

Mr. President,

A raison d'être of this organization is to create a more humane world. The most fundamental human rights embodied in the Charter and UN human rights documents are being systematically and grossly violated in a number of member countries. The reports of Amnesty International are an indictment of our age. In Afghanistan a whole people has been tyrannized and millions of its citizens made refugees. Around the world and every day people are being tortured and killed for their political and religious beliefs.

One of the most distressing trends of the past year has been the deterioration of the situation in South Africa. The government of the country has stubbornly refused to dismantle the abhorrent regime of apartheid and to adopt a system that respects human rights for all its people. It has instead imposed a draconian state of emergency. We have seen hundreds of deaths and more than 10,000 detainees.

The South African government's repressive policies can have no other outcome but more violence and, in the end, a cataclysm in which all South Africans - white and non-white - will suffer grievously. That would be tragic for a country so blessed in human and material resources.

Canada has worked to intensify the international community's pressure against apartheid and has helped mobilize the special capacities of the Commonwealth to try to stop the destruction of Southern Africa. Canada is implementing all the sanctions agreed to by six Commonwealth leaders in London last month. But pressure will only be fully effective if the international community stands as one, and I urge all countries, especially those with significant economic relations with South Africa, to implement further concrete measures on an urgent basis.

International terrorism threatens us all and we must all act together to fight it. The United Nations, functioning as it always should, expressed this purpose and met this need over the past year. All member states agree on the threat that international terrorism poses. At the last session, the Security Council unanimously and unequivocally condemned all acts of hostage-taking and abduction. At the same session, the General Assembly spoke with one voice condemning all acts, methods and practices of terrorism. This was the UN at its best.