

And in Cambodia, the recent international conference in Paris which was called to explore an end to this tragedy failed to produce an agreement due to many outstanding differences between the parties. It is to be hoped that the future will bring compromise before this land endures yet another bloody conflict. However, I believe the Paris Conference served a positive purpose: it has put the issue firmly on the international agenda and identified international control mechanisms and reconstruction processes which can be brought into play when a settlement is reached.

As some regional conflicts have been brought under control, the unique and important UN instrument of peacekeeping has been brought to bear. At the same time, welcome and pragmatic suggestions are being made to improve operations and funding. Canada supports the Secretary-General's call to provide peacekeeping with a rational and secure funding base. Peacekeeping has become too important to the mission of this Organization to be subject to charity or whim.

One of the central tasks of this Organization has been to weave a new fabric of international law. This it has done assiduously, often without fanfare. The foundation is being laid for an international society governed by legal principles and codes of conduct. As with domestic society, stability is not possible without law - and law is powerless without consensus. The integration into domestic law of the rights codified by the UN in its Declaration of Human Rights and the covenants on racial discrimination and the rights of women - this is testimony to a growing international consensus. We must build on this success by acting this year to approve the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We are witnessing today a profound transformation in the substance of international discourse. Issues once thought intractable are now remarkably close to resolution. And issues once considered the province of domestic governments are now the focus of international activity. These are on the international agenda because they are pressing and because no state no matter how powerful or well-intentioned can resolve them on its own.

Thus the environment is emerging as the most important international challenge of the remainder of this century and the next. In a very few years, the environment will be seen as a threat to human existence in the same way nuclear war has been regarded in the past. It is now a challenge to national survival. It is also an area where the distinction between the domestic and the international agenda is collapsing. Pollution knows no borders. In the end, we all share the same air and water; we all suffer from its corruption or its loss.