

## SSEA to UNGA: Time for Member States to Act

The following are excerpts from the address by the Honourable Barbara McDougall, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the 47th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 47) in New York on September 24, 1992.

Once again the nations of the world meet in full assembly to discuss the state of our world, to report on our actions of the past year, and to express the focus for our intentions in the coming years.

Many of us had hoped that this might have been a time for celebration, a time for rejoicing, as the deep freeze of a lengthy Cold War gave way to the soothing warmth of a new era of enlightenment, understanding, caring and purpose. But we have little joy and our celebration was far too brief. Whatever insights we may have gained from the cruel and terrible events of the past half-century are sorely needed now in a world that breeds new forms of tyranny, hatred and brutality almost on a daily basis.

Many people in this chamber have seen the evidence up close: the bullets, the bodies and the fear in ordinary men and women. But there is no need to lose hope — we have the capacity, and we must continue to build for the future. What we need is the collective will.

I believe that it is this institution, this United Nations, this global forum where we must dedicate ourselves to securing the peace and stability that have evaded many generations before us. We must build a new world, individual by individual, nation by nation, but we must remove the double standards that are everywhere...

It is our belief that we are not in need of better principles in this United Nations — the drafters of the original Charter have served us well. What we need from this organization and its members is the will to act. We need deeper understanding of the root causes of conflict between nations, so that together we can “break the chain of violence, defuse the lust for revenge, voice the peoples’ needs and affirm the peoples’ dignity,” as our Prime Minister said in this Assembly on its 40th anniversary.

I believe that the United Nations has taken up that challenge, and I salute the Secretary-General for his vision and lead-

ership and for his courage in making this organization more relevant in and to our time. His report, *An Agenda for Peace*, lights a path to the future.

The Secretary-General also made the important link between peace among nations and peace within nations when he pointed out that “there is an obvious connection between democratic practices — such as the rule of law and transparency in decision-making — and the achievement of true peace and security in any new and stable political order.”

There are within nation states three fundamental weaknesses that can cause disputes that go beyond their borders. Primary among these is the absence or abuse of fundamental human rights. If people have no rights, they have no hope; if they have no hope, eventually they will have no fear; if they have no fear, they will seek any means possible to restore their rights, even to die in the trying. It is a pattern for instability, a pattern for failure, one that has happened all too often in the past.

The UN must lead in the field of human rights. In El Salvador, Cambodia, Croatia, Bosnia and Somalia, efforts to protect human rights are of fundamental importance in attempts to bring peace to these troubled lands. Canada is currently serving in all of these places.

The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights offers a unique opportunity for all members of the United Nations to work in a constructive and cooperative spirit to strengthen the foundation of universal respect for human rights.

Particularly insidious among the forms

of human rights abuse is systemic discrimination, whether based on gender, race or ethnic origin...

Canada protests, in the strongest terms possible, the abhorrent practice of “ethnic cleansing,” whatever its reason, wherever it is being practiced. It represents the basest form of inhumanity and abuse of the individual and cannot be tolerated by this world community. In this connection, Canada calls for the drafting of a statute by the International Law Commission to establish an international criminal court. For this purpose, Canada will convene shortly an international meeting of experts to mobilize legal expertise on this matter.

A second major weakness that exists within many nation states is the absence of a developed system of democratic values and institutions, and this too can ultimately lead to conflict.

One should not be fooled by the outward trappings of democracy. How can peace flourish when a democratically-elected leader is placed under house arrest, as in Myanmar, or a democratically-elected government is violently overthrown, as in Haiti? A true and lasting democracy requires time and understanding, like a true and lasting friendship, and it requires two-way trust between a nation’s peoples and its leaders.

We recognize the enormous challenges facing countries where democracy is in its early stages. We must all promote a climate of trust within these emerging democracies so that new ideas have time to flourish. Canada is doing this through its aid programs and by its participation in

### Verification Bibliography Updated

In October, Canada submitted to the UN an update to the Canadian *Bibliography on Arms Control Verification: 1962-1991*, which was distributed at UNGA 46 in 1991. The original *Bibliography* contained over 1,500 entries, representing English-language publications and submissions by governments and international organizations as well as the academic community’s literature on the subject. The *Update* includes more than 800 new entries, covering approximately the same period as the 1991 *Bibliography*, with special emphasis on literature produced between the summers of 1991 and 1992. The *Update* also encompasses French-language material.

The *Update* was prepared as a further Canadian contribution to the development of a UN data bank on verification, and to assist governmental experts, negotiators and researchers in their work on verification matters. It is being widely distributed to the relevant communities.