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the press is not free or where censorship reigns, how can public opinion exist? A large part of mankind is unfortunately still deprived of the means of expression.

Despite these defects, the Commission seems less impaired than one might have thought. How otherwise would one explain that so many governments seek to prevent situations in which they are involved being brought to the tables? Still, the Commission is not an international tribunal. Its objective is not to punish governments, but to alleviate the fate of the victims.

To this end, the Commission has experimented with mechanisms which it has been obliged to invent to respond to violations of human rights without wounding the susceptibilities of governments, while at the same time obtaining their co-operation. These mechanisms are now operational, and their use will no doubt become easier. My activities as president did not end at the conclusion of the thirty-fifth session but continued until now in various forms. In this context, it would without doubt be appropriate to follow up on resolution 22 of last year, which envisages meetings of the bureau between sessions when circumstances require, as well as providing the Human Rights Division with the personnel it needs to fulfill its functions. It is of the greatest importance indeed that the Human Rights Division have at its disposal sufficient resources to carry out the increasingly heavy tasks which have been assigned to it. For myself, I wish to take this occasion to warmly thank the Director, Mr. Van Boven, and his staff for their constant support. I have become aware in working closely with them of their great competence, and of their devotion and profound attachment to the cause of human rights.

The Commission has taken prudent steps in new directions, opening for example on the right to development in its regional and national ramifications. Draft conventions on torture and on the rights of the child are now on the way to completion, as well as a draft declaration on the rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities.

We understand it is becoming urgent to envisage intercessional action on the part of the Commission and to extend the duration of meetings of the Commission and the sub-commission. With the agenda items that we have debated in public session, and the situations which we have studied in camera, I believe that the balance sheet is favourable.

However, in comparing these accomplishments with what remains to be done, the results surely seem derisory. How can we not begin with anguish the thirty-sixth session of the Commission, which is opening against a backdrop of armed conflict? The spirit of *detente* is threatened. The world is in a state of alert. It is timely for the Commission to recall that force does not suffice to guarantee security and that peace does not rest on armed force alone. Let me quote in this respect one of the most prestigious champions of human rights and of peace, His Holiness Pope John-Paul II: "in the final analysis, peace is but the respect of the inviolable rights of man".

The champions of human rights must not let themselves be intimidated by the rattling of sabres. Security is not threatened uniquely by military confrontation but by

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