

We confront this new generation of challenges of almost baffling complexity at a time of crisis in governance. Even the strongest and the most successful of industrialized nations today are reaching the limits of what their governments can do to deal effectively with these issues. Necessity, more than ideology, is driving a reduction in the role of governments, with increasing reliance on private action and initiative.

At the same time, there is a growing movement of responsibilities and jurisdictions, both downstream to local and state governments and upstream to the international level. For developing countries, this experience is especially traumatic, since governments in those countries have played a prominent role in shaping their societies and in unifying their countries.

Engagement of such unprecedented numbers of non-governmental organizations and citizen groups in preparations for UNCED and at Rio itself provides the basis for continuing and deepening citizen concern and action on the issues that they see as critical to their own future. As I have said, it produced an explosion of awareness about these issues in all parts of the world, and I am greatly encouraged that we can now build a very substantial citizen network on this basis.

That is why I have joined in a new initiative for the creation of an Earth Council. It will help in the development of informed, aware and concerned global constituencies. It will ensure a continuing focus on the issues addressed at Rio, and will enable them also to work together more effectively for the implementation of its results.

The Earth Council Foundation was incorporated right here in Vancouver. An organizing committee has been formed and a secretariat established in San José, Costa Rica, in response to the invitation of the government of Costa Rica to host the headquarters of the Earth Council.

In the final analysis, at this point in our history we must recognize that the effectiveness of Canadian diplomacy at the international level must be based on Canada's domestic performance. Canadians are custodians of one of the largest territories on earth,