

village. We know that we cannot afford to fail in coming up with formulas for fairness in our dealings with the developing world. Yet the facts remain immutable.

The developed world retains its corner on wealth and power. Disparities between north and south are worsening. Formulas for fair sharing of resources elude us. Promises about equality in trade remain hollow.

The world is really in a race against time. It must produce the resources to sustain a population which has more than doubled in the past 40 years and will reach a staggering eight billion, perhaps even 10 billion, early in the twenty-first century.

Here at home, doomsday scenarios proliferate. Some even project a 30-per-cent permanently unemployed class. Others point to the agony of an already engulfed middle class. Yet others speak of a potentially insolvent pension system, a rich tradition of social systems in crisis, and all of this along with the deceleration of world economies across the board as they undergo what Lester Thurow recently referred to as global economic saturation, or GES. Add to that the "D" word — where the deficit is another vital component of the enemy arsenal — and the beaches of the new age appear to be even more formidable and more impenetrable.

Yet over the last few months we have heard a man of experience, a man of common sense, speak to us of a very simple truth. That man is the Prime Minister of our country. The truth is about the restoration of hope to individuals in our society. Individual dignity, Prime Minister Chrétien has said tirelessly, is the engine of all we will do together and all we will accomplish together. That simple truth is the basic assumption upon which this government will enact reform and renewal.

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No government can call for sacrifice from people who do not believe in their own worth. We cannot make a national effort to win the beaches of the new age, honourable senators, without people strong in the conviction that we can do better. It will be individuals of conviction, of will and of courage who will do this.

I believe the Prime Minister has history on his side. Look around the planet. There is cause for celebration in the global reach of education, in the dynamic spread of new ideas advancing across traditional borders of sovereign states with impunity — all this caused by information technology and by the parallel burgeoning of citizen participation.

In our present chaotic world there are a number of powerful forces at work. Globalization is one; disintegration is another. But what is of particular interest, in my opinion, is that "people power", through the new social movements revolution, has become a force to be reckoned with, as the present Mexican government knows only too well. I refer here to the rich proliferation of groups prepared to push doors open all over the world. Ecological groups are doing this; aboriginal peoples are going further. Anti-nuclear, feminist and human rights groups, all of these are springing up all over the planet.

We see movements struggling for urban renewal, alternate forms of economic organization, land reform, racial justice, cooperative production and liberation from various forms of  
[ Senator Graham ]

foreign domination. They are voices demanding change from the bottom up, and they signify the determination of ordinary people to have a voice in their own affairs.

All this means that something very significant is happening. It means that one of the most important forces of our time is people. In fact, it seems to me that people, ordinary people, are going much further than their governments; much further, in some cases, than their leaders.

I have to tell you that my heart is really on board this "people power" train. As an international election observer who has been part of many missions abroad over the years — to Africa, South America, Eastern Europe and Asia — I can only tell you that I have watched firsthand the process of the empowerment of people and the growth of a marvellous devotion to democracy in terrain often noted for repression and fear.

I have seen people go much further — much further than their governments, much further than their leaders, because, of course, the real transition was rooted in their hearts and in their minds, rooted in a conviction that ordinary people have the right to shape the foundations of a fair society. Therefore I believe that, as the Prime Minister speaks of the empowerment of the individual, he is very much in tune with one of the most important forces now sweeping the planet.

Just last month, I spoke to a model United Nations forum at St. Francis Xavier University. I told those assembled that the future is not a gift; it is an achievement. They understood this. I said that there were no limits to the power of ordinary people to make change happen. I told them that they could make a difference. I spoke to them of little people in far-off places whose spirit and will alone was what forced sorghum to grow from the dust, and was what forced the seeds of freedom as well to spring from barren soil. They savoured the thought, but wondered at the staggering obstacles that lie ahead.

Our nation, Canada, is becoming increasingly underemployed. Today, only 48 per cent of the adult Canadian population have full-time jobs. The majority of the population is employed on a part-time basis, or underemployed, or unemployed.

Arthur Kroeger, one of Canada's most distinguished public servants and now Chairman of the Public Policy Forum, recently pointed out in an address in Toronto that:

...one of the failures of Canadian labour markets has been, and is, the co-existence of skill shortages and high unemployment.

He said that in 1989, 39 per cent of auto parts manufacturers reported that they had to curtail operations due to shortages of trained personnel. As well, he pointed out that the Quebec Department of Education last month listed 30 vocational programs in which there is a severe shortage of students relative to job market requirements.

Just think about it: Fifty-two per cent of the adult population in Canada is employed on a part-time basis, underemployed or unemployed — and still there are jobs available for which we lack the commensurate skills.

As far as I am concerned, the new Minister of Education in Nova Scotia, John MacEachern, has it right in this respect. A former high school physics teacher himself, he has set out to