed with appropriate stature, authority and resources, will bring the needed co-ordination and renewal to these institutions.

We cannot miss this historic opportunity to translate the promise of Vienna into reality. Canada pledges its continued co-operation to all in seeking to bring this to pass.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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