

The picture today is not one of unremitting gloom. Since World War II, living standards in many Third World countries have improved dramatically. New economic power centres are emerging. The newly industrialized countries must find the markets and the means to permit them to develop.

Some countries of the South are growing stronger every day. Let us help them grow. But there are other countries, the poorest of the poor, which are struggling just to survive. Their situation will be critical for as far ahead as the eye can see. Eight hundred million people live on the margin of human existence. They live with overwhelming deprivation, with despair, and in a state of perpetual crisis. The management of this crisis is a test of both the humanity and the credibility of governments in both North and South.

The best tool with which to help the poorest is outright aid. We have to assist them to develop the potential to feed themselves and provide for other fundamental needs like health and shelter. It is a ghastly cynicism which pretends that international co-operation cannot bring these lives closer to minimum standards of human dignity.

The overwhelming fact which governments must face is that international aid efforts are inadequate. The gap between rich and poor is not closing, but opening wider, in spite of everything that has been done.

The Canadian aid record can be improved, and is being improved. My government is committed to that. But I do point out that we have made a lot of progress since the sixties. Our efforts have done a lot of good, and we have won ourselves solid friends in the world. In Canada, and throughout the developed world, there is a need for even greater public involvement—not just through round table discussions among the knowledgeable and already involved, but in communities and schools—so that growing public support will encourage governments to do more and to do it better.

I firmly believe that the world can and must grow enough food, provide clean water, decent housing, health care and real hope for all its people. It can be done, but it will require a gigantic effort.