

In some cases they have become caricatures -- not just in the collapse of self-respect in our Senate, but in the growing incivility in Parliament, and the casual denigration of other Canadians that is becoming more marked in our public commentary. Those imperfections should not freeze us into inaction. They simply mean we have a job to do at home and a job to do abroad.

Third, we must be prepared to move beyond rhetoric. Societies that are developing-politically and developing economically -- do not need cheerleaders. They need understanding friends -- people who will extend their hand and not turn their backs, countries who are willing to help them practise what we have so long preached.

Societies that are not democratic are unlikely to become developed. But so too societies that are underdeveloped are unlikely to become democratic. True democracy is not secured by building assemblies or buying ballots or crafting lofty laws. Democracy and human rights require a foundation -- a foundation of belief and a foundation of development. We cannot demand democracy and deny development. Teaching people to read fights illiteracy, but it can also be a step towards democracy. Making people productive fights poverty, but it also can be a step towards other human rights. Development assistance that is effective and efficient will do far more to promote democracy and human rights than any lecture or any admonition from the West or the North.

Fourth, we must be patient and we must be understanding. We cannot demand democracy or perfect human rights overnight anymore than we ever demanded that of ourselves. We cannot blindly pursue policies of structural adjustment which do not acknowledge that those policies, if misguided, can themselves erode the roots of democracy and social stability. Structural adjustment is necessary for growth that is not inflationary and development that is sustainable. But those policies must be constructed to preserve the social foundations required for future growth.

Fifth, we must face squarely the issue of the links we make between development assistance and government behaviour. Part of that challenge is to recognize that there are no easy choices. We may detest regimes and abhor governments. But people should not be punished for regimes they do not support, regimes that are punishing them already. On the other hand, those regimes should know that there are limits and there are fundamental standards which we will not discard.

I believe Canadian development assistance reflects that approach. We look at human rights records in deciding on the level of aid we give and on what type of aid that should be. But we do not demand miracles. We do not expect a society that has been a prison to become a paradise overnight. So we look for trends of improvement, and we review those trends regularly.