

intolerance and human rights abuses go unpunished that such tragedies occur in the first place.

Another major cause of most armed conflicts – and this is indeed a matter of human rights, of economic and social rights, to which all here subscribe – is the persistent and growing gap between rich and poor.

I believe that this presents us with a major threat to world stability today. We live in an age of instant communication. It is easy for people to see who are better off than they are. And those who are in more desperate circumstances, the "have-nots," can more easily be manipulated and led into violence by others. "What do you have to lose?" becomes the rallying cry and the promise of change. War, death and even greater poverty are too often the only results.

It is clear that the international community working together is the best hope for breaking this cycle.

That is why Canadians are active supporters – and even outspoken reformers – of the United Nations.

The Canadian government is working to strengthen its ability to respond to crises, primarily in three areas.

We must take preventive action to stop simmering tensions from turning into open military conflict. If we can prevent a crisis from erupting, we will not only save money in terms of troop movements and military intervention, we will also be saving lives and protecting the rights of the people in the area concerned.

We have at our disposal a number of tools for detecting potential problems and we can use a variety of methods to resolve situations before they hit the boiling point. In most cases, we have all the information we need; however, what we lack is the ability to analyze it, prepare a response and quickly mobilize the international community to take action.

Analyses of the information generated by the UN human rights monitoring systems need to be improved and distributed more effectively throughout all member states. Their findings should also go to the Security Council and the Secretary-General so that appropriate preventive measures can be undertaken.

Canada has also provided to the UN Secretary-General an inventory of resource people suited to missions of peace and negotiation, or specializing in elections, human rights, the administration of justice and other such fields. These are prominent and well-respected individuals who are available on short notice to put their expertise and credibility to work to settle disputes.