

In **Indonesia**, we welcome the government's notable progress in the area of human rights, including the commitments under the National Plan of Action on Human Rights and moves to ratify international human rights treaties. We encourage the government to push forward with these and other initiatives to meet the aspirations of Indonesians for greater democracy and for more equitable and sustainable development. Canada also welcomes the new approach in dealing with **East Timor**. Canada believes, however, that **East Timorese** themselves should be involved in the process and should have a say in determining their future. We encourage the government of **Indonesia** also to consider other initiatives, such as the release of **Xanana Gusmao**, conducive to a full and lasting settlement of this longstanding international issue.

The situation in **Indonesia** is just one example of where serious domestic human rights challenges are beginning to be addressed, often with recourse to international human rights instruments and mechanisms.

A welcome example is the significant improvement that has recently taken place in **Nigeria**, particularly regarding the transition to democracy. We laud the release of large numbers of political prisoners, urge that remaining pending cases be dealt with expeditiously and that **Decree No. 2** providing for detention without trial be repealed soon. We welcome **Nigeria's** confirmation yesterday that the visit of the **Special Rapporteur to Nigeria** will take place in the course of 1998.

We welcome **China's** recent signing of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** as well as last October's signing of the **Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. We urge **China** to ratify and implement both covenants swiftly. Canada remains concerned about the extensive use of the death penalty, restrictions on freedom of religion and the suppression of political dissent throughout the country, including in **Tibet**. We take **China's** willingness to conduct bilateral dialogues with Canada and others on human rights as an important indication of **China's** greater acceptance of the principle of the universality of human rights.

We appreciate our frank bilateral human rights dialogue with **Cuba**, and welcome such positive developments as **Cuba's** growing space for religious freedom, its invitation to selected **UN Special Representatives**, and the release of political prisoners earlier this year. However, the continued existence of prisoners of conscience, particularly the four arrested in July 1997, and the failure to protect and promote freedom of expression, and civil and political rights in general, remain matters of deep concern for Canada.

In **Haiti**, while acknowledging efforts towards improving the human rights situations, we underline that much remains to be done, particularly with regard to impunity, abuse of authority, the state of prisons, and the essential reform of the judicial system. We remain very concerned at the absence of an agreement regarding a Prime Minister. However we are encouraged by the **Haitian government's** continued commitment to the cause of human rights as further evidence by its invitation to the **Special Rapporteur on violence against women**.

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