

values and means of dealing with offenders and as Judge Lilles has put it, "to develop new co-operative approaches to the administration of justice in our northern communities."

Since 1982, several important initiatives have been undertaken to address aboriginal rights at an international level. International standard setting activities by the International Labour Organization and the United Nations may have implications for domestic Canadian policy on aboriginal rights. In addition, allegations by several aboriginal groups that Canada is in violation of existing international human rights standards may have an impact on Canada's international reputation and on domestic policy. In other words, policy development, legislative action and administrative action on aboriginal affairs in Canada is now increasingly taking place against an international backdrop that includes international norms of acceptable government action. The adoption by the I.L.O. of Convention 169 ("the Convention Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples In Independent Countries") raises the issue of whether Canada should ratify the only existing international convention on aboriginal rights. Reaction from the aboriginal community so far has been mixed. At the United Nations, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations is in the process of drafting a Declaration on Indigenous Rights, that may eventually come before the U.N. General Assembly for consideration.

One of the most difficult human rights issues facing the aboriginal community is the question of women's equality rights under the Indian Act. Many aboriginal groups maintain that despite the attempt in 1985 to remove legislative sex discrimination from the Act, there is residual sex discrimination that violates Canada's international human rights commitments. There is also a continuing debate regarding the appropriate way to implement the 1985 amendments in a way that respects the rights of persons reinstated to Indian status as well as the collective self-government rights of aboriginal nations.

### **23. Health**

There is a great number of important health issues from health services on and off reserve, to substance abuse, to long-term care, to