

• cont'd from page 9

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS BILATERALLY

Canada actively promotes human rights in countries where it believes improvements are needed. In the past two years, Canada has had ongoing dialogue with China, Indonesia and Cuba on human rights issues, and we are co-operating in a number of areas. We are beginning to see the benefits of this continued engagement.

CUBA

- A joint declaration signed with Cuba last year covers a number of economic, political, justice and social issues and includes specific references to human rights.
- We have had an active dialogue with Cuba since the agreement was signed, including specific forums on children's rights and women's rights and discussion of the role of non-governmental organizations. The release of several hundred political prisoners is one sign that Cuba is making some steps toward more openness.

INDONESIA

- Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy's meeting with his Indonesian counterpart last year led to an agreement to co-operate on issues of human rights and good governance. Canada is the only country whose human rights commission has a formal program of co-operation with the Indonesian National Human Rights Commission, a body well established enough to be openly critical of the Indonesian government. Canadian parliamentarians have been to Indonesia to observe conditions directly.



photo: John Rodsted

CHINA

- When Prime Minister Chrétien met with the Chinese President last year, they agreed to co-host a forum on human rights. That frank discussion took place earlier this year in British Columbia and included observers from several of China's Asian neighbours. Another such forum is to take place in November this year. There are signs that China is responding to ongoing dialogue with Canada and other nations. This year, for example, China signed the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights, released two prominent dissidents and allowed visits by high profile human rights advocates such as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson.

CHILD LABOUR

- Canada strongly supports the work of the International Labour Organization to develop a new Convention on eliminating the worst forms of child labour, for adoption in 1999.
- Last year, Minister Axworthy announced the creation of the Child Labour Challenge Fund to support Canadian private sector initiatives aimed at addressing exploitive child labour internationally. Information on project funding is available on the Internet at: www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca (click on Social Issues under the Policy section of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Web page).

CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

The exploitation of child soldiers includes the many boys and girls who serve in armies and rebel groups as cooks, porters, messengers, spies, labourers and sexual slaves.

- In April 1998, following meetings with UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict Olara Otunnu, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency announced aid for four projects worth \$650 000 to eliminate the use of child soldiers. For example, projects in northern Uganda and Liberia are aimed at stopping the abduction of children by rebel soldiers, supporting the advocacy work for the release of these children, and facilitating the tracing and resettlement of the ones who manage to escape captivity.

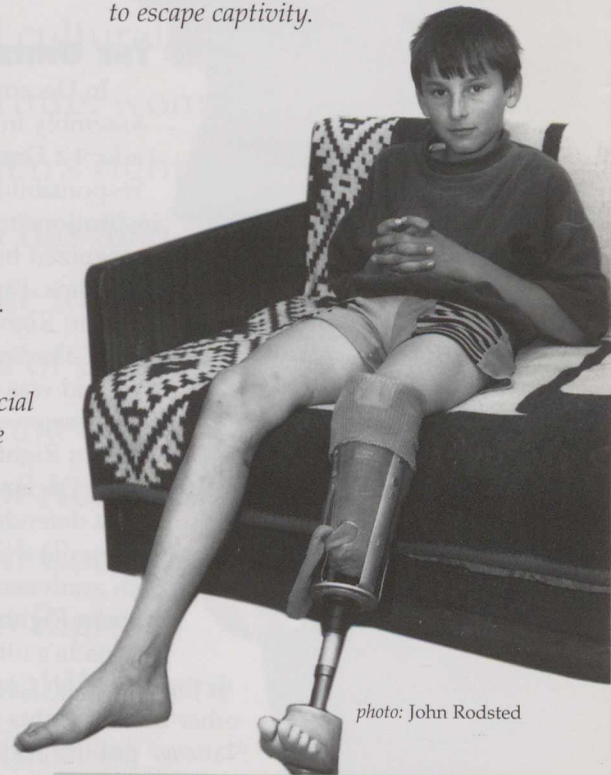


photo: John Rodsted

OCTOBER

OCTOBER 2-4

Conference: "Linking the Domestic and International — Human Rights into the 21st Century", Faculty of Law, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario
DFAIT supported this conference.

OCTOBER 8-10

Workshop: "Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 50 Years After the Universal Declaration", Faculty of Law, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B.C.
DFAIT supported the participation of international human rights experts in this workshop.

NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 23-27

Official Visit to Canada of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson
Mary Robinson will participate in activities across Canada celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Her visit will highlight Canada's commitment to the UN human rights program and underscore the importance we attach to the central message of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — all human rights for all.

NOVEMBER 26-29

International Conference: "Universal Rights and Human Values — A Blueprint for Peace, Justice and Freedom", Sheraton Grande Hotel, Edmonton, Alberta
Sponsored by the Western Chapter of the Canadian Human Rights Foundation and supported by DFAIT, the conference features UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson as a keynote speaker. For information call (403) 453-2638. E-mail: hrc@inc.com