

Statement No. 48

October 18, 1967

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS  
INTOLERANCE

Text of Statement delivered in the Third Committee  
by the Canadian representative, Mrs. Sally Merchant,  
on the draft convention on the elimination of all  
forms of religious intolerance, October 18, 1967.

The Canadian delegation welcomes this opportunity to express some general views on Item 54 of our agenda, the draft convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance. In this first statement we will attempt to limit our comments to the way in which we believe the Committee should proceed in its work on this item. At a later stage we would of course wish to express our views on the substance of the draft convention and the question of the type and scope of the implementation articles.

At the outset I should like to express the pleasure of my delegation that this Assembly has before it for adoption, after so many years, a draft convention on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance. Members of this Committee will recall that the idea of drafting such an instrument goes back to the 17th session of the General Assembly, and that the Human Rights Commission has laboured long and thoughtfully through four sessions to produce a draft declaration and convention on religious intolerance. The result is the document we see before us, a product of concerted effort, compromise and co-operation among the members of the Human Rights Commission. Our congratulations to the Human Rights Commission are, however, qualified by the disappointment we feel because pressing demands on the Commission's time prevented it from adopting a formula for implementation articles. Had the Human Rights Commission been able to do this, the work of our Committee would, we believe, have been greatly simplified. It is also somewhat disappointing that a draft declaration on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance has not been adopted. Nevertheless, we feel that a declaration as a statement of intention is of lesser significance than a convention, which is a legal instrument. Now that we have the prospect of adopting the draft convention at this session of the General Assembly, it would seem to my delegation that although it is usual practice a declaration in this case is not entirely