

immeasurably to the improvement of the Convention. Finally, I pay tribute to all those states that participated in the drafting of this important instrument.

Mr. Chairman,

I am proud also of the contribution of my country in the drafting of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. At an early stage, Canada recognized the potential importance of this instrument and worked diligently towards its realization. Once adopted, my country will commence the process of considering the possibility of ratification as I hope all countries will. As a federal state, the process in Canada will require close consultations with the provinces and territories, since many of the provisions of the Convention fall within provincial or shared jurisdiction. However, discussions between the various levels of government were initiated early in the drafting exercise and I am optimistic that, in light of the extensive consultations that have already occurred, support for early Canadian ratification will be forthcoming.

Mr. Chairman,

However, I would be less than honest if I did not admit that the instrument is not a perfect one. There is probably no delegation in this room that does not have concerns about some provisions of the Convention. For its part, Canada is disappointed that no solution has yet been found to improve the standards in Article 38 on children in times of armed conflict. It remains Canada's view that the eventual wording of this article must not be interpreted as a lowering of those standards set forth in the 1977 Geneva Protocols. As well, we believe that Article 14 on freedom of thought, conscience and religion must be read in light of the provision in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights on which it is based. We must all recognize that no instrument can be perfect when you bring together, for drafting purposes, countries of different ideologies, religions, and social and economic structures. Given that reality, it is remarkable that an instrument of the high quality of the Convention was produced at all.

This fact should not hinder our support for its adoption. It should spur us to work together to ensure that the Convention lives up to its fullest potential. One way to achieve this objective is through the implementation mechanisms established in the Convention. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, once in place, can be and should be a tool through which the