

sponsor a meeting held, I believe, this past weekend, in Nicaragua. It is through such meetings that the theory of the North-South dialogue is put into practice.)

**Western  
world's  
commitment**

Central America is by no means the only area of the developing world which is undergoing extremes on the economic and political scale, and this leads me to reiterate the absolute necessity of the Western world's commitment on the North-South question. We in the North are, without any doubt the wealthiest and freest peoples in the history of the earth. Under no other system have people been able to sustain the growth rates, the political sophistication, nor the economic betterment that we have given to our peoples since the Second World War. Yet, at the same time, almost a billion human beings in this world live on the borderline of existence. We must ensure that they at least have access to the most fundamental of human requirements – food, shelter, health care, clean water, and education. In a shrinking world we have to broaden the definition of who is our neighbour. The plight of our fellow human beings demands our attention, regardless of the national boundaries or ideologies that may divide us.

Where, then, can we find our starting point in defining a liberal agenda for North-South affairs in the 1980s? As liberals, I think we should start with reality, with the facts – and one of the most appalling facts I know is that of the estimated 125 million children born this year in the Third World, about 12 million will never reach their first birthday. They die of malnutrition or water-borne diseases compounded by lack of medical care. They will become part of our generation's record in history – in effect, the equivalent of two holocausts a year, even though we have the means in our world to end this disgrace and certainly cannot plead ignorance of what is happening.

As liberals, we know that such a situation cries out for reform. We know, too, that the problem is global and transcends national borders. That is why liberals of all nationalities have helped in building the framework of international institutions that are needed to tackle world-wide problems, and to allow countries to participate on a fair and open basis in the world's affairs. It is appropriate that one of the great liberal statements of this century is, in fact, the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, which sets out goals that should command our lifelong efforts: "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal right of men and women and of nations large and small; to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours".

**Two major  
challenges**

From the continuing international issues, two relatively new questions have emerged as major challenges for the 1980s and beyond.

The most obvious is the search for a more just and equitable international economic order, one that will enable the developing countries to benefit from a larger share of