



Open Letter to Parliamentarians

We, the members of the student committees for the recent Human Rights and Social Justice conference at The University of Winnipeg, under the auspices of the Global College, believe that human rights, provided through advocacy and education, are the foundation of peaceful and prosperous societies, and therefore call on all political parties and all parliamentarians to:

1. Recognize the link between human rights, democracy, and democratic development, and assert these as fundamental principles in the drafting of domestic and foreign policy.
2. Form a Standing Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights with a mandate to oversee the policies, programs, and legislation of any and all departments and agencies within government, particularly those with a direct effect on the promotion and protection of human rights both in Canada and abroad.
3. Support further development and implementation of human rights education in concert with both formal and informal institutions and programs, both at home and abroad, and urge the full and continued cooperation of government with organizations working to these ends.

We urge that the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights have as its members not only parliamentarians, but also significant representation from civil society organizations that work specifically on the protection and promotion of human rights as prescribed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We would also suggest that this representation include representatives of youth/student organizations who are engaged in human rights activities and correctly view this involvement as an investment in the peaceful and harmonious global society that they wish to be their heritage.

We believe that Winnipeg is emerging as the Canadian centre for human rights development, and therefore call on all citizens, organizations, and Civic, Provincial and Federal levels of government to work together in order to establish this city as a Human Rights City with the hope of leading other Canadian cities to make this same commitment.

We call on all Canadian youth, and civil society, to join us in forming a committee to urge all parties and parliamentarians to act immediately on these recommendations.

-Erin Bartlett, Joel Marion, Jennifer Montebruno and Choloé Chapple are students involved with the Rights and Democracy Network at The University of Winnipeg. Jayne Miles, Nicolas Kotoulas and Kaitlyn Boulding are students at The University of Winnipeg Collegiate. They have worked together to capture and articulate the important messages resulting from the Human Rights and Social Justice Conference held on Feb. 23-25, 2007, hosted by the Global College at The University of Winnipeg.

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**HUMAN RIGHTS
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

SETTING THE AGENDA FOR THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL,
AN INTERNATIONAL FORUM ON WAR-AFFECTED CHILDREN,
GENDER RIGHTS, AND THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES