

dividuals are volunteering in their communities. In Canada, for example, 7.5 million people—nearly one in three—volunteer their time. More people are choosing to take public transit, recycle, use fewer pesticides, and buy ethical funds rather than regular mutual funds.

There is increased evidence of responsible corporate behaviour. At the Pierina Mine in Peru which I visited last fall, the Toronto-based company, Barrick Gold, is focusing not only on revenue, but on community development, by helping to provide education (notably for girls) and training for the local population.

Meanwhile, scientists around the world have been working on genetically engineered products to help a greater number of people produce more nourishing food. For example, a product called “Golden Rice” has been engineered to address vitamin A deficiency, the leading cause of blindness among children in developing countries. In India, they have developed a genetically engineered “pro-tato” that will be disease resistant and yield greater crops.

Governments, too, have been showing an increased sense of conscience. As International Trade Minister, I can point to the labour and environmental side agreements to our NAFTA, as well as to our commitment to both greater transparency and broader development in the new WTO round and in the ongoing Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations. I am also proud to be part of a government that has ratified the Kyoto Protocol.

All of these examples point to more socially responsible behaviour inspired by a greater sense of conscience. This is a good start, but if we want to enjoy truly sustainable prosperity, we must be committed to making all of our respective choices in light of an even higher degree of conscience. And, if we want this ethic of conscience to permeate all levels of society we must ensure that individuals use their power, particularly in democracies, to influence the state and their society. Too many believe they can't make a difference.