

sents, and these priorities will guide our endeavours to fulfil this commitment.

I have spoken about the far-reaching quests for peace, self-determination and development. These are the forces by which pervasive change can be channelled in positive directions. They are as new as today and as old as humankind, constants amid change. They have found eloquent expression in the ideals of our Charter, and I urge our re-dedication to them.

Human rights

But there is none so pervasive as the quest for human dignity for the individual and his rights. That is why the United Nations enshrined in its Charter, as a primary objective, the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. There has been the development of several important human rights instruments since — most noticeably, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In its stewardship of implementing the provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, there is the expert and responsible role of the Human Rights Committee. It is as an example of the ability of the international community to promote internationally-recognized standards.

The Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is an equally significant covenant needing serious and expert review.

There are areas in which international standards have yet to be established. We applaud the placing before this Assembly for adoption the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion.

But while we welcome the continuing development of international human rights standards, we are deeply conscious that despite these, the grossest of abuses occur; the lives, freedom and integrity of innocent persons are constantly swept aside in the name of one cause, or power struggle, or another. If the United Nations provides relief unhesitatingly to the victims of natural disasters, how can we do less when the crises are man-made?

The United Nations has the means to respond. It can, for example, employ the good offices of the Secretary-General; it can provide for the urgent dispatch of a special rapporteur or a mission of enquiry. All that is needed is the will to act in providing protection for those individuals or groups whose situation has become perilous in situations of social breakdown.

On the subject of human rights and massive exodus, Canada welcomed the adoption of its proposal to appoint a special rapporteur. We trust that the experience of Prince Sadruddin Khan in that role will lead to adoption of a report which provides insights into how the United Nations' organizations and member states can together prevent refugee situations from reaching existing proportions. We believe that report should provide an impartial basis for examining broader aspects of international refugee problems including, for example, the proposed initiative by the Federal Republic of Germany regarding international guidelines for preventing massive flows of refugees.