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**This Document : 1999 CanLII 699 (S.C.C.)**

**Citation:** *Baker v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)*, [1999] 2 S.C.R. 817, 1999 CanLII 699 (S.C.C.)

**Date:** 1999-07-09

**Docket:** 25823

[\[Noteup\]](#)

**Mavis Baker**     *Appellant*

v.

**Minister of Citizenship and Immigration**     *Respondent*

and

**The Canadian Council of Churches,  
the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law,  
the Defence for Children International-Canada,  
the Canadian Council for Refugees,  
and the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues**     *Interveners*

**Indexed as: Baker v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)**

File No.: 25823.

1998: November 4; 1999: July 9.

Present: L'Heureux-Dubé, Gonthier, Cory, McLachlin, Iacobucci, Bastarache and Binnie JJ.

ON APPEAL FROM THE FEDERAL COURT OF APPEAL

*Immigration -- Humanitarian and compassionate considerations -- Children's interests -- Woman with Canadian-born dependent children ordered deported -- Written application made on humanitarian and compassionate grounds for exemption to requirement that application for immigration be made abroad -- Application denied*

*without hearing or formal reasons -- Whether procedural fairness violated -- Immigration Act, [R.S.C., 1985, c. I-2, ss. 82.1\(1\), 114\(2\)](#) -- Immigration Regulations, 1978, SOR/93-44, s. 2.1 -- Convention on the Rights of the Child, Can. T.S. 1992 No. 3, Arts. 3, 9, 12.*

*Administrative law -- Procedural fairness -- Woman with Canadian-born dependent children ordered deported -- Written application made on humanitarian and compassionate grounds for exemption to requirement that application for immigration be made abroad -- Whether participatory rights accorded consistent with duty of procedural fairness -- Whether failure to provide reasons violated principles of procedural fairness -- Whether reasonable apprehension of bias.*

*Courts -- Appellate review -- Judge on judicial review certifying question for consideration of Court of Appeal -- Legal effect of certified question -- Immigration Act, [R.S.C., 1985, c. I-2, s. 83\(1\)](#).*

*Immigration -- Humanitarian and compassionate considerations -- Standard of review of humanitarian and compassionate decision -- Best interests of claimant's children -- Approach to be taken in reviewing humanitarian and compassionate decision where children affected.*

*Administrative law -- Review of discretion -- Approach to review of discretionary decision making.*

The appellant, a woman with Canadian-born dependent children, was ordered deported. She then applied for an exemption, based on humanitarian and compassionate considerations under s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*, from the requirement that an application for permanent residence be made from outside Canada. This application was supported by letters indicating concern about the availability of medical treatment in her country of origin and the effect of her possible departure on her Canadian-born children. A senior immigration officer replied by letter stating that there were insufficient humanitarian and compassionate reasons to warrant processing the application in Canada. This letter contained no reasons for the decision. Counsel for the appellant, however, requested and was provided with the notes made by the investigating immigration officer and used by the senior officer in making his decision. The Federal Court -- Trial Division, dismissed an application for judicial review but certified the following question pursuant to s. 83(1) of the Act: "Given that the Immigration Act does not expressly incorporate the language of Canada's international obligations with respect to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, must federal immigration authorities treat the best interests of the Canadian child as a primary consideration in assessing an applicant under s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*?" The Court of Appeal limited its consideration to the question and found that the best interests of the children did not need to be given primacy in assessing such an

application. The order that the appellant be removed from Canada, which was made after the immigration officer's decision, was stayed pending the result of this appeal.

*Held:* The appeal should be allowed.

*Per* L'Heureux-Dubé, Gonthier, McLachlin, Bastarache and Binnie JJ.: Section 83(1) of the *Immigration Act* does not require the Court of Appeal to address only the certified question. Once a question has been certified, the Court of Appeal may consider all aspects of the appeal lying within its jurisdiction.

The duty of procedural fairness is flexible and variable and depends on an appreciation of the context of the particular statute and the rights affected. The purpose of the participatory rights contained within it is to ensure that administrative decisions are made using a fair and open procedure, appropriate to the decision being made and its statutory, institutional and social context, with an opportunity for those affected to put forward their views and evidence fully and have them considered by the decision-maker. Several factors are relevant to determining the content of the duty of fairness: (1) the nature of the decision being made and process followed in making it; (2) the nature of the statutory scheme and the terms of the statute pursuant to which the body operates; (3) the importance of the decision to the individual or individuals affected; (4) the legitimate expectations of the person challenging the decision; (5) the choices of procedure made by the agency itself. This list is not exhaustive.

A duty of procedural fairness applies to humanitarian and compassionate decisions. In this case, there was no legitimate expectation affecting the content of the duty of procedural fairness. Taking into account the other factors, although some suggest stricter requirements under the duty of fairness, others suggest more relaxed requirements further from the judicial model. The duty of fairness owed in these circumstances is more than minimal, and the claimant and others whose important interests are affected by the decision in a fundamental way must have a meaningful opportunity to present the various types of evidence relevant to their case and have it fully and fairly considered. Nevertheless, taking all the factors into account, the lack of an oral hearing or notice of such a hearing did not constitute a violation of the requirement of procedural fairness. The opportunity to produce full and complete written documentation was sufficient.

It is now appropriate to recognize that, in certain circumstances, including when the decision has important significance for the individual, or when there is a statutory right of appeal, the duty of procedural fairness will require a written explanation for a decision. Reasons are required here given the profound importance of this decision to those affected. This requirement was fulfilled by the provision of the junior immigration officer's notes, which are to be taken to be the reasons for decision. Accepting such

documentation as sufficient reasons upholds the principle that individuals are entitled to fair procedures and open decision-making, but recognizes that, in the administrative context, this transparency may take place in various ways.

Procedural fairness also requires that decisions be made free from a reasonable apprehension of bias, by an impartial decision-maker. This duty applies to all immigration officers who play a role in the making of decisions. Because they necessarily relate to people of diverse backgrounds, from different cultures, races, and continents, immigration decisions demand sensitivity and understanding by those making them. They require a recognition of diversity, an understanding of others, and an openness to difference. Statements in the immigration officer's notes gave the impression that he may have been drawing conclusions based not on the evidence before him, but on the fact that the appellant was a single mother with several children and had been diagnosed with a psychiatric illness. Here, a reasonable and well-informed member of the community would conclude that the reviewing officer had not approached this case with the impartiality appropriate to a decision made by an immigration officer. The notes therefore give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.

The concept of discretion refers to decisions where the law does not dictate a specific outcome, or where the decision-maker is given a choice of options within a statutorily imposed set of boundaries. Administrative law has traditionally approached the review of decisions classified as discretionary separately from those seen as involving the interpretation of rules of law. Review of the substantive aspects of discretionary decisions is best approached within the pragmatic and functional framework defined by this Court's decisions, especially given the difficulty in making rigid classifications between discretionary and non-discretionary decisions. Though discretionary decisions will generally be given considerable respect, that discretion must be exercised in accordance with the boundaries imposed in the statute, the principles of the rule of law, the principles of administrative law, the fundamental values of Canadian society, and the principles of the *Charter*.

In applying the applicable factors to determining the standard of review, considerable deference should be accorded to immigration officers exercising the powers conferred by the legislation, given the fact-specific nature of the inquiry, its role within the statutory scheme as an exception, and the considerable discretion evidenced by the statutory language. Yet the absence of a privative clause, the explicit contemplation of judicial review by the Federal Court -- Trial Division, and the individual rather than polycentric nature of the decision also suggest that the standard should not be as deferential as "patent unreasonableness". The appropriate standard of review is, therefore, reasonableness *simpliciter*.

The wording of the legislation shows Parliament's intention that the decision be made in a humanitarian and compassionate manner. A reasonable exercise of the

power conferred by the section requires close attention to the interests and needs of children since children's rights, and attention to their interests, are central humanitarian and compassionate values in Canadian society. Indications of these values may be found in the purposes of the Act, in international instruments, and in the Minister's guidelines for making humanitarian and compassionate decisions. Because the reasons for this decision did not indicate that it was made in a manner which was alive, attentive, or sensitive to the interests of the appellant's children, and did not consider them as an important factor in making the decision, it was an unreasonable exercise of the power conferred by the legislation. In addition, the reasons for decision failed to give sufficient weight or consideration to the hardship that a return to the appellant's country of origin might cause her.

*Per Cory and Iacobucci JJ.:* The reasons and disposition of L'Heureux-Dubé J. were agreed with apart from the effect of international law on the exercise of ministerial discretion under s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*. The certified question must be answered in the negative. The principle that an international convention ratified by the executive is of no force or effect within the Canadian legal system until incorporated into domestic law does not survive intact the adoption of a principle of law which permits reference to an unincorporated convention during the process of statutory interpretation.

## Cases Cited

By L'Heureux-Dubé J.

**Applied:** *Pushpanathan v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)*, > [\[1998\] 1 S.C.R. 982](#); *Committee for Justice and Liberty v. National Energy Board*, [1978] 1 S.C.R. 369; **disapproved:** *Liyanagamage v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)* (1994), 176 N.R. 4; *Shah v. Minister of Employment and Immigration* (1994), 170 N.R. 238; **not followed:** *Tylo v. Minister of Employment and Immigration* (1995), 90 F.T.R. 157; *Gheorlan v. Canada (Secretary of State)* (1995), 26 Imm. L.R. (2d) 170; *Chan v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)* (1994), 87 F.T.R. 62; *Marques v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) (No. 1)* (1995), 116 F.T.R. 241; *Northwestern Utilities Ltd. v. City of Edmonton*, [1979] 1 S.C.R. 684; *Supermarchés Jean Labrecque Inc. v. Flamand*, > [\[1987\] 2 S.C.R. 219](#); *Public Service Board of New South Wales v. Osmond* (1986), 159 C.L.R. 656; [Williams v. Canada \(Minister of Citizenship and Immigration\)](#), [\[1997\] 2 F.C. 646](#); **referred to:** [Ramoutar v. Canada \(Minister of Employment and Immigration\)](#), [\[1993\] 3 F.C. 370](#); *Minister of Employment and Immigration v. Jiminez-Perez*, [1984] 2 S.C.R. 565; > [Cardinal v. Director of Kent Institution](#), [\[1985\] 2 S.C.R. 643](#); *Sobrie v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)* (1987), 3 Imm. L.R. (2d) 81; *Said v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)* (1992), 6 Admin. L.R. (2d) 23; > [Knight v. Indian Head](#)

[School Division No. 19](#), [1990] 1 S.C.R. 653;> [Old St. Boniface Residents Assn. Inc. v. Winnipeg \(City\)](#), [1990] 3 S.C.R. 1170; *Russell v. Duke of Norfolk*, [1949] 1 All E.R. 109; *Syndicat des employés de production du Québec et de l'Acadie v. Canada (Canadian Human Rights Commission)*, >[\[1989\] 2 S.C.R. 879](#); *Kane v. Board of Governors of the University of British Columbia*, [1980] 1 S.C.R. 1105; *R. v. Higher Education Funding Council, ex parte Institute of Dental Surgery*, [1994] 1 All E.R. 651; >[Reference re Canada Assistance Plan \(B.C.\)](#), [1991] 2 S.C.R. 525; *Qi v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship & Immigration)* (1995), 33 Imm. L.R. (2d) 57; *Mercier-Néron v. Canada (Minister of National Health and Welfare)* (1995), 98 F.T.R. 36; *Bendahmane v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)*, [1989] 3 F.C. 16; *Canada (Attorney General) v. Human Rights Tribunal Panel (Canada)* (1994), 76 F.T.R. 1; >[IWA v. Consolidated-Bathurst Packaging Ltd.](#), [1990] 1 S.C.R. 282; >[Reference re Remuneration of Judges of the Provincial Court of Prince Edward Island](#), [1997] 3 S.C.R. 3; *R. v. Civil Service Appeal Board, ex parte Cunningham*, [1991] 4 All E.R. 310; *R. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex parte Doody*, [1994] 1 A.C. 531; *Norton Tool Co. v. Tewson*, [1973] 1 W.L.R. 45; *Alexander Machinery (Dudley) Ltd. v. Crabtree*, [1974] I.C.R. 120; *Orlowski v. British Columbia (Attorney-General)* (1992), 94 D.L.R. (4th) 541; *R.D.R. Construction Ltd. v. Rent Review Commission* (1982), 55 N.S.R. (2d) 71; *Taabea v. Refugee Status Advisory Committee*, [1980] 2 F.C. 316; *Boyle v. Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (N.B.)* (1996), 179 N.B.R. (2d) 43; *R. v. S. (R. D.)*,> [\[1997\] 3 S.C.R. 484](#); >[Newfoundland Telephone Co. v. Newfoundland \(Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities\)](#), [1992] 1 S.C.R. 623; >[U.E.S., Local 298 v. Bibeault](#), [1988] 2 S.C.R. 1048; >[Canada \(Attorney General\) v. Mossop](#), [1993] 1 S.C.R. 554; >[Pezim v. British Columbia \(Superintendent of Brokers\)](#), [1994] 2 S.C.R. 557;> [Canada \(Director of Investigation and Research\) v. Southam Inc.](#), [1997] 1 S.C.R. 748; *Maple Lodge Farms Ltd. v. Government of Canada*, [1982] 2 S.C.R. 2; >[Shell Canada Products Ltd. v. Vancouver \(City\)](#), [1994] 1 S.C.R. 231; *Associated Provincial Picture Houses, Ltd. v. Wednesbury Corporation*, [1948] 1 K.B. 223; *Roncarelli v. Duplessis*, [1959] S.C.R. 121; >[Slaight Communications Inc. v. Davidson](#), [1989] 1 S.C.R. 1038; >[R. v. Gladue](#), [1999] 1 S.C.R. 688; >[Rizzo & Rizzo Shoes Ltd. \(Re\)](#), [1998] 1 S.C.R. 27; *Francis v. The Queen*, [1956] S.C.R. 618; *Capital Cities Communications Inc. v. Canadian Radio-Television Commission*, [1978] 2 S.C.R. 141; *Tavita v. Minister of Immigration*, [1994] 2 N.Z.L.R. 257; *Vishaka v. Rajasthan*, [1997] 3 L.R.C. 361; >[R. v. Keegstra](#), [1990] 3 S.C.R. 697; >[Young v. Young](#), [1993] 4 S.C.R. 3.

By Iacobucci J.

**Applied:** *Capital Cities Communications Inc. v. Canadian Radio-Television Commission*, [1978] 2 S.C.R. 141; **referred to:** >[Slaight Communications Inc. v. Davidson](#), [1989] 1 S.C.R. 1038.

## Statutes and Regulations Cited

[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.](#)

*Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Can. T.S. 1992 No. 3, preamble, Arts. 3(1), (2), 9, 12.

*Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (1959), preamble.

*Immigration Act*, [R.S.C., 1985, c. I-2 , ss. 3\(c\), 9\(1\), 82.1\(1\)](#) [rep. & sub. 1992, c. 49, s. 73], 83(1) [*idem*], 114(2) [*ibid.*, s. 102].

*Immigration Regulations, 1978*, SOR/78-172 , s. 2.1 [ad. SOR/93-44 , s. 2].

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APPEAL from a judgment of the Federal Court of Appeal, [\[1997\] 2 F.C. 127](#), 207 N. R. 57, 142 D.L.R. (4th) 554, [1996] F.C.J. No. 1726 (QL), dismissing an appeal from a judgment of Simpson J. (1995), 101 F.T.R. 110, 31 Imm. L.R. (2d) 150, [1995] F.C.J. No. 1441 (QL), dismissing an application for judicial review. Appeal allowed.

*Roger Rowe and Rocco Galati*, for the appellant.

*Urszula Kaczmarczyk and Cheryl D. Mitchell*, for the respondent.

*Sheena Scott and Sharryn Aiken*, for the interveners the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law, the Defence for Children International-Canada, and the Canadian Council for Refugees.

*John Terry and Craig Scott*, for the intervener the Charter Committee on Poverty Issues.

*Barbara Jackman and Marie Chen*, for the intervener the Canadian Council of Churches.

The judgment of L'Heureux-Dubé, Gonthier, McLachlin, Bastarache and Binnie JJ. was delivered by

é1L'HEUREUX-DUBÉ J. -- Regulations made pursuant to s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*, [R.S.C., 1985, c. I-2](#), empower the respondent Minister to facilitate the admission to Canada of a person where the Minister is satisfied, owing to humanitarian and compassionate considerations, that admission should be facilitated or an exemption from the regulations made under the Act should be granted. At the centre of this appeal is the approach to be taken by a court to judicial review of such decisions, both on procedural and substantive grounds. It also raises issues of reasonable apprehension of bias, the provision of written reasons as part of the duty of fairness, and the role of children's interests in reviewing decisions made pursuant to s. 114(2).

## I. Factual Background

2 Mavis Baker is a citizen of Jamaica who entered Canada as a visitor in August of

1981 and has remained in Canada since then. She never received permanent resident status, but supported herself illegally as a live-in domestic worker for 11 years. She has had four children (who are all Canadian citizens) while living in Canada: Paul Brown, born in 1985, twins Patricia and Peter Robinson, born in 1989, and Desmond Robinson, born in 1992. After Desmond was born, Ms. Baker suffered from post-partum psychosis and was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. She applied for welfare at that time. When she was first diagnosed with mental illness, two of her children were placed in the care of their natural father, and the other two were placed in foster care. The two who were in foster care are now again under her care, since her condition has improved.

3 The appellant was ordered deported in December 1992, after it was determined that she had worked illegally in Canada and had overstayed her visitor's visa. In 1993, Ms. Baker applied for an exemption from the requirement to apply for permanent residence outside Canada, based upon humanitarian and compassionate considerations, pursuant to s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*. She had the assistance of counsel in filing this application, and included, among other documentation, submissions from her lawyer, a letter from her doctor, and a letter from a social worker with the Children's Aid Society. The documentation provided indicated that, although she was still experiencing psychiatric problems, she was making progress. It also stated that she might become ill again if she were forced to return to Jamaica, since treatment might not be available for her there. Ms. Baker's submissions also clearly indicated that she was the sole caregiver for two of her Canadian-born children, and that the other two depended on her for emotional support and were in regular contact with her. The documentation suggested that she too would suffer emotional hardship if she were separated from them.

4 The response to this request was contained in a letter dated April 18, 1994 and signed by Immigration Officer M. Caden, stating that a decision had been made that there were insufficient humanitarian and compassionate grounds to warrant processing Ms. Baker's application for permanent residence within Canada. This letter contained no reasons for the decision.

5 Upon request of the appellant's counsel, she was provided with the notes made by Immigration Officer G. Lorenz, which were used by Officer Caden when making his decision. After a summary of the history of the case, Lorenz's notes read as follows:

PC is unemployed - on Welfare. No income shown - no assets. Has four Cdn.-born children- four other children in Jamaica- HAS A TOTAL OF EIGHT CHILDREN

Says only two children are in her "direct custody". (No info on who has the [sic] other two).

There is nothing for her in Jamaica - hasn't been there in a long time - no longer close

to her children there - no jobs there - she has no skills other than as a domestic - children would suffer - can't take them with her and can't leave them with anyone here. Says has suffered from a mental disorder since '81 -is now an outpatient and is improving. If sent back will have a relapse.

Letter from Children's Aid - they say PC has been diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. - children would suffer if returned - Letter of Aug. '93 from psychiatrist from Ont. Govm't. Says PC had post-partum psychosis and had a brief episode of psychosis in Jam. when was 25 yrs. old. Is now an out-patient and is doing relatively well -deportation would be an extremely stressful experience.

Lawyer says PS [*sic*] is sole caregiver and single parent of two Cdn born children. Pc's mental condition would suffer a setback if she is deported etc.

This case is a catastrophe [*sic*]. It is also an indictment of our "system" that the client came as a visitor in Aug. '81, was not ordered deported until Dec. '92 and in APRIL '94 IS STILL HERE!

The PC is a paranoid schizophrenic and on welfare. She has no qualifications other than as a domestic. She has FOUR CHILDREN IN JAMAICA AND ANOTHER FOUR BORN HERE. She will, of course, be a tremendous strain on our social welfare systems for (probably) the rest of her life. There are no H & C factors other than her FOUR CANADIAN-BORN CHILDREN. Do we let her stay because of that? I am of the opinion that Canada can no longer afford this type of generosity. However, because of the circumstances involved, there is a potential for adverse publicity. I recommend refusal but you may wish to clear this with someone at Region.

There is also a potential for violence - see charge of "assault with a weapon" [Capitalization in original.]

6 Following the refusal of her application, Ms. Baker was served, on May 27, 1994, with a direction to report to Pearson Airport on June 17 for removal from Canada. Her deportation has been stayed pending the result of this appeal.

## II. Relevant Statutory Provisions and Provisions of International Treaties

### 7 *Immigration Act*, [R.S.C., 1985, c. I-2](#)

**82.1** (1) An application for judicial review under the *Federal Court Act* with respect to any decision or order made, or any matter arising, under this Act or the rules or regulations thereunder may be commenced only with leave of a judge of the Federal

Court -- Trial Division.

**83.** (1) A judgment of the Federal Court -- Trial Division on an application for judicial review with respect to any decision or order made, or any matter arising, under this Act or the rules or regulations thereunder may be appealed to the Federal Court of Appeal only if the Federal Court -- Trial Division has at the time of rendering judgment certified that a serious question of general importance is involved and has stated that question.

**114.** . . .

(2) The Governor in Council may, by regulation, authorize the Minister to exempt any person from any regulation made under subsection (1) or otherwise facilitate the admission of any person where the Minister is satisfied that the person should be exempted from that regulation or that the person's admission should be facilitated owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations.

*Immigration Regulations, 1978, SOR/78-172, as amended by SOR/93-44*

2.1 The Minister is hereby authorized to exempt any person from any regulation made under subsection 114(1) of the Act or otherwise facilitate the admission to Canada of any person where the Minister is satisfied that the person should be exempted from that regulation or that the person's admission should be facilitated owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations.

*Convention on the Rights of the Child, Can. T.S. 1992 No. 3*

### Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.

### Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is

necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

2. In any proceedings pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present article, all interested parties shall be given an opportunity to participate in the proceedings and make their views known.

3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.

4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse consequences for the person(s) concerned.

## Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

## III. Judgments

### *A. Federal Court -- Trial Division (1995), 101 F.T.R. 110*

8 Simpson J. delivered oral reasons dismissing the appellant's judicial review application. She held that since there were no reasons given by Officer Caden for his decision, no affidavit was provided, and no reasons were required, she would assume, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, that he acted in good faith and made a

decision based on correct principles. She rejected the appellant's argument that the statement in Officer Lorenz's notes that Ms. Baker would be a strain on the welfare system was not supported by the evidence, holding that it was reasonable to conclude from the reports provided that Ms. Baker would not be able to return to work. She held that the language of Officer Lorenz did not raise a reasonable apprehension of bias, and also found that the views expressed in his notes were unimportant, because they were not those of the decision-maker, Officer Caden. She rejected the appellant's argument that the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* mandated that the appellant's interests be given priority in s. 114(2) decisions, holding that the Convention did not apply to this situation, and was not part of domestic law. She also held that the evidence showed the children were a significant factor in the decision-making process. She rejected the appellant's submission that the Convention gave rise to a legitimate expectation that the children's interests would be a primary consideration in the decision.

9 Simpson J. certified the following as a "serious question of general importance" under s. 83(1) of the *Immigration Act*: "Given that the Immigration Act does not expressly incorporate the language of Canada's international obligations with respect to the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, must federal immigration authorities treat the best interests of the Canadian child as a primary consideration in assessing an applicant under s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*?"

#### B. [Federal Court of Appeal, \[1997\] 2 F.C. 127](#)

10 The reasons of the Court of Appeal were delivered by Strayer J.A. He held that pursuant to s. 83(1) of the *Immigration Act*, the appeal was limited to the question certified by Simpson J. He also rejected the appellant's request to challenge the constitutional validity of s. 83(1). Strayer J.A. noted that a treaty cannot have legal effect in Canada unless implemented through domestic legislation, and that the Convention had not been adopted in either federal or provincial legislation. He held that although legislation should be interpreted, where possible, to avoid conflicts with Canada's international obligations, interpreting s. 114(2) to require that the discretion it provides for must be exercised in accordance with the Convention would interfere with the separation of powers between the executive and legislature. He held that such a principle could also alter rights and obligations within the jurisdiction of provincial legislatures. Strayer J.A. also rejected the argument that any articles of the Convention could be interpreted to impose an obligation upon the government to give primacy to the interests of the children in a proceeding such as deportation. He held that the deportation of a parent was not a decision "concerning" children within the meaning of article 3. Finally, Strayer J.A. considered the appellant's argument based on the doctrine of legitimate expectations. He noted that because the doctrine does not create substantive rights, and because a requirement that the best interests of the children be given primacy by a decision-maker under s. 114(2) would be to create a substantive right, the doctrine did not apply.

#### IV. Issues

11 Because, in my view, the issues raised can be resolved under the principles of administrative law and statutory interpretation, I find it unnecessary to consider the various *Charter* issues raised by the appellant and the interveners who supported her position. The issues raised by this appeal are therefore as follows:

(1) What is the legal effect of a stated question under s. 83(1) of the *Immigration Act* on the scope of appellate review?

(2) Were the principles of procedural fairness violated in this case?

(i) Were the participatory rights accorded consistent with the duty of procedural fairness?

(ii) Did the failure of Officer Caden to provide his own reasons violate the principles of procedural fairness?

(iii) Was there a reasonable apprehension of bias in the making of this decision?

(3) Was this discretion improperly exercised because of the approach taken to the interests of Ms. Baker's children?

I note that it is the third issue that raises directly the issues contained in the certified question of general importance stated by Simpson J.

#### V. Analysis

##### A. *Stated Questions Under Section 83(1) of the Immigration Act*

12 The Court of Appeal held, in accordance with its decision in *Liyanagamage v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)* (1994), 176 N.R. 4, that the requirement, in s. 83(1), that a "serious question of general importance" be certified for an appeal to be permitted restricts an appeal court to addressing the issues raised by the certified question. However, in *Pushpanathan v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)*,<sup>></sup> [\[1998\] 1 S.C.R. 982](#), at para. 25, this Court held that s. 83(1) does not require that the Court of Appeal address only the stated question and issues related to it:

The certification of a "question of general importance" is the trigger by which an appeal is justified. The object of the appeal is still the judgment itself, not merely the

certified question.

Rothstein J. noted in [\*Ramoutar v. Canada \(Minister of Employment and Immigration\)\*, \[1993\] 3 F.C. 370 \(T.D.\)](#), that once a question has been certified, all aspects of the appeal may be considered by the Court of Appeal, within its jurisdiction. I agree. The wording of s. 83(1) suggests, and *Pushpanathan* confirms, that if a "question of general importance" has been certified, this allows for an appeal from the judgment of the Trial Division which would otherwise not be permitted, but does not confine the Court of Appeal or this Court to answering the stated question or issues directly related to it. All issues raised by the appeal may therefore be considered here.

### B. *The Statutory Scheme and the Nature of the Decision*

13 Before examining the various grounds for judicial review, it is appropriate to discuss briefly the nature of the decision made under s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*, the role of this decision in the statutory scheme, and the guidelines given by the Minister to immigration officers in relation to it.

14 Section 114(2) itself authorizes the Governor in Council to authorize the Minister to exempt a person from a regulation made under the Act, or to facilitate the admission to Canada of any person. The Minister's power to grant an exemption based on humanitarian and compassionate (H & C) considerations arises from s. 2.1 of the *Immigration Regulations*, which I reproduce for convenience:

The Minister is hereby authorized to exempt any person from any regulation made under subsection 114(1) of the Act or otherwise facilitate the admission to Canada of any person where the Minister is satisfied that the person should be exempted from that regulation or that the person's admission should be facilitated owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations.

For the purpose of clarity, I will refer throughout these reasons to decisions made pursuant to the combination of s. 114(2) of the Act and s. 2.1 of the Regulations as "H & C decisions".

15 Applications for permanent residence must, as a general rule, be made from outside Canada, pursuant to s. 9(1) of the Act. One of the exceptions to this is when admission is facilitated owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations. In law, pursuant to the Act and the Regulations, an H & C decision is made by the Minister, though in practice, this decision is dealt with in the name of the Minister by immigration officers: see, for example, *Minister of Employment and Immigration v. Jiminez-Perez*, [1984] 2 S.C.R. 565, at p. 569. In addition, while in law, the H & C decision is one that provides for an exemption from regulations or from the

Act, in practice, it is one that, in cases like this one, determines whether a person who has been in Canada but does not have status can stay in the country or will be required to leave a place where he or she has become established. It is an important decision that affects in a fundamental manner the future of individuals' lives. In addition, it may also have an important impact on the lives of any Canadian children of the person whose humanitarian and compassionate application is being considered, since they may be separated from one of their parents and/or uprooted from their country of citizenship, where they have settled and have connections.

16 Immigration officers who make H & C decisions are provided with a set of guidelines, contained in chapter 9 of the *Immigration Manual: Examination and Enforcement*. The guidelines constitute instructions to immigration officers about how to exercise the discretion delegated to them. These guidelines are also available to the public. A number of statements in the guidelines are relevant to Ms. Baker's application. Guideline 9.05 emphasizes that officers have a duty to decide which cases should be given a favourable recommendation, by carefully considering all aspects of the case, using their best judgment and asking themselves what a reasonable person would do in such a situation. It also states that although officers are not expected to "delve into areas which are not presented during examination or interviews, they should attempt to clarify possible humanitarian grounds and public policy considerations even if these are not well articulated".

17 The guidelines also set out the bases upon which the discretion conferred by s. 114(2) and the Regulations should be exercised. Two different types of criteria that may lead to a positive s. 114(2) decision are outlined -- public policy considerations and humanitarian and compassionate grounds. Immigration officers are instructed, under guideline 9.07, to assure themselves, first, whether a public policy consideration is present, and if there is none, whether humanitarian and compassionate circumstances exist. Public policy reasons include marriage to a Canadian resident, the fact that the person has lived in Canada, has become established, and has become an "illegal de facto resident", and the fact that the person may be a long-term holder of employment authorization or has worked as a foreign domestic. Guideline 9.07 states that humanitarian and compassionate grounds will exist if "unusual, undeserved or disproportionate hardship would be caused to the person seeking consideration if he or she had to leave Canada". The guidelines also directly address situations involving family dependency, and emphasize that the requirement that a person leave Canada to apply from abroad may result in hardship for close family members of a Canadian resident, whether parents, children, or others who are close to the claimant, but not related by blood. They note that in such cases, the reasons why the person did not apply from abroad and the existence of family or other support in the person's home country should also be considered.

### C. Procedural Fairness

18 The first ground upon which the appellant challenges the decision made by Officer Caden is the allegation that she was not accorded procedural fairness. She suggests that the following procedures are required by the duty of fairness when parents have Canadian children and they make an H & C application: an oral interview before the decision-maker, notice to her children and the other parent of that interview, a right for the children and the other parent to make submissions at that interview, and notice to the other parent of the interview and of that person's right to have counsel present. She also alleges that procedural fairness requires the provision of reasons by the decision-maker, Officer Caden, and that the notes of Officer Lorenz give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.

19 In addressing the fairness issues, I will consider first the principles relevant to the determination of the content of the duty of procedural fairness, and then address Ms. Baker's arguments that she was accorded insufficient participatory rights, that a duty to give reasons existed, and that there was a reasonable apprehension of bias.

20 Both parties agree that a duty of procedural fairness applies to H & C decisions. The fact that a decision is administrative and affects "the rights, privileges or interests of an individual" is sufficient to trigger the application of the duty of fairness: >[Cardinal v. Director of Kent Institution, \[1985\] 2 S.C.R. 643](#), at p. 653. Clearly, the determination of whether an applicant will be exempted from the requirements of the Act falls within this category, and it has been long recognized that the duty of fairness applies to H & C decisions: *Sobrie v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)* (1987), 3 Imm. L. R. (2d) 81 (F.C.T.D.), at p. 88; *Said v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)* (1992), 6 Admin. L.R. (2d) 23 (F.C.T.D.); *Shah v. Minister of Employment and Immigration* (1994), 170 N.R. 238 (F.C.A.).

### (1) Factors Affecting the Content of the Duty of Fairness

21 The existence of a duty of fairness, however, does not determine what requirements will be applicable in a given set of circumstances. As I wrote in >[Knight v. Indian Head School Division No. 19, \[1990\] 1 S.C.R. 653](#), at p. 682, "the concept of procedural fairness is eminently variable and its content is to be decided in the specific context of each case". All of the circumstances must be considered in order to determine the content of the duty of procedural fairness: [Knight](#), at pp. 682-83; [Cardinal](#), *supra*, at p. 654; >[Old St. Boniface Residents Assn. Inc. v. Winnipeg \(City\), \[1990\] 3 S.C.R. 1170](#), *per* Sopinka J.

22 Although the duty of fairness is flexible and variable, and depends on an appreciation of the context of the particular statute and the rights affected, it is helpful to review the criteria that should be used in determining what procedural rights the duty of

fairness requires in a given set of circumstances. I emphasize that underlying all these factors is the notion that the purpose of the participatory rights contained within the duty of procedural fairness is to ensure that administrative decisions are made using a fair and open procedure, appropriate to the decision being made and its statutory, institutional, and social context, with an opportunity for those affected by the decision to put forward their views and evidence fully and have them considered by the decision-maker.

23 Several factors have been recognized in the jurisprudence as relevant to determining what is required by the common law duty of procedural fairness in a given set of circumstances. One important consideration is the nature of the decision being made and the process followed in making it. In *Knight, supra*, at p. 683, it was held that "the closeness of the administrative process to the judicial process should indicate how much of those governing principles should be imported into the realm of administrative decision making". The more the process provided for, the function of the tribunal, the nature of the decision-making body, and the determinations that must be made to reach a decision resemble judicial decision making, the more likely it is that procedural protections closer to the trial model will be required by the duty of fairness. See also *Old St. Boniface, supra*, at p. 1191; *Russell v. Duke of Norfolk*, [1949] 1 All E.R. 109 (C.A.), at p. 118; *Syndicat des employés de production du Québec et de l'Acadie v. Canada (Canadian Human Rights Commission)*, >[\[1989\] 2 S.C.R. 879](#), at p. 896, *per* Sopinka J.

24 A second factor is the nature of the statutory scheme and the "terms of the statute pursuant to which the body operates": *Old St. Boniface, supra*, at p. 1191. The role of the particular decision within the statutory scheme and other surrounding indications in the statute help determine the content of the duty of fairness owed when a particular administrative decision is made. Greater procedural protections, for example, will be required when no appeal procedure is provided within the statute, or when the decision is determinative of the issue and further requests cannot be submitted: see D. J. M. Brown and J. M. Evans, *Judicial Review of Administrative Action in Canada* (loose-leaf), at pp. 7-66 to 7-67.

25 A third factor in determining the nature and extent of the duty of fairness owed is the importance of the decision to the individual or individuals affected. The more important the decision is to the lives of those affected and the greater its impact on that person or those persons, the more stringent the procedural protections that will be mandated. This was expressed, for example, by Dickson J. (as he then was) in *Kane v. Board of Governors of the University of British Columbia*, [1980] 1 S.C.R. 1105, at p. 1113:

A high standard of justice is required when the right to continue in one's profession or employment is at stake. . . . A disciplinary suspension can have grave and permanent

consequences upon a professional career.

As Sedley J. (now Sedley L.J.) stated in *R. v. Higher Education Funding Council, ex parte Institute of Dental Surgery*, [1994] 1 All E.R. 651 (Q.B.), at p. 667:

In the modern state the decisions of administrative bodies can have a more immediate and profound impact on people's lives than the decisions of courts, and public law has since *Ridge v. Baldwin* [1963] 2 All E.R. 66, [1964] A.C. 40 been alive to that fact. While the judicial character of a function may elevate the practical requirements of fairness above what they would otherwise be, for example by requiring contentious evidence to be given and tested orally, what makes it "judicial" in this sense is principally the nature of the issue it has to determine, not the formal status of the deciding body.

The importance of a decision to the individuals affected, therefore, constitutes a significant factor affecting the content of the duty of procedural fairness.

26 Fourth, the legitimate expectations of the person challenging the decision may also determine what procedures the duty of fairness requires in given circumstances. Our Court has held that, in Canada, this doctrine is part of the doctrine of fairness or natural justice, and that it does not create substantive rights: *Old St. Boniface, supra*, at p. 1204;> [Reference re Canada Assistance Plan \(B.C.\)](#), [1991] 2 S.C.R. 525, at p. 557. As applied in Canada, if a legitimate expectation is found to exist, this will affect the content of the duty of fairness owed to the individual or individuals affected by the decision. If the claimant has a legitimate expectation that a certain procedure will be followed, this procedure will be required by the duty of fairness: *Qi v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)* (1995), 33 Imm. L.R. (2d) 57 (F.C.T.D.); *Mercier-Néron v. Canada (Minister of National Health and Welfare)* (1995), 98 F.T.R. 36; *Bendahmane v. Canada (Minister of Employment and Immigration)*, [1989] 3 F.C. 16 (C.A.). Similarly, if a claimant has a legitimate expectation that a certain result will be reached in his or her case, fairness may require more extensive procedural rights than would otherwise be accorded: D. J. Mullan, *Administrative Law* (3rd ed. 1996), at pp. 214-15; D. Shapiro, "Legitimate Expectation and its Application to Canadian Immigration Law" (1992), 8 *J.L. & Social Pol'y* 282, at p. 297; *Canada (Attorney General) v. Human Rights Tribunal Panel (Canada)* (1994), 76 F.T.R. 1. Nevertheless, the doctrine of legitimate expectations cannot lead to substantive rights outside the procedural domain. This doctrine, as applied in Canada, is based on the principle that the "circumstances" affecting procedural fairness take into account the promises or regular practices of administrative decision-makers, and that it will generally be unfair for them to act in contravention of representations as to procedure, or to backtrack on substantive promises without according significant procedural rights.

27 Fifth, the analysis of what procedures the duty of fairness requires should also take into account and respect the choices of procedure made by the agency itself, particularly when the statute leaves to the decision-maker the ability to choose its own procedures, or when the agency has an expertise in determining what procedures are appropriate in the circumstances: *Brown and Evans*, *supra*, at pp. 7-66 to 7-70. While this, of course, is not determinative, important weight must be given to the choice of procedures made by the agency itself and its institutional constraints: >[\*IWA v. Consolidated-Bathurst Packaging Ltd.\*, \[1990\] 1 S.C.R. 282](#), per Gonthier J.

28 I should note that this list of factors is not exhaustive. These principles all help a court determine whether the procedures that were followed respected the duty of fairness. Other factors may also be important, particularly when considering aspects of the duty of fairness unrelated to participatory rights. The values underlying the duty of procedural fairness relate to the principle that the individual or individuals affected should have the opportunity to present their case fully and fairly, and have decisions affecting their rights, interests, or privileges made using a fair, impartial, and open process, appropriate to the statutory, institutional, and social context of the decision.

## (2) Legitimate Expectations

29 I turn now to an application of these principles to the circumstances of this case to determine whether the procedures followed respected the duty of procedural fairness. I will first determine whether the duty of procedural fairness that would otherwise be applicable is affected, as the appellant argues, by the existence of a legitimate expectation based upon the text of the articles of the Convention and the fact that Canada has ratified it. In my view, however, the articles of the Convention and their wording did not give rise to a legitimate expectation on the part of Ms. Baker that when the decision on her H & C application was made, specific procedural rights above what would normally be required under the duty of fairness would be accorded, a positive finding would be made, or particular criteria would be applied. This Convention is not, in my view, the equivalent of a government representation about how H & C applications will be decided, nor does it suggest that any rights beyond the participatory rights discussed below will be accorded. Therefore, in this case there is no legitimate expectation affecting the content of the duty of fairness, and the fourth factor outlined above therefore does not affect the analysis. It is unnecessary to decide whether an international instrument ratified by Canada could, in other circumstances, give rise to a legitimate expectation.

## (3) Participatory Rights

30 The next issue is whether, taking into account the other factors related to the determination of the content of the duty of fairness, the failure to accord an oral hearing

and give notice to Ms. Baker or her children was inconsistent with the participatory rights required by the duty of fairness in these circumstances. At the heart of this analysis is whether, considering all the circumstances, those whose interests were affected had a meaningful opportunity to present their case fully and fairly. The procedure in this case consisted of a written application with supporting documentation, which was summarized by the junior officer (Lorenz), with a recommendation being made by that officer. The summary, recommendation, and material was then considered by the senior officer (Caden), who made the decision.

31 Several of the factors described above enter into the determination of the type of participatory rights the duty of procedural fairness requires in the circumstances. First, an H & C decision is very different from a judicial decision, since it involves the exercise of considerable discretion and requires the consideration of multiple factors. Second, its role is also, within the statutory scheme, as an exception to the general principles of Canadian immigration law. These factors militate in favour of more relaxed requirements under the duty of fairness. On the other hand, there is no appeal procedure, although judicial review may be applied for with leave of the Federal Court -- Trial Division. In addition, considering the third factor, this is a decision that in practice has exceptional importance to the lives of those with an interest in its result -- the claimant and his or her close family members -- and this leads to the content of the duty of fairness being more extensive. Finally, applying the fifth factor described above, the statute accords considerable flexibility to the Minister to decide on the proper procedure, and immigration officers, as a matter of practice, do not conduct interviews in all cases. The institutional practices and choices made by the Minister are significant, though of course not determinative factors to be considered in the analysis. Thus, it can be seen that although some of the factors suggest stricter requirements under the duty of fairness, others suggest more relaxed requirements further from the judicial model.

32 Balancing these factors, I disagree with the holding of the [Federal Court of Appeal](#) in *Shah, supra*, at p. 239, that the duty of fairness owed in these circumstances is simply "minimal". Rather, the circumstances require a full and fair consideration of the issues, and the claimant and others whose important interests are affected by the decision in a fundamental way must have a meaningful opportunity to present the various types of evidence relevant to their case and have it fully and fairly considered.

33 However, it also cannot be said that an oral hearing is always necessary to ensure a fair hearing and consideration of the issues involved. The flexible nature of the duty of fairness recognizes that meaningful participation can occur in different ways in different situations. The Federal Court has held that procedural fairness does not require an oral hearing in these circumstances: see, for example, *Said, supra*, at p. 30.

34 I agree that an oral hearing is not a general requirement for H & C decisions. An

interview is not essential for the information relevant to an H & C application to be put before an immigration officer, so that the humanitarian and compassionate considerations presented may be considered in their entirety and in a fair manner. In this case, the appellant had the opportunity to put forward, in written form through her lawyer, information about her situation, her children and their emotional dependence on her, and documentation in support of her application from a social worker at the Children's Aid Society and from her psychiatrist. These documents were before the decision-makers, and they contained the information relevant to making this decision. Taking all the factors relevant to determining the content of the duty of fairness into account, the lack of an oral hearing or notice of such a hearing did not, in my opinion, constitute a violation of the requirements of procedural fairness to which Ms. Baker was entitled in the circumstances, particularly given the fact that several of the factors point toward a more relaxed standard. The opportunity, which was accorded, for the appellant or her children to produce full and complete written documentation in relation to all aspects of her application satisfied the requirements of the participatory rights required by the duty of fairness in this case.

#### (4) The Provision of Reasons

35 The appellant also submits that the duty of fairness, in these circumstances, requires that reasons be given by the decision-maker. She argues either that the notes of Officer Lorenz should be considered the reasons for the decision, or that it should be held that the failure of Officer Caden to give written reasons for his decision or a subsequent affidavit explaining them should be taken to be a breach of the principles of fairness.

36 This issue has been addressed in several cases of judicial review of humanitarian and compassionate applications. The [Federal Court of Appeal](#) has held that reasons are unnecessary: *Shah, supra*, at pp. 239-40. It has also been held that the case history notes prepared by a subordinate officer are not to be considered the decision-maker's reasons: see *Tylo v. Minister of Employment and Immigration* (1995), 90 F.T.R. 157, at pp. 159-60. In *Gheorlan v. Canada (Secretary of State)* (1995), 26 Imm. L.R. (2d) 170 (F.C.T.D.), and *Chan v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration)* (1994), 87 F.T.R. 62, it was held that the notes of the reviewing officer should not be taken to be the reasons for decision, but may help in determining whether a reviewable error exists. In *Marques v. Canada (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration) (No. 1)* (1995), 116 F.T.R. 241, an H & C decision was set aside because the decision-making officer failed to provide reasons or an affidavit explaining the reasons for his decision.

37 More generally, the traditional position at common law has been that the duty of fairness does not require, as a general rule, that reasons be provided for administrative decisions: *Northwestern Utilities Ltd. v. City of Edmonton*, [1979] 1 S.C.R. 684;

*Supermarchés Jean Labrecque Inc. v. Flamand*, > [\[1987\] 2 S.C.R. 219](#), at p. 233; *Public Service Board of New South Wales v. Osmond* (1986), 159 C.L.R. 656 (H.C.A.), at pp. 665-66.

38 Courts and commentators have, however, often emphasized the usefulness of reasons in ensuring fair and transparent decision-making. Though *Northwestern Utilities* dealt with a statutory obligation to give reasons, Estey J. held as follows, at p. 706, referring to the desirability of a common law reasons requirement:

This obligation is a salutary one. It reduces to a considerable degree the chances of arbitrary or capricious decisions, reinforces public confidence in the judgment and fairness of administrative tribunals, and affords parties to administrative proceedings an opportunity to assess the question of appeal. . . .

The importance of reasons was recently reemphasized by this Court in [Reference re Remuneration of Judges of the Provincial Court of Prince Edward Island, \[1997\] 3 S.C.R. 3](#), at paras. 180-81.

39 Reasons, it has been argued, foster better decision making by ensuring that issues and reasoning are well articulated and, therefore, more carefully thought out. The process of writing reasons for decision by itself may be a guarantee of a better decision. Reasons also allow parties to see that the applicable issues have been carefully considered, and are invaluable if a decision is to be appealed, questioned, or considered on judicial review: R. A. Macdonald and D. Lametti, "Reasons for Decision in Administrative Law" (1990), 3 *C.J.A.L.P.* 123, at p. 146; [Williams v. Canada \(Minister of Citizenship and Immigration\), \[1997\] 2 F.C. 646 \(C.A.\)](#), at para. 38. Those affected may be more likely to feel they were treated fairly and appropriately if reasons are given: de Smith, Woolf, & Jowell, *Judicial Review of Administrative Action* (5th ed. 1995), at pp. 459-60. I agree that these are significant benefits of written reasons.

40 Others have expressed concerns about the desirability of a written reasons requirement at common law. In *Osmond, supra*, Gibbs C.J. articulated, at p. 668, the concern that a reasons requirement may lead to an inappropriate burden being imposed on administrative decision-makers, that it may lead to increased cost and delay, and that it "might in some cases induce a lack of candour on the part of the administrative officers concerned". Macdonald and Lametti, *supra*, though they agree that fairness should require the provision of reasons in certain circumstances, caution against a requirement of "archival" reasons associated with court judgments, and note that the special nature of agency decision-making in different contexts should be considered in evaluating reasons requirements. In my view, however, these concerns can be accommodated by ensuring that any reasons requirement under the duty of fairness leaves sufficient flexibility to decision-makers by accepting various types of written

explanations for the decision as sufficient.

41 In England, a common law right to reasons in certain circumstances has developed in the case law: see M. H. Morris, "Administrative Decision-makers and the Duty to Give Reasons: An Emerging Debate" (1997), 11 *C.J.A.L.P.* 155, at pp. 164-68; de Smith, Woolf & Jowell, *supra*, at pp. 462-65. In *R. v. Civil Service Appeal Board, ex parte Cunningham*, [1991] 4 All E.R. 310 (C.A.), reasons were required of a board deciding the appeal of the dismissal of a prison official. The House of Lords, in *R. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex parte Doody*, [1994] 1 A.C. 531, imposed a reasons requirement on the Home Secretary when exercising the statutory discretion to decide on the period of imprisonment that a prisoner who had been imposed a life sentence should serve before being entitled to a review. Lord Mustill, speaking for all the law lords on the case, held that although there was no general duty to give reasons at common law, in those circumstances, a failure to give reasons was unfair. Other English cases have held that reasons are required at common law when there is a statutory right of appeal: see *Norton Tool Co. v. Tewson*, [1973] 1 W.L.R. 45 (N.I.R.C.), at p. 49; *Alexander Machinery (Dudley) Ltd. v. Crabtree*, [1974] I.C.R. 120 (N. I.R.C.).

42 Some Canadian courts have imposed, in certain circumstances, a common law obligation on administrative decision-makers to provide reasons, while others have been more reluctant. In *Orlowski v. British Columbia (Attorney-General)* (1992), 94 D.L.R. (4th) 541 (B.C.C.A.), at pp. 551-52, it was held that reasons would generally be required for decisions of a review board under Part XX.1 of the [Criminal Code](#), based in part on the existence of a statutory right of appeal from that decision, and also on the importance of the interests affected by the decision. In *R.D.R. Construction Ltd. v. Rent Review Commission* (1982), 55 N.S.R. (2d) 71 (C.A.), the court also held that because of the existence of a statutory right of appeal, there was an implied duty to give reasons. Smith D.J., in *Taabea v. Refugee Status Advisory Committee*, [1980] 2 F.C. 316 (T.D.), imposed a reasons requirement on a ministerial decision relating to refugee status, based upon the right to apply to the Immigration Appeal Board for redetermination. Similarly, in the context of evaluating whether a statutory reasons requirement had been adequately fulfilled in *Boyle v. Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (N.B.)* (1996), 179 N.B.R. (2d) 43 (C.A.), Bastarache J.A. (as he then was) emphasized, at p. 55, the importance of adequate reasons when appealing a decision. However, the [Federal Court of Appeal](#) recently rejected the submission that reasons were required in relation to a decision to declare a permanent resident a danger to the public under s. 70(5) of the *Immigration Act*: [Williams](#), *supra*.

43 In my opinion, it is now appropriate to recognize that, in certain circumstances, the duty of procedural fairness will require the provision of a written explanation for a decision. The strong arguments demonstrating the advantages of written reasons

suggest that, in cases such as this where the decision has important significance for the individual, when there is a statutory right of appeal, or in other circumstances, some form of reasons should be required. This requirement has been developing in the common law elsewhere. The circumstances of the case at bar, in my opinion, constitute one of the situations where reasons are necessary. The profound importance of an H & C decision to those affected, as with those at issue in *Orlowski*, *Cunningham*, and *Doody*, militates in favour of a requirement that reasons be provided. It would be unfair for a person subject to a decision such as this one which is so critical to their future not to be told why the result was reached.

44 In my view, however, the reasons requirement was fulfilled in this case since the appellant was provided with the notes of Officer Lorenz. The notes were given to Ms. Baker when her counsel asked for reasons. Because of this, and because there is no other record of the reasons for making the decision, the notes of the subordinate reviewing officer should be taken, by inference, to be the reasons for decision. Accepting documents such as these notes as sufficient reasons is part of the flexibility that is necessary, as emphasized by Macdonald and Lametti, *supra*, when courts evaluate the requirements of the duty of fairness with recognition of the day-to-day realities of administrative agencies and the many ways in which the values underlying the principles of procedural fairness can be assured. It upholds the principle that individuals are entitled to fair procedures and open decision-making, but recognizes that in the administrative context, this transparency may take place in various ways. I conclude that the notes of Officer Lorenz satisfy the requirement for reasons under the duty of procedural fairness in this case, and they will be taken to be the reasons for decision.

#### (5) Reasonable Apprehension of Bias

45 Procedural fairness also requires that decisions be made free from a reasonable apprehension of bias by an impartial decision-maker. The respondent argues that Simpson J. was correct to find that the notes of Officer Lorenz cannot be considered to give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias because it was Officer Caden who was the actual decision-maker, who was simply reviewing the recommendation prepared by his subordinate. In my opinion, the duty to act fairly and therefore in a manner that does not give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias applies to all immigration officers who play a significant role in the making of decisions, whether they are subordinate reviewing officers, or those who make the final decision. The subordinate officer plays an important part in the process, and if a person with such a central role does not act impartially, the decision itself cannot be said to have been made in an impartial manner. In addition, as discussed in the previous section, the notes of Officer Lorenz constitute the reasons for the decision, and if they give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias, this taints the decision itself.

46 The test for reasonable apprehension of bias was set out by de Grandpré J., writing in dissent, in *Committee for Justice and Liberty v. National Energy Board*, [1978] 1 S.C.R. 369, at p. 394:

. . . the apprehension of bias must be a reasonable one, held by reasonable and right minded persons, applying themselves to the question and obtaining thereon the required information. . . [T]hat test is "what would an informed person, viewing the matter realistically and practically -- and having thought the matter through -- conclude. Would he think that it is more likely than not that [the decision-maker], whether consciously or unconsciously, would not decide fairly."

This expression of the test has often been endorsed by this Court, most recently in *R. v. S. (R.D.)*, > [\[1997\] 3 S.C.R. 484](#), at para. 11, *per* Major J.; at para. 31, *per* L'Heureux-Dubé and McLachlin JJ.; and at para. 111, *per* Cory J.

47 It has been held that the standards for reasonable apprehension of bias may vary, like other aspects of procedural fairness, depending on the context and the type of function performed by the administrative decision-maker involved: *Newfoundland Telephone Co. v. Newfoundland (Board of Commissioners of Public Utilities)*, [1992] 1 S.C.R. 623; *Old St. Boniface*, *supra*, at p. 1192. The context here is one where immigration officers must regularly make decisions that have great importance to the individuals affected by them, but are also often critical to the interests of Canada as a country. They are individualized, rather than decisions of a general nature. They also require special sensitivity. Canada is a nation made up largely of people whose families migrated here in recent centuries. Our history is one that shows the importance of immigration, and our society shows the benefits of having a diversity of people whose origins are in a multitude of places around the world. Because they necessarily relate to people of diverse backgrounds, from different cultures, races, and continents, immigration decisions demand sensitivity and understanding by those making them. They require a recognition of diversity, an understanding of others, and an openness to difference.

48 In my opinion, the well-informed member of the community would perceive bias when reading Officer Lorenz's comments. His notes, and the manner in which they are written, do not disclose the existence of an open mind or a weighing of the particular circumstances of the case free from stereotypes. Most unfortunate is the fact that they seem to make a link between Ms. Baker's mental illness, her training as a domestic worker, the fact that she has several children, and the conclusion that she would therefore be a strain on our social welfare system for the rest of her life. In addition, the conclusion drawn was contrary to the psychiatrist's letter, which stated that, with treatment, Ms. Baker could remain well and return to being a productive member of society. Whether they were intended in this manner or not, these statements give the

impression that Officer Lorenz may have been drawing conclusions based not on the evidence before him, but on the fact that Ms. Baker was a single mother with several children, and had been diagnosed with a psychiatric illness. His use of capitals to highlight the number of Ms. Baker's children may also suggest to a reader that this was a reason to deny her status. Reading his comments, I do not believe that a reasonable and well-informed member of the community would conclude that he had approached this case with the impartiality appropriate to a decision made by an immigration officer. It would appear to a reasonable observer that his own frustration with the "system" interfered with his duty to consider impartially whether the appellant's admission should be facilitated owing to humanitarian or compassionate considerations. I conclude that the notes of Officer Lorenz demonstrate a reasonable apprehension of bias.

#### *D. Review of the Exercise of the Minister's Discretion*

49 Although the finding of reasonable apprehension of bias is sufficient to dispose of this appeal, it does not address the issues contained in the "serious question of general importance" which was certified by Simpson J. relating to the approach to be taken to children's interests when reviewing the exercise of the discretion conferred by the Act and the Regulations. Since it is important to address the central questions which led to this appeal, I will also consider whether, as a substantive matter, the H & C decision was improperly made in this case.

50 The appellant argues that the notes provided to her show that, as a matter of law, the decision should be overturned on judicial review. She submits that the decision should be held to a standard of review of correctness, that principles of administrative law require this discretion to be exercised in accordance with the Convention, and that the Minister should apply the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in H & C decisions. The respondent submits that the Convention has not been implemented in Canadian law, and that to require that s. 114(2) and the Regulations made under it be interpreted in accordance with the Convention would be improper, since it would interfere with the broad discretion granted by Parliament, and with the division of powers between the federal and provincial governments.

##### (1) The Approach to Review of Discretionary Decision-Making

51 As stated earlier, the legislation and Regulations delegate considerable discretion to the Minister in deciding whether an exemption should be granted based upon humanitarian and compassionate considerations. The Regulations state that "[t]he Minister is . . . authorized to" grant an exemption or otherwise facilitate the admission to Canada of any person "where the Minister is satisfied that" this should be done "owing to the existence of compassionate or humanitarian considerations". This language signals an intention to leave considerable choice to the Minister on the question of

whether to grant an H & C application.

52 The concept of discretion refers to decisions where the law does not dictate a specific outcome, or where the decision-maker is given a choice of options within a statutorily imposed set of boundaries. As K. C. Davis wrote in *Discretionary Justice* (1969), at p. 4:

A public officer has discretion whenever the effective limits on his power leave him free to make a choice among possible courses of action or inaction.

It is necessary in this case to consider the approach to judicial review of administrative discretion, taking into account the "pragmatic and functional" approach to judicial review that was first articulated in [>U.E.S., Local 298 v. Bibeault, \[1988\] 2 S.C.R. 1048](#), and has been applied in subsequent cases including [>Canada \(Attorney General\) v. Mossop, \[1993\] 1 S.C.R. 554](#), at pp. 601-7, *per* L'Heureux-Dubé J., dissenting, but not on this issue; [>Pezim v. British Columbia \(Superintendent of Brokers\), \[1994\] 2 S.C.R. 557](#); *Canada (Director of Investigation and Research) v. Southam Inc.*, [>\[1997\] 1 S.C.R. 748](#); and *Pushpanathan, supra*.

53 Administrative law has traditionally approached the review of decisions classified as discretionary separately from those seen as involving the interpretation of rules of law. The rule has been that decisions classified as discretionary may only be reviewed on limited grounds such as the bad faith of decision-makers, the exercise of discretion for an improper purpose, and the use of irrelevant considerations: see, for example, *Maple Lodge Farms Ltd. v. Government of Canada*, [1982] 2 S.C.R. 2, at pp. 7-8; [>Shell Canada Products Ltd. v. Vancouver \(City\), \[1994\] 1 S.C.R. 231](#). A general doctrine of "unreasonableness" has also sometimes been applied to discretionary decisions: *Associated Provincial Picture Houses, Ltd. v. Wednesbury Corporation*, [1948] 1 K.B. 223 (C.A.). In my opinion, these doctrines incorporate two central ideas -- that discretionary decisions, like all other administrative decisions, must be made within the bounds of the jurisdiction conferred by the statute, but that considerable deference will be given to decision-makers by courts in reviewing the exercise of that discretion and determining the scope of the decision-maker's jurisdiction. These doctrines recognize that it is the intention of a legislature, when using statutory language that confers broad choices on administrative agencies, that courts should not lightly interfere with such decisions, and should give considerable respect to decision-makers when reviewing the manner in which discretion was exercised. However, discretion must still be exercised in a manner that is within a reasonable interpretation of the margin of manoeuvre contemplated by the legislature, in accordance with the principles of the rule of law (*Roncarelli v. Duplessis*, [1959] S.C.R. 121), in line with general principles of administrative law governing the exercise of discretion, and consistent with the

[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#) (>[Slaight Communications Inc. v. Davidson](#), [1989] 1 S.C.R. 1038).

54 It is, however, inaccurate to speak of a rigid dichotomy of "discretionary" or "non-discretionary" decisions. Most administrative decisions involve the exercise of implicit discretion in relation to many aspects of decision making. To give just one example, decision-makers may have considerable discretion as to the remedies they order. In addition, there is no easy distinction to be made between interpretation and the exercise of discretion; interpreting legal rules involves considerable discretion to clarify, fill in legislative gaps, and make choices among various options. As stated by Brown and Evans, *supra*, at p. 14-47:

The degree of discretion in a grant of power can range from one where the decision-maker is constrained only by the purposes and objects of the legislation, to one where it is so specific that there is almost no discretion involved. In between, of course, there may be any number of limitations placed on the decision-maker's freedom of choice, sometimes referred to as "structured" discretion.

55 The "pragmatic and functional" approach recognizes that standards of review for errors of law are appropriately seen as a spectrum, with certain decisions being entitled to more deference, and others entitled to less: [Pezim](#), *supra*, at pp. 589-90; [Southam](#), *supra*, at para. 30; [Pushpanathan](#), *supra*, at para. 27. Three standards of review have been defined: patent unreasonableness, reasonableness *simpliciter*, and correctness: [Southam](#), at paras. 54-56. In my opinion the standard of review of the substantive aspects of discretionary decisions is best approached within this framework, especially given the difficulty in making rigid classifications between discretionary and non-discretionary decisions. The pragmatic and functional approach takes into account considerations such as the expertise of the tribunal, the nature of the decision being made, and the language of the provision and the surrounding legislation. It includes factors such as whether a decision is "polycentric" and the intention revealed by the statutory language. The amount of choice left by Parliament to the administrative decision-maker and the nature of the decision being made are also important considerations in the analysis. The spectrum of standards of review can incorporate the principle that, in certain cases, the legislature has demonstrated its intention to leave greater choices to decision-makers than in others, but that a court must intervene where such a decision is outside the scope of the power accorded by Parliament. Finally, I would note that this Court has already applied this framework to statutory provisions that confer significant choices on administrative bodies, for example, in reviewing the exercise of the remedial powers conferred by the statute at issue in [Southam](#), *supra*.

56 Incorporating judicial review of decisions that involve considerable discretion into the pragmatic and functional analysis for errors of law should not be seen as reducing

the level of deference given to decisions of a highly discretionary nature. In fact, deferential standards of review may give substantial leeway to the discretionary decision-maker in determining the "proper purposes" or "relevant considerations" involved in making a given determination. The pragmatic and functional approach can take into account the fact that the more discretion that is left to a decision-maker, the more reluctant courts should be to interfere with the manner in which decision-makers have made choices among various options. However, though discretionary decisions will generally be given considerable respect, that discretion must be exercised in accordance with the boundaries imposed in the statute, the principles of the rule of law, the principles of administrative law, the fundamental values of Canadian society, and the principles of the *Charter*.

## (2) The Standard of Review in This Case

57 I turn now to an application of the pragmatic and functional approach to determine the appropriate standard of review for decisions made under s. 114(2) and Regulation 2.1, and the factors affecting the determination of that standard outlined in *Pushpanathan, supra*. It was held in that case that the decision, which related to the determination of a question of law by the Immigration and Refugee Board, was subject to a standard of review of correctness. Although that decision was also one made under the *Immigration Act*, the type of decision at issue was very different, as was the decision-maker. The appropriate standard of review must, therefore, be considered separately in the present case.

58 The first factor to be examined is the presence or absence of a privative clause, and, in appropriate cases, the wording of that clause: *Pushpanathan*, at para. 30. There is no privative clause contained in the *Immigration Act*, although judicial review cannot be commenced without leave of the Federal Court -- Trial Division under s. 82.1. As mentioned above, s. 83(1) requires the certification of a "serious question of general importance" by the Federal Court -- Trial Division before that decision may be appealed to the Court of Appeal. *Pushpanathan* shows that the existence of this provision means there should be a lower level of deference on issues related to the certified question itself. However, this is only one of the factors involved in determining the standard of review, and the others must also be considered.

59 The second factor is the expertise of the decision-maker. The decision-maker here is the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration or his or her delegate. The fact that the formal decision-maker is the Minister is a factor militating in favour of deference. The Minister has some expertise relative to courts in immigration matters, particularly with respect to when exemptions should be given from the requirements that normally apply.

60 The third factor is the purpose of the provision in particular, and of the Act as a whole. This decision involves considerable choice on the part of the Minister in determining when humanitarian and compassionate considerations warrant an exemption from the requirements of the Act. The decision also involves applying relatively "open-textured" legal principles, a factor militating in favour of greater deference: *Pushpanathan, supra*, at para. 36. The purpose of the provision in question is also to exempt applicants, in certain circumstances, from the requirements of the Act or its Regulations. This factor, too, is a signal that greater deference should be given to the Minister. However, it should also be noted, in favour of a stricter standard, that this decision relates directly to the rights and interests of an individual in relation to the government, rather than balancing the interests of various constituencies or mediating between them. Its purpose is to decide whether the admission to Canada of a particular individual, in a given set of circumstances, should be facilitated.

61 The fourth factor outlined in *Pushpanathan* considers the nature of the problem in question, especially whether it relates to the determination of law or facts. The decision about whether to grant an H & C exemption involves a considerable appreciation of the facts of that person's case, and is not one which involves the application or interpretation of definitive legal rules. Given the highly discretionary and fact-based nature of this decision, this is a factor militating in favour of deference.

62 These factors must be balanced to arrive at the appropriate standard of review. I conclude that considerable deference should be accorded to immigration officers exercising the powers conferred by the legislation, given the fact-specific nature of the inquiry, its role within the statutory scheme as an exception, the fact that the decision-maker is the Minister, and the considerable discretion evidenced by the statutory language. Yet the absence of a privative clause, the explicit contemplation of judicial review by the Federal Court -- Trial Division and the [Federal Court of Appeal](#) in certain circumstances, and the individual rather than polycentric nature of the decision, also suggest that the standard should not be as deferential as "patent unreasonableness". I conclude, weighing all these factors, that the appropriate standard of review is reasonableness *simpliciter*.

### (3) Was this Decision Unreasonable?

63 I will next examine whether the decision in this case, and the immigration officer's interpretation of the scope of the discretion conferred upon him, were unreasonable in the sense contemplated in the judgment of Iacobucci J. in *Southam, supra*, at para. 56:

An unreasonable decision is one that, in the main, is not supported by any reasons that can stand up to a somewhat probing examination. Accordingly, a court reviewing a conclusion on the reasonableness standard must look to see whether any reasons

support it. The defect, if there is one, could presumably be in the evidentiary foundation itself or in the logical process by which conclusions are sought to be drawn from it.

In particular, the examination of this question should focus on the issues arising from the "serious question of general importance" stated by Simpson J.: the question of the approach to be taken to the interests of children when reviewing an H & C decision.

64 The notes of Officer Lorenz, in relation to the consideration of "H & C factors", read as follows:

The PC is a paranoid schizophrenic and on welfare. She has no qualifications other than as a domestic. She has FOUR CHILDREN IN JAMAICA AND ANOTHER FOUR BORN HERE. She will, of course, be a tremendous strain on our social welfare systems for (probably) the rest of her life. There are no H & C factors other than her FOUR CANADIAN-BORN CHILDREN. Do we let her stay because of that? I am of the opinion that Canada can no longer afford this type of generosity.

65 In my opinion, the approach taken to the children's interests shows that this decision was unreasonable in the sense contemplated in *Southam, supra*. The officer was completely dismissive of the interests of Ms. Baker's children. As I will outline in detail in the paragraphs that follow, I believe that the failure to give serious weight and consideration to the interests of the children constitutes an unreasonable exercise of the discretion conferred by the section, notwithstanding the important deference that should be given to the decision of the immigration officer. Professor Dyzenhaus has articulated the concept of "deference as respect" as follows:

Deference as respect requires not submission but a respectful attention to the reasons offered or which could be offered in support of a decision. . . .

(D. Dyzenhaus, "The Politics of Deference: Judicial Review and Democracy", in M. Taggart, ed., *The Province of Administrative Law* (1997), 279, at p. 286.)

The reasons of the immigration officer show that his decision was inconsistent with the values underlying the grant of discretion. They therefore cannot stand up to the somewhat probing examination required by the standard of reasonableness.

66 The wording of s. 114(2) and of Regulation 2.1 requires that a decision-maker exercise the power based upon "compassionate or humanitarian considerations" (emphasis added). These words and their meaning must be central in determining whether an individual H & C decision was a reasonable exercise of the power conferred by Parliament. The legislation and regulations direct the Minister to determine whether the person's admission should be facilitated owing to the existence

of such considerations. They show Parliament's intention that those exercising the discretion conferred by the statute act in a humanitarian and compassionate manner. This Court has found that it is necessary for the Minister to consider an H & C request when an application is made: *Jiminez-Perez, supra*. Similarly, when considering it, the request must be evaluated in a manner that is respectful of humanitarian and compassionate considerations.

67 Determining whether the approach taken by the immigration officer was within the boundaries set out by the words of the statute and the values of administrative law requires a contextual approach, as is taken to statutory interpretation generally: see >[R. v. Gladue, \[1999\] 1 S.C.R. 688](#); >[Rizzo & Rizzo Shoes Ltd. \(Re\), \[1998\] 1 S.C.R. 27](#), at paras. 20-23. In my opinion, a reasonable exercise of the power conferred by the section requires close attention to the interests and needs of children. Children's rights, and attention to their interests, are central humanitarian and compassionate values in Canadian society. Indications of children's interests as important considerations governing the manner in which H & C powers should be exercised may be found, for example, in the purposes of the Act, in international instruments, and in the guidelines for making H & C decisions published by the Minister herself.

(a) *The Objectives of the Act*

68 The objectives of the Act include, in s. 3(c):

to facilitate the reunion in Canada of Canadian citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives from abroad;

Although this provision speaks of Parliament's objective of reuniting citizens and permanent residents with their close relatives from abroad, it is consistent, in my opinion, with a large and liberal interpretation of the values underlying this legislation and its purposes to presume that Parliament also placed a high value on keeping citizens and permanent residents together with their close relatives who are already in Canada. The obligation to take seriously and place important weight on keeping children in contact with both parents, if possible, and maintaining connections between close family members is suggested by the objective articulated in s. 3(c).

(b) *International Law*

69 Another indicator of the importance of considering the interests of children when making a compassionate and humanitarian decision is the ratification by Canada of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and the recognition of the importance of children's rights and the best interests of children in other international instruments ratified by Canada. International treaties and conventions are not part of Canadian law

unless they have been implemented by statute: *Francis v. The Queen*, [1956] S.C.R. 618, at p. 621; *Capital Cities Communications Inc. v. Canadian Radio-Television Commission*, [1978] 2 S.C.R. 141, at pp. 172-73. I agree with the respondent and the Court of Appeal that the Convention has not been implemented by Parliament. Its provisions therefore have no direct application within Canadian law.

70 Nevertheless, the values reflected in international human rights law may help inform the contextual approach to statutory interpretation and judicial review. As stated in R. Sullivan, *Driedger on the Construction of Statutes* (3rd ed. 1994), at p. 330:

[T]he legislature is presumed to respect the values and principles enshrined in international law, both customary and conventional. These constitute a part of the legal context in which legislation is enacted and read. In so far as possible, therefore, interpretations that reflect these values and principles are preferred. [Emphasis added.]

The important role of international human rights law as an aid in interpreting domestic law has also been emphasized in other common law countries: see, for example, *Tavita v. Minister of Immigration*, [1994] 2 N.Z.L.R. 257 (C.A.), at p. 266; *Vishaka v. Rajasthan*, [1997] 3 L.R.C. 361 (S.C. India), at p. 367. It is also a critical influence on the interpretation of the scope of the rights included in the *Charter*. *Slaight Communications, supra*; >[R. v. Keegstra, \[1990\] 3 S.C.R. 697](#).

71 The values and principles of the Convention recognize the importance of being attentive to the rights and best interests of children when decisions are made that relate to and affect their future. In addition, the preamble, recalling the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, recognizes that "childhood is entitled to special care and assistance". A similar emphasis on the importance of placing considerable value on the protection of children and their needs and interests is also contained in other international instruments. The United Nations *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* (1959), in its preamble, states that the child "needs special safeguards and care". The principles of the Convention and other international instruments place special importance on protections for children and childhood, and on particular consideration of their interests, needs, and rights. They help show the values that are central in determining whether this decision was a reasonable exercise of the H & C power.

### (c) *The Ministerial Guidelines*

72 Third, the guidelines issued by the Minister to immigration officers recognize and reflect the values and approach discussed above and articulated in the Convention. As described above, immigration officers are expected to make the decision that a reasonable person would make, with special consideration of humanitarian values such as keeping connections between family members and avoiding hardship by sending

people to places where they no longer have connections. The guidelines show what the Minister considers a humanitarian and compassionate decision, and they are of great assistance to the Court in determining whether the reasons of Officer Lorenz are supportable. They emphasize that the decision-maker should be alert to possible humanitarian grounds, should consider the hardship that a negative decision would impose upon the claimant or close family members, and should consider as an important factor the connections between family members. The guidelines are a useful indicator of what constitutes a reasonable interpretation of the power conferred by the section, and the fact that this decision was contrary to their directives is of great help in assessing whether the decision was an unreasonable exercise of the H & C power.

73 The above factors indicate that emphasis on the rights, interests, and needs of children and special attention to childhood are important values that should be considered in reasonably interpreting the "humanitarian" and "compassionate" considerations that guide the exercise of the discretion. I conclude that because the reasons for this decision do not indicate that it was made in a manner which was alive, attentive, or sensitive to the interests of Ms. Baker's children, and did not consider them as an important factor in making the decision, it was an unreasonable exercise of the power conferred by the legislation, and must, therefore, be overturned. In addition, the reasons for decision failed to give sufficient weight or consideration to the hardship that a return to Jamaica might cause Ms. Baker, given the fact that she had been in Canada for 12 years, was ill and might not be able to obtain treatment in Jamaica, and would necessarily be separated from at least some of her children.

74 It follows that I disagree with the [Federal Court of Appeal's](#) holding in *Shah, supra*, at p. 239, that a s. 114(2) decision is "wholly a matter of judgment and discretion" (emphasis added). The wording of s. 114(2) and of the Regulations shows that the discretion granted is confined within certain boundaries. While I agree with the Court of Appeal that the Act gives the applicant no right to a particular outcome or to the application of a particular legal test, and that the doctrine of legitimate expectations does not mandate a result consistent with the wording of any international instruments, the decision must be made following an approach that respects humanitarian and compassionate values. Therefore, attentiveness and sensitivity to the importance of the rights of children, to their best interests, and to the hardship that may be caused to them by a negative decision is essential for an H & C decision to be made in a reasonable manner. While deference should be given to immigration officers on s. 114(2) judicial review applications, decisions cannot stand when the manner in which the decision was made and the approach taken are in conflict with humanitarian and compassionate values. The Minister's guidelines themselves reflect this approach. However, the decision here was inconsistent with it.

75 The certified question asks whether the best interests of children must be a primary consideration when assessing an applicant under s. 114(2) and the

Regulations. The principles discussed above indicate that, for the exercise of the discretion to fall within the standard of reasonableness, the decision-maker should consider children's best interests as an important factor, give them substantial weight, and be alert, alive and sensitive to them. That is not to say that children's best interests must always outweigh other considerations, or that there will not be other reasons for denying an H & C claim even when children's interests are given this consideration. However, where the interests of children are minimized, in a manner inconsistent with Canada's humanitarian and compassionate tradition and the Minister's guidelines, the decision will be unreasonable.

### E. *Conclusions and Disposition*

76 Therefore, both because there was a violation of the principles of procedural fairness owing to a reasonable apprehension of bias, and because the exercise of the H & C discretion was unreasonable, I would allow this appeal.

77 The appellant requested that solicitor-client costs be awarded to her if she were successful in her appeal. The majority of this Court held as follows in >[Young v. Young, \[1993\] 4 S.C.R. 3](#), at p. 134:

Solicitor-client costs are generally awarded only where there has been reprehensible, scandalous or outrageous conduct on the part of one of the parties. There has been no such conduct on the part of the Minister shown during this litigation, and I do not believe that this is one of the exceptional cases where solicitor-client costs should be awarded. I would allow the appeal, and set aside the decision of Officer Caden of April 18, 1994, with party-and-party costs throughout. The matter will be returned to the Minister for redetermination by a different immigration officer. The reasons of Cory and Iacobucci JJ. were delivered by

78 IACOBUCCI J. - I agree with L'Heureux-Dubé J.'s reasons and disposition of this appeal, except to the extent that my colleague addresses the effect of international law on the exercise of ministerial discretion pursuant to s. 114(2) of the *Immigration Act*, [R.S.C., 1985, c. I-2](#). The certified question at issue in this appeal concerns whether federal immigration authorities must treat the best interests of the child as a primary consideration in assessing an application for humanitarian and compassionate consideration under s. 114(2) of the Act, given that the legislation does not implement the provisions contained in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Can. T.S. 1992 No. 3, a multilateral convention to which Canada is party. In my opinion, the certified question should be answered in the negative.

79 It is a matter of well-settled law that an international convention ratified by the executive branch of government is of no force or effect within the Canadian legal system until such time as its provisions have been incorporated into domestic law by way of implementing legislation: *Capital Cities Communications Inc. v. Canadian Radio-Television Commission*, [1978] 2 S.C.R. 141. I do not agree with the approach adopted

by my colleague, wherein reference is made to the underlying values of an unimplemented international treaty in the course of the contextual approach to statutory interpretation and administrative law, because such an approach is not in accordance with the Court's jurisprudence concerning the status of international law within the domestic legal system.<sup>80</sup> In my view, one should proceed with caution in deciding matters of this nature, lest we adversely affect the balance maintained by our Parliamentary tradition, or inadvertently grant the executive the power to bind citizens without the necessity of involving the legislative branch. I do not share my colleague's confidence that the Court's precedent in *Capital Cities, supra*, survives intact following the adoption of a principle of law which permits reference to an unincorporated convention during the process of statutory interpretation. Instead, the result will be that the appellant is able to achieve indirectly what cannot be achieved directly, namely, to give force and effect within the domestic legal system to international obligations undertaken by the executive alone that have yet to be subject to the democratic will of Parliament.<sup>81</sup> The primacy accorded to the rights of children in the Convention, assuming for the sake of argument that the factual circumstances of this appeal are included within the scope of the relevant provisions, is irrelevant unless and until such provisions are the subject of legislation enacted by Parliament. In answering the certified question in the negative, I am mindful that the result may well have been different had my colleague concluded that the appellant's claim fell within the ambit of rights protected by the [Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#). Had this been the case, the Court would have had an opportunity to consider the application of the interpretive presumption, established by the Court's decision in [Slaight Communications Inc. v. Davidson, \[1989\] 1 S.C.R. 1038](#), and confirmed in subsequent jurisprudence, that administrative discretion involving *Charter* rights be exercised in accordance with similar international human rights norms. *Appeal allowed with costs.*

*Solicitors for the appellant: Roger Rowe and Rocco Galati, North York.*

*Solicitor for the respondent: The Deputy Attorney General of Canada, Toronto.*

*Solicitor for the interveners the Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law, the Defence for Children International-Canada, and the Canadian Council for Refugees: The Canadian Foundation for Children, Youth and the Law, Toronto.*

*Solicitors for the intervener Charter Committee on Poverty Issues: Tory, Tory, DesLauriers & Binnington, Toronto.*

*Solicitors for the intervener the Canadian Council of Churches: Jackman and Associates, Toronto.*

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