

After having had the most terrible wars during this century, after having had crimes against humanity that we never had before in human history in this century, now for the last decade we have the chance to create a new world based on human rights, on freedom, on democracy. We have the opportunity to face and to meet the global challenges, to develop the Third World, to meet the great challenge of saving our natural resources and our environment. That is what we should focus on . . .⁽¹⁾

The reduction in East–West tensions, which will be a primary focus of the Committee’s report on Canada’s relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, could open up promising new avenues for Canadian foreign policy initiative. The realization of a peace dividend should allow for increased investment in productive international economic cooperation, social development, environmental protection and other elements of a truly common security for all countries of the globe.

But the welcome optimism that has been generated in East–West relations stands in stark contrast to North–South prospects more weighed down than ever by the burdens of chronic debt and economic depression. For nearly two–thirds of humanity, the walls of ignorance, poverty and disease have yet to be broken down. In some cases they are being raised higher as developmental gains are being lost. UNICEF’s report *The State of the World’s Children 1990* points out that the proportion of children enrolled in primary schooling in the developing world began to fall in the mid 1980s while the total number of children continued to grow. “As a result, the number of children out of school has increased to 60 million from 50 million in 1986—the first significant rise in 4 decades.”⁽²⁾ The North–South Institute’s *Review ’89/Outlook ’90* observes bluntly that “for most of the people of the South, 1989 was a miserable year.”⁽³⁾

In a recent speech, Canada’s former ambassador for disarmament, Douglas Roche, reminds us of what he refers to as the overwhelming “accumulating backlog of human deprivation in the Third World”:

- 1.2 billion absolute poor;
- 870 million without education;
- 1.3 billion without safe water;
- 800 million hungry every night;
- 14 million children under 5 die each year.⁽⁴⁾

(1) Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade (hereinafter cited as SCEAIT), *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, Issue No. 48, 5 April 1990, p. 16.

(2) UNICEF, *The State of the World’s Children 1990*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989, Fig. 2, p. 9.

(3) “The Nervous Nineties: Uncertainties Cloud Decade for the Third World,” Ottawa: The North–South Institute, January 1990, p. 1.

(4) Douglas Roche, “Good Economics and Good Ethics: Canada and the Peace Dividend in the 1990s,” Keynote Address to Conference on Ethics and Canadian Defence Policy, Acadia University, 22 March 1990, p. 3.