

In this dawning hope for peace, the path we should take is clear. It is toward conciliation and not confrontation between East and West. It is toward cooperation and generosity, not recrimination and rigidity, in North-South relations. It is toward negotiation, not warfare, in regional disputes. It is toward implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 40 years ago.

We must give hope to those who today find their rights to free expression silenced by gunfire. We must provide sustenance to the flame of liberty in all regions where fundamental rights are being abused. We must reinforce the role of the Security Council in the pursuit of peacemaking and peacekeeping around the world. It can be done, with the help of everyone in this Assembly.

Mr. President, for two generations the arms race, regional disputes and the threat of nuclear annihilation have been a central preoccupation of the United Nations, and so they will remain. But I believe we are at a point in history when we must devote significantly more political energy to problems other than security, problems just as important, but until now accorded a lower priority.

I want to speak specifically about the twin challenges of severe poverty and our endangered environment. I believe we will not have true security until these problems have been successfully resolved.

These issues were high on the agendas of three international summits Canada hosted this past year — la Francophonie, the Commonwealth, and the Economic Summit. At these meetings, I found a growing conviction among national leaders that these problems can be tackled successfully, and before the end of this century. These problems command the same priority in the United Nations.

Poverty undermines security. It compromises equality. It denies hope. Today, it is estimated that at least one billion people live in absolute poverty. They are hungry. They are often sick. They are uneducated. They die young.

At Toronto, the leaders of the major industrialized countries renewed their

commitment to work toward continued growth for the benefit of both industrialized and developing countries.

We are also working toward a trading system which is more open and more beneficial to all nations. It will be strengthened bilaterally, as in the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement, the largest commercial agreement in the history of two-way trade.

It can also be strengthened regionally, as in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in Europe, as it approaches 1992. And it must be strengthened through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and multilateral talks such as the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. Progress in these talks is essential at the GATT mid-term review to be held in Montreal this December.

Increased development assistance, especially to the poorest countries, is another imperative. Canada has just completed a review of its official development assistance (ODA) policy. We have reset our bearings to improve the quality, and increase the quantity of the help we give, to recognize the special role of women in development, and to concentrate on the poorest people in the poorest countries.

That is why Canada has completely written off the ODA debts of a large number of countries. It is surely reasonable that loans given for development purposes should not be allowed to become hindrances to that same development. None of this is altruism. North and South, rich and poor, have an equal stake in a world where wealth must be more equitably shared.

That is why our assistance program is now composed entirely of grants. We have affirmed that Canadian assistance will continue to increase to reach the target of 0.6% of GNP by 1995 and the desired 0.7% target by the year 2000, now less than 12 years away.

Perhaps I could best illustrate the importance we attach to the UN by pointing out that Canada is the fourth largest contributor to the UN system. Most of these contributions are directed at development assistance. But Canadians generally feel more can and should be done.

Africa is a special case. Canada has taken seriously its responsibilities under the UN Program of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD). In 1986-87, Canada disbursed a total of almost one billion dollars in Africa, through all channels, multilateral, bilateral and non-governmental.

Nearly half of all our bilateral assistance will be directed to Africa over the next five years. But poverty in Africa and elsewhere, cannot be ended solely through trade and help from developed countries. It will require sound national economic and development strategies. And the governments of the developing countries have a more direct responsibility to their own people to achieve progress.

Mr. President, I said we must devote the energies freed by greater security to two equally pressing problems. One is poverty. The other is the environment.

The world is facing an environmental crisis of unparalleled magnitude. Nature is sending us an urgent message that we ignore at our peril. The signs of this crisis are all around us—shortages of timber, exhausted soil, desertification, depleted fish stocks, seals dying in the North Sea, beluga whales washing ashore in the St. Lawrence River. Some even maintain that we have reached a point where the survival of mankind is at risk.

Prime Minister Brundtland, Chairman of the World Commission on Environment and Development, has said that the threat to our environmental security is 'second only to nuclear war.' Having lessened the likelihood of global nuclear war, we now face invasion by rising seas, polluted air and encroaching deserts.

There is a growing awareness that the environment, the economy, and human health are inextricably linked. At the same time as we in the North suffer the effects of our industrial society's disregard for the environment, the South suffers from the environmental degradation engendered by poverty, by population growth, and by pressure for immediate economic development.