

Second, the critical roles of special rapporteurs and representatives must be recognized, and their capabilities safeguarded and strengthened. We profoundly regret that several reports by special rapporteurs were subject to selective and arbitrary decisions regarding length and circulation which, in two cases - those of El Salvador and Afghanistan - rendered the document far less useful as the basis for serious discussion. In the case of Iran, the quality of the report is so lamentable as to be virtually irrelevant to this debate. These lapses are unacceptable; they severely undercut the work of the U.N. in the human rights field.

Although the mandates of special rapporteurs have varied enormously in the past decade, the time has come for greater uniformity in their designation and reporting functions. We believe that special rapporteurs must be allowed to conclude their work in all cases. Some governments have committed their states to greater respect for human rights, and promised fundamental changes. That is all to the good. But while recognizing those sound intentions, this organization must have a means of ensuring that intentions are translated into action. Even the most dedicated commitment to pluralistic democratic principles does not guarantee compliance in practice. In the case of both Guatemala and El Salvador, for example, newly-elected civilian governments have promised moves in a positive direction. However, we believe that the mandates of the special rapporteur and special representative in those cases should be continued. Their work must go on until there is agreement that their mandates can be terminated in recognition of an effective effort to promote full respect for human rights.

Third, we need to establish differential treatment for those states, such as Iran and Afghanistan, which refuse to cooperate with U.N. human rights activities. Where states do admit fact-finding bodies, or agree to useful measures of reform, we could afford recognition to their efforts commensurate with the extent of follow-up action. Where full cooperation is assured, and concrete steps are taken in keeping with the expectations of the international community, a degree of confidentiality and discretion could accompany the work of the special rapporteur. But where states categorically deny their charter obligations to cooperate, the full authority of this Organization should be brought to bear to ensure that their behaviour is a matter of public record. Perhaps international opprobrium will succeed where institutional niceties have failed.

Fourth, we must work to construct a more sensitive approach to UN action in those cases where states are emerging from difficult human rights situations and require the solidarity of the international community to consolidate fragile gains.