

There are other substantive issues that I would have liked to discuss in greater detail before this General Assembly today -- notably the follow-up to the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro. Canada's Prime Minister urges acceptance of the Conventions on Climate Change and on Biological Diversity in a ringing call to action: "As political leaders, our job is to force the pace and stretch out the limits of international co-operation. Nations ... have the human genius to create a world free from deprivation and secure from degradation. What remains is for governments to provide the leadership the world so desperately needs."

The job of this General Assembly is to continue to stretch the limits and to demonstrate that leadership, through the establishment of both a Commission on Sustainable Development and the Conference on the High Seas.

There are as well many issues of process, such as the reform of the UN development system, which require our immediate time and attention. Canada put forward detailed proposals in this regard in July in the Economic and Social Council, and we will continue to take an active role in this matter.

What a large task we have set ourselves!

However, one of the lessons that we have learned in the post-Cold War era is that there is no breathing space, there is no long pause for contemplation and reflection. Decisions must be made on a timely basis, and when those decisions are made, all Member States must vigorously support and abide by them.

Last month, at the London Conference on the former Yugoslavia, I made it clear that Canada is losing patience with much of the posturing that historically masquerades as international diplomacy. I know that others in this Assembly share this frustration. But, as we speak, the body count rises in what is left of Bosnia-Herzegovina, not to mention the thousands of men, women and children facing starvation in Somalia.

The United Nations needs the commitment of its Member States, it needs well-thought-out decisions, and it needs follow-up action. Anything less is failure.

Let us not spend the next four or five years debating the niceties of "this" principle or "that" concept. Let us all get on with the job of building peace and prosperity.

No one should be here, if they are not prepared to work toward those noble objectives, and no one should leave without confirming their commitment to work together for the benefit of all the peoples of the world.