

Destruction of the rainforest in Brazil, deforestation in Sub-Saharan Africa, or the pollution of drinking water in the sprawling cities of the developing world are the consequences of people in poverty seeking the means to survive. Without improved development opportunities, we cannot expect them to do other than search for such fuel, shelter and livelihood, as best as they can.

We must help them to protect these precious resources. We require a new era of economic growth, but we need growth that sustains and expands the resource capital of our planet, not growth that poisons the air we breathe and the water we drink.

An Aboriginal elder, speaking to a Canadian Government Commission, said it best: 'we did not inherit the earth—we only hold it in trust for our children.'

Mr. President, in a world where rivers and winds cannot be contained by laws or borders, it is clear that domestic initiatives by themselves are inadequate. Canadians know this.

Our economy as well as our environment is damaged by acid rain. We have taken important internal measures to address the problem. We have urgently pressed our neighbour to follow suit and to conclude a treaty with us that will reduce the environmental damage from this blight by stated amounts within specific time frames.

But acid rain is not limited to one nation or one continent. It is an international problem, and it demands a viable international solution. The greenhouse effect, the deterioration of the ozone layer and the disposal of toxic wastes are cause for concern the world over. I am encouraged by the strong emphasis given to the environment by others in this year's debate. Strengthened international cooperation is essential, and the UN has a key role to play.

As with security issues, important action has been initiated:

— The signature a year ago in Montreal of the protocol on the protection of the ozone layer is a landmark example of what nations working together can accomplish.

I urge all states which have not yet done so to sign and ratify the protocol without delay.

— The increasingly urgent question of global warming and climate change received serious attention at the International Conference on the Changing Atmosphere in Toronto last June.

Our goal should be an International Framework Convention for the Protection of the Atmosphere by 1992.

We applaud the work of the United Nations Environment Program in developing a global convention on the trans-boundary movements of hazardous wastes. We hope it will be ready for signature next year.

Mr. President, this powerful momentum must be maintained and strengthened.

Other steps are needed.

Canada is supporting a feasibility study on a World Conservation Bank to work in concert with the World Bank. Canada is asking the World Bank, at its annual meeting in Berlin, to strengthen the integration of environmental concerns into the design and implementation of its projects.

Canada fully supports the holding of an environmental Summit at the Heads of Government level. Canada urges all corporations and international industrial and trade associations to develop, strengthen and vigorously apply environmental codes of conduct.

Obviously, wealthier nations have to offer more assistance and support to help developing countries achieve growth which does not destroy their environment. For that reason the Canadian International Development Agency makes environmental protection one of the criteria for its development projects.

I want to announce today that Canada will establish a Centre which will promote internationally the concept of environmentally sustainable development. This centre will be located in Winnipeg and will work closely with the United Nations Environment Program and other like-minded international institutions and organizations.

Canada strongly supports the call for a UN Conference on sustainable development in 1992.

The global challenges we face are great, but we are proving they can be met and resolved.

Mankind is not destined to destroy itself. War is not inevitable. Poverty can be alleviated. The environment can be preserved. Injustices can be made right.

Mr. President, the UN is not and never will be a perfect institution. But in the last few years the UN has proven that it can make needed reforms and emerge as a stronger and more effective body. We must continue to improve this irreplaceable organization. Our citizens will judge the UN not by its rhetoric but by its actions and its practical successes.

An immunization program that saves children's lives in a developing nation is, in itself, an enduring monument to the profound value of this institution.

Because now as the international political climate improves, the UN can play the role intended in the Charter.

Lester Pearson, a great Canadian statesman who was present at the creation of this Organization, once observed that the United Nations is the 'living symbol of our interdependence, and embodies that emerging sense of international community, going beyond nation and region, which alone can save us in this nuclear age.'

Mr. President, the United Nations reflects the vision of our predecessors and the hope for our children.

The agenda before the United Nations is compelling, and the choices are clear: to manage the irresistible forces of change that swirl around us: to acknowledge the interdependence of our world and of the issues before us: to ensure a more peaceful, more prosperous, more humane world, a world in which the strong nations are just, the rich nations generous — a world in which all nations have legitimate hope for greater economic and social justice, understanding as we must that there is but one earth for us to preserve for our children." □