

At the United Nations General Assembly, Canada will keep up the pressure to reform this very vital organization and, through example and by moral suasion, will endeavour to stabilize its financial situation.

But reforming world organizations is only part of the task. We must somehow find a way to increase what Adam Smith called the "wealth of nations," because poverty, disenfranchisement and hopelessness are virtually always at the root of civil and international disruptions.

International trade is the most obvious method for creating new wealth between and within nations. Canada has rejected the shallow arguments of the trade protectionists and opted for free trade with the United States, with the United States and Mexico, and with the world community at large through a more expansive General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Despite all the nay-sayers, since the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA), Canada has continued to run a large and growing trade surplus with the United States. Our success in the world's most significant market has prepared us to seek new opportunities in other areas.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with the United States and Mexico is really the "FTA-plus," providing more precision on certain elements of the FTA, such as rules of origin, while strengthening other important aspects, such as environmental protection, and, of course, adding an additional 86 million consumers to the marketplace.

Trade policy has always been an important element of foreign policy. A careful reading of the terms of international trade agreements provides a valuable insight into the values and standards of a country's domestic policy, whether it be with respect to culture, social programs, the environment, or its overall respect for minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

But there is also a non-trade aspect of the international "wealth of nations" that has received less attention; one that is less easy to measure but no less important in the total scheme of things. It is the valuation of a country's basic political, judicial and administrative institutions and, ultimately, its protection of individual human rights.

What is the value of advanced technology or rich stores of natural resources, if a nation's citizens are unable to speak freely, to meet peacefully, to worship according to their own beliefs, or freely question the government of the day without fear of reprisals?