

## **FACTFINDING BY THE COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY**

The following are the facts found by the Committee of Inquiry, and subsequently accepted by the Permanent Council of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB).

1. The five Mexican organizations do not support or promote abortion. Their goals are to promote access to justice, civil security, the defence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, the environment, freedom of speech for journalists, protection of persons abducted, and defence of the poor and Aboriginal Peoples.
2. The five Mexican organizations did include their names on a United Nations Report which represented the sum total of all the recommendations of 50 Mexican human rights organizations. However:
  - a. Each signatory group had expressed its concerns about one or more human rights.
  - b. Each organization presented its own views without necessarily consulting the others. This is why some of them, by their signature, now appear to accept what the others had presented.
  - c. The organizations had only six months to send to the United Nations their observations and hopes on human rights in Mexico. The synthesis of all documents received was done in Geneva and resulted in the United Nations Report being ratified by all of the organizations that had contributed to the inquiry.
  - d. Unfortunately, some organizations that focused on women's rights took advantage of this opportunity to add "sexual and reproductive rights", hoping to open the way to abortion in Mexico and thus also leading to allegations that all the signatory groups supported abortion.
3. While abortion in most instances remains illegal in Mexico, a 2007 legal debate on abortion in Mexico involved a number of groups opposing imprisonment as a punishment for abortion, but continuing to oppose abortion on moral and legal grounds. Other Catholic groups, however, claimed that to be in favour of abolishing imprisonment for abortion meant promoting abortion and not being pro-life.
4. The representatives of the five Mexican organizations were clearly committed to defending human rights. They described in great detail and provided documentation on the programs introduced to improve the lot of the most destitute, victims of oppression, and persons treated unjustly and deprived of their rights.
5. Withdrawing the financial support of Canadian Catholics would cause immense harm to the five organizations in their work.
6. With respect to various statements found on their Web sites, the five Mexican organizations have acknowledged the concerns of the Bishops of the Canada.

## **OTHER FACTS TO BE NOTED**

1. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace adheres to Catholic teaching on the sanctity of each and all human life.
2. Development and Peace does not fund projects that support or promote abortion.
3. Development and Peace does not fund groups or organizations, but provides funding assistance for specific projects, each of which are individually approved.