

ascertained, no funding programme for independent monitoring and reporting currently exists in the provinces.

### III. IMPROVING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION: SOME BASIC ISSUES

Recent NGO successes in raising the issue of Canada's compliance with its international human rights obligations at UN meetings have highlighted the points of intersection between the domestic and international dimensions of human rights. Interest in Canada towards civil society participation in the reporting and monitoring process is likely to grow, especially in areas such as economic and social rights, where existing constitutional and legislative provisions are clearly inadequate.<sup>26</sup>

A typical example of the growing interest in reporting and monitoring is the Joint Statement on Human Rights,<sup>27</sup> issued by approximately 30 Québec NGOs on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The Statement, a comprehensive document on contemporary human rights issues, calls for the establishment in Québec of a "permanent watchdog, independent from governments", that would "periodically and publicly assess government and corporate action" in relation to economic and social rights, "in view of the *Universal Declaration* and its related instruments", while also "advising governments, parliaments and citizens on necessary changes".<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Economic and social rights enjoy no specific protection under the *Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*. (See Reference on Ss. 193 and 195(1) of the *Criminal Code (Man.)*, (1990) 1 S.C.R. 1123, pp. 1172-1175.) Québec is the only jurisdiction where human rights legislation specifically recognises economic and social rights: see P. BOSSET, "Les droits économiques et sociaux, parents pauvres de la Charte québécoise?", (1996) 75 *Canadian Bar Review* 583-603, and ss. 39-48 of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, R.S.Q., c. C-12.

<sup>27</sup> *Tous les droits humains pour toutes et tous, un idéal à poursuivre avec détermination. Déclaration commune*. Joint Statement by the Ligue des droits et libertés and 28 other Québec NGOs (1998).

<sup>28</sup> "Nous exigeons [...] la création d'un observatoire québécois permanent, indépendant des gouvernements, chargé d'évaluer, périodiquement et publiquement, l'action gouvernementale de