

development is most likely to be successful and sustainable over the long term if it rests on a foundation of democratic processes and institutions. A country's potential for social and economic development turns on the freedom its citizens enjoy to participate fully in all aspects of society, no less than on governmental commitment to material prosperity.

Much progress was made in Vienna in developing a new and broader consensus on the importance of key relationship between human rights, democracy and development, which was itself a key underlying theme of the entire Vienna World Conference.

There is growing acceptance of the idea that development, democracy and human rights are inter related. And old suggestions, on the part of some, that lack of development can be an excuse for human rights violations, or that development must come first with human rights to be considered later as a lower priority, ring increasingly hollow.

We are moving away from development as a debating ground between north and south in the Commission, and towards a more cooperative mutual understanding of the issues involved.

A forward agenda

Mr. Chairman:

The question before us here is what we in the Commission on Human Rights can do to move forward in the new more constructive spirit developed at the Conference in Vienna? What can we do here during these six weeks to ensure that the concepts and ideas reflected in the Vienna Declaration are not consigned to the archives of history but form the basis of a new partnership to promote human rights, democracy and development at the international level? What concrete steps can we take?

Canada, like some other countries, has increasingly made human rights an important component of our bilateral assistance programmes.

But, we also believe that more can be done within the UN system to assist countries which are genuinely trying to improve their human rights records.

This does not of course mean that the international community should become less vigilant in speaking up about serious cases of human rights violations, wherever they may occur. That is and will continue to be a main focus of the Commission.

But we could at the same time usefully devote more effort to the development of practical and constructive ways to assist

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