

We would also agree that, if requested, Canada should offer assistance in the development of institutions and conditions which will help guarantee human rights; that is technical assistance for the judiciary; advice on the administration of elections; technical assistance to auditors. In principle, we agree with the committee's constructive approach to the question of technical assistance to military and police but there are limitations due to inadequacies in Spanish language training capabilities and the fact that there are few additional places available in appropriate Canadian training institutions. We will examine further the possibilities in this area.

Canada has an enviable record in regard to sending recognized experts, such as experienced Elections Canada and provincial officials to observe elections in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, in response to invitations by the governments concerned. Clear and reasonable criteria have been developed for accepting such invitations. Support for the proposed Central America Parliament is of course, an initiative for Parliament. The government would favourably consider sending expert observers to the Central American Parliamentary elections, if asked, and in good company with other democratic countries.

One of the principal themes of the Committee's report is the central importance of economic development to both realizing and sustaining peace in Central America. The government fully supports this view; indeed, the belief that the root causes of conflict in the region are economic and social has for some years been one of the main underlying precepts of Canadian policy toward the region. Since the early eighties, we have substantially increased our economic assistance to the region. Canada has played an important role multilaterally in focussing the attention of the international community on the need for both more effective coordination and clearer priorities for economic assistance and for extraordinary additional assistance for economic reconstruction. We have responded consistently and generously to the plight of the thousands of refugees and displaced persons through contributions to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and other international relief agencies in Canada, as well as admitting to Canada almost 21,000 Central American refugees over the last 5 years.

As the Committee has emphasized, this is not the time to slacken our efforts. If we in Canada are serious about our commitment to the achievement of a resilient peace in the region, we have to consider seriously how we can most appropriately