

When preparing for the recent G-7 summit in Halifax, Canada had an opportunity to foster discussion on the role of international financial institutions in human development. It is clear that International Monetary Fund and World Bank initiatives and programs must be better co-ordinated and their consequences on people must be more carefully assessed.

The recent series of UN world conferences on economic and social issues has produced a general blueprint for sustainable development based on a balance between economic and social priorities, with the aim of enhancing human well-being. The impetus created by the Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing conferences proves to us that the UN is capable of playing a leading role in forging international agreements on development goals, in defending fundamental values, and in satisfying humanitarian and development needs.

Our priority must be sustainable development based on human needs. There must be a clear emphasis on reducing poverty and integrating the poorest countries into the world economy.

The growing gap between rich and poor on the planet is the greatest known threat to peace. This is an unacceptable situation that must be remedied. There can be no peace while there exists wealth that appears obscene in its juxtaposition with abject poverty. However, no country or even group of countries acting alone can hope to work changes on a global scale. We must undertake a truly universal effort.

I would like to stress that the three components I have mentioned – that is, preventive diplomacy, rapid reaction and peace-building – are mutually reinforcing. For any of them to bear fruit, UN member states must assign equal importance to each.

The United Nations is the keystone of our foreign policy. Its values and ideals are the same as those which have forged our identity as Canadians: values of respect, openness, co-operation and dialogue. I am therefore confident that 50 years hence my successor will be able to cite many other Canadians who will have distinguished themselves in the service of peace and the United Nations.

Thank you.