

and an increasing and important role for the valued expertise of Elections Canada and provincial electoral commissions such as Elections Quebec.

The creation of the Electoral Observation Fund is an example of a flexible mechanism that responds to new needs in developing countries. Likewise, the new Human Rights Fund for Sri Lanka will help those who are working to preserve and restore human rights in the face of an extended conflict.

In Central and Eastern Europe, we have moved quickly to reinforce democratic change. Within the last two years, the External Affairs Task Force on East and Central Europe has undertaken 27 projects worth over \$3 million in support of democracy, 47 projects worth over \$5 million in support of good government and eight projects amounting to \$400,000 in the area of human rights. Almost half of its funding, apart from food aid and humanitarian assistance, has been specifically targeted in these areas. All of these are grass-roots, hands-on assistance.

These special and targeted efforts are part of Canada's overall development effort, which seeks to enable countries to bring about improvements in efficiency, increases in human freedom and an expansion of human enjoyment on a sustainable basis -- in short, to eliminate poverty and achieve good governance.

The Legal Underpinning

At the outset of this address, I referred to the balance between law and government action that supports human rights and encourages and assists democratic reform.

New governments aspiring to democratic reform increasingly make solemn political commitments to ensure that all rights are respected. If this requires change to domestic law, it must be done. If it requires better enforcement of those laws, it also must be done. If it requires action by other states to ensure compliance with international covenants and treaties, we shall use the mechanisms established for that purpose.

Governments alone cannot guarantee tolerance; inevitably that power rests with the individual. But governments can establish a climate for tolerance; they can play a crucial role in education -- the heart of this issue.

And governments can ensure that intolerance is unacceptable. The persecution or discrimination in treatment of individuals based on their race, religion, ethnic or linguistic background can be made illegal. Once such treatment is illegal, governments can use the full force of their laws to prosecute offenders.