

opportunity, but also the ability to contribute their talents, intelligence and energy to that goal.

A key human rights challenge is to improve the lives of the world's children. This includes not only full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also the ambitious goals of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit for Children and tabled by Prime Minister Mulroney at last year's General Assembly.

I would like, Mr. President, to express Canada's pleasure at the follow-up that is occurring under the aegis of UNICEF. As for our own follow-up, we have taken several initiatives in order to increase awareness about children's issues and to encourage co-operation across Canada.

### Environment

In just eight months world leaders will gather in Rio de Janeiro for the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). It is an opportunity to launch a concerted shift to more sustainable forms of development, to integrate environmental concerns into economic development.

It is an opportunity to infuse our efforts to protect the international environment with the political will required for success. It is an opportunity to forge an international consensus that will prevent fracturing our efforts into an unbridgeable divide between North and South.

The Rio conference is not an optional occasion, and we should recognize now, well in advance of our deliberations, that the price of failure will be high indeed.

From our perspective, a good package at Rio would consist of four elements: the Earth Charter dealing with principles; Agenda 21, setting out actions; Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity; and a Statement of Principles on Forests. And for this package to succeed, we will have to ensure that political commitments are made for the necessary resources, the transfer of technology and the adaptation of institutions.

Now that three of the four preparatory meetings have been held, the results can be assessed. And I fear that we have not overcome the two great risks that the UNCED process faces: disinterest on the part of the governments of many developed countries, and a slide towards two solitudes of rich and poor.

It is true that we in Canada are worried about climate change, the loss of species, pollutants in the Arctic food chain, ocean resources and forests. But, we recognize that, for developing