

As I think most people agree, promoting human rights and pursuing trade are seldom, if ever, mutually exclusive objectives.

In fact, growing trade and the increased economic prosperity it brings will often help to nurture more open and more democratic societies.

Governments that have opened their markets to international trade are likely to be more sensitive to the views and reactions of other countries. An inward-looking society that depends little on trade and international investments is less likely to respond to concerns raised by foreigners. Trade reduces isolationism. Trade also expands the scope of international law and generates the economic growth required to sustain social change and development.

We support the building of more and better trade linkages between and among all nations of the world, and we will continue to work toward a better, more open and freer world trading system.

Just as Canada was engaged at the beginning as a founding member of the United Nations; in helping to draft the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; in reaffirming its principles at the world conference in 1993 and in countless interventions and peacekeeping missions in between, we intend to stay engaged in all parts of the world.

We do not favour isolationism. We do not believe in cutting ourselves off from other countries even if we do not like their human rights records. We believe that the way to help bring about change is by confronting the issue head on.

We must, and we will, continue to insist in all areas of the world that crimes and atrocities against individuals not go unpunished. We will continue to take a lead – as we have in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia, for example – in the establishment of war crimes tribunals to bring guilty parties to justice.

But, as difficult as the human rights issues we must face appear to be, we also need to be aware that there is cause for hope and optimism on many fronts.

The definition of "national security" has shifted to the economic, social and political security of people within societies. We want to encourage that shift. One of Canada's major objectives at this year's World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen was to promote the acceptance of a people-centred approach to sustainable development, good governance and respect for human rights and diversity.

By putting the focus on human needs, we are trying to deal with global issues that in many ways transcend the power, ability and scope of individual governments. We hope that in so doing, we not