

With respect to the Convention on Torture, we welcome its recent entry into force, and we trust that the Committee Against Torture, which meets in April, will soon be in a position to discharge its mandate under the Convention. We would urge other states to ratify this important document with a view to achieving the utmost universality. While touching on the Convention, my delegation wishes to flag one important series of issues which is now beginning to merit the serious attention of the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, namely, the variety of financial and administrative arrangements which support the work of treaty-based bodies in the human rights field, and the crisis which is now evident across the board as far as concerns work-loads, meeting times, Secretariat support and reporting obligations for these bodies. It is now time that the Commission began to address this problem, even though we recognize its complexity and difficulty. In this regard, my delegation has already indicated in its statement under Item 11 our hope of pursuing at future sessions of the Commission some new ideas, such as the consolidation and rationalization of monitoring bodies.

Before leaving this subject, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate the concern my government and others have expressed on other occasions about the reservation which one State Party to the Convention Against Torture has registered concerning its financial responsibilities under the Convention. Canada regards this reservation as inconsistent with the responsibility of all parties to support the machinery established to oversee implementation of the Convention, and we would encourage the State concerned to reconsider this matter.

With respect to the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, Canada has recently reaffirmed its support by increasing our financial contribution. We support a continued focus of activity by the fund on therapy and rehabilitation projects designed to address the psychological and physical ravages caused by torture.

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Working Group on Disappearances, my delegation regards this mechanism as a model of what can be achieved by this organization by approaching human rights issues on the basis of consensus and good will. The fairness, discretion and flexibility that have become essential hallmarks of the Working Group's humanitarian mission are underscored in the useful outline of its methods in this year's report. We trust that the Working Group will continue to enjoy a high level of cooperation from all parties to its enquiries. In this