

budgets of the various UN agencies dealing with the many facets of development. This participation in the UN organs is important to Canada, enabling it to take part in development efforts in many more countries and sectors than it could have done with only its own bilateral development assistance program.

Whether in programs addressing basic needs—family planning, nutrition, education—or programs dealing with health, environmental protection, women's education, agricultural development, food, irrigation, the eradication of poverty, the protection of human rights, humanitarian aid or vaccination, Canada is present wherever its resources permit and where its action may serve to improve the lot of the world's poorest people. It participates not only through CIDA but also through a number of federal departments, including Agriculture and Agri-Food, Environment, Transport, Natural Resources, and Justice, to name but a few.

Human rights

Since its founding in 1945, the UN has attempted to achieve the objectives of justice and equality defined by the Charter and applying to individuals as well as to states. One of its first tasks was to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (see p. 62 of the Guide), which enshrines the basic rights and freedoms that all human beings can claim: the right to life, liberty and nationality; freedom of opinion, conscience and religion; the right to work; the right to education; the right to take part in the nation's public business, etc.

The Declaration, the first draft of which was written by a Canadian, John Peters Humphrey, was passed a little over 50 years ago by the UN General Assembly on December 10, 1948. Every year, Human Rights Day commemorates this event, which is unique and of fundamental importance in the history of humanity.

Two international agreements adopted in 1966—the United Nations Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the United Nations Convention on Civil and Political Rights—extend the area of rights established by the Declaration. These three instruments together make up the International Charter of Human Rights, both a standard and a goal for all nations and all peoples.

Since that time, they have been joined by about 60 other instruments concerning human rights, notably the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To afford better protection for human rights and ensure that they are respected, the UN has acquired certain tools. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a position created in 1993, co-ordinates all the activities of UN system agencies in this area, attempts to prevent violations of basic rights, investigates violations



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