

Sisters and brothers; friends and allies; workers and students, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters; thank you.

There's no place in the world I'd rather be than here in this room with you.

Because I believe that the people in this room hold the seeds of Ontario's future.

Great change that shaped our province started in rooms like this.

Rooms filled with people like us decided that every child would have an education, decided that working people would make a living wage, decided that no one would have to choose between health care for their child and a roof over their head.

This is a room filled with real people.

We work in hospitals and nursing homes, factories and pulp mills, office towers and home offices.

We are students and we are retirees and we are people with differing abilities and contributions to make.

But we all came here because we are committed to change.

We may not be rich but we are powerful.

We're not in this for ourselves.

We're here because we believe in building a better world.

You can knock us down, you can try and ignore us, you can repeatedly write our political obituary.

But the people in this room, and the people joining us from home, are the kind of people who will keep going. We won't be ignored, and every time you knock us down we'll get back up again.

Because we're New Democrats.

And like every Ontarian, we are experiencing change.

Not one week ago, when my team first prepared the video you just saw, the skyline view of the steel mills from the Harbour, representing Hamilton also represented work.

Now, less than a week later, the same skyline view represents people out of work.

Those idled mills represent an economy ripped apart by savage neoliberalism.

The silent plants represent an Ontario economy with a gutted industrial base.

Those mills represent steel no longer made in Hamilton.

But they also represent cars and vans no longer made in Oshawa and Windsor.

They represent pulp mills no longer open for business in Kenora.

They represent a forestry sector devastated in Timmins, a mining sector grinding to a halt in Sudbury.

We are here in Hamilton – but when we look, we see Ontario.

I was a CAW brat and I went to university because my father had a good job in the auto sector.

I, Andrea Horwath, would not be here at this podium today, if it wasn't for that well paid, union job.

This crisis, this economic crisis, this social crisis touches all of us.

When plants close, when good jobs disappear – I ask you, how many children are yanked from their future podiums?

When jobs are scarce, when they don't have benefits, when they don't pay well, how many women and men descend into despair?

Lorsque les emplois sont rares, quand ils n'ont pas les avantages, quand ils ne paient pas bien, combien de femmes et les hommes descendent dans le désespoir?

When we lose child care spaces and women lose their wages on the few, expensive child care spaces out there, how many families become working poor?

We used to ask ourselves, do we say "working families" or do we say "middle class" in our literature.

Well, look at the difference one year makes.

The middle class is disappearing and the working class is largely unemployed or underemployed.

We could just accept this.

We could take it as it is and move on.

We could adjust.

That's what the Liberals and Conservatives say. They say – we'll have to adjust.

Habituez-vous.

Adjust to what?

Adjust to the growing unemployment lines?

Adjust to the growing lines at food banks?

Adjust to welfare and poverty?

Habituez-vous à l'aide sociale et la pauvreté?

Adjust to this growing discrepancy with a poor working class and a non-existent middle class?

Adjust so that those that stole our money and closed down our workplaces can get more of our money with no strings attached?

We can't adjust. We won't adjust. We refuse to adjust.

I'll tell you what we will do.

We'll invest in ourselves, in our workforce.

Our investment, our public dollars, will come with strings attached.

Attached to good jobs that remain right here.

We'll demand an equity stake.

It's our money and it will be the last time, thieves will run away with it.

Our money will stay in Ontario and it will make Ontario work.

We'll re-industrialize our province with smart investments, with targeted investments in the products of the future.

We will build Light Rail systems and green cars for Ontario and beyond.

With the iron from Sudbury, we'll make steel in Hamilton, we'll build light rail cars in Thunder Bay.

We will make green cars in Oshawa and Windsor. We will produce once again.

We'll buy our own products. We will buy locally.

We will buy farm products grown in Ontario, grown less than 3 kms from here.

We will put homemade LRT systems in our cities, in Ottawa, in Toronto, in Hamilton.

We will invest in our work by making Ontario the transit hub of North America.

We'll make every job a good job.

Nous allons assurer que chaque emplois est un bon emplois.

We will make sure that minimum wage is a livable wage. We will get rid of scab labour and return to card based certification in Ontario.

We will make sure that part-time workers, and temporary workers, cultural workers and migrant workers get treated like the real workers they are.

We will bring our workforce back to health.

We will stop eating away at our public system. Instead of privatizing, we will expand our public system.

I say let's make child care public and let's make post-secondary education public.

Because our economic health and our social health are intertwined.

The neo-liberal experiment has imploded and it has become quite obvious, that there is no invisible hand, that the invisible hand never existed and that we should have never trusted invisible hands to take care of us.

We won't accept this disaster, we won't adjust to the growing misery. We will change.

We'll think for ourselves and take care of ourselves, and we won't keep trusting a few, greedy individuals to take care of us.

I am a community organizer and the one true measure of an organizer is that she trusts people. And I do.

Make no mistake, it's not a blind trust...

I have seen what people can accomplish together.

When we organized the Days of Action, thousands and thousands of Ontarians came together.

And now, thousands of Ontarians can come together again.

That is why, when I think about our climate crisis and the road ahead, I think like an organizer.

I believe people want a cleaner environment and trust that they will make changes in their lives to achieve it.

We must help them by making environmental solutions affordable.

If we make environmentalism affordable with up front loans for retrofitting houses, for installing solar panels and geo-thermal pumps, we will help every family harness energy.

New Democrats do not believe in making environmental solutions unaffordable.

That's for Greens and for Liberals.

We, New Democrats, won't check our socialism at the door when it comes to building a better future. Let's do for the environment today, what we did for the health 50 years ago. We can make environmentalism universal and affordable.

Two years from now, the people of Ontario will go to the polls.

We owe them a real choice.

We owe them a reason to vote NDP.

If we want to make change in Ontario we have to be ready to change ourselves.

We have to set internal goals that seem impossible and then we have to make them real:

We must double our party membership by 2011

We must reflect the face of Ontario – with many more women, young people, and people from the many diverse communities of our province among our ranks.

Ce n'est pas quelque chose que nous pouvons faire juste avant les élections.

We must work in communities like organizers, by listening and working together on the issues that are relevant to real people like us.

Let's once and for all get serious about being truly representative.

We must prepare ourselves to win elections

- by putting regional organizers on the ground,
- by changing the financial relationship between ridings and the central party,
- by making riding associations vibrant once again.
- I will spend half of my time in those ridings across Ontario
- making sure we give Ontarians a reason to vote NDP

New Democrats – it's time to believe in ourselves again.

Together, we can make this province a better place, a fairer place, a place where the average working woman gets the childcare she needs and Dalton McGuinty gets the pink slip he deserves.

That's what we owe the people of Ontario in 2011.

I have been at Queen's Park long enough to know things at Queen's Park aren't working.

It's time for new voices.

Il est temps pour des voix plus jeunes.

It's time for different faces.

It's time for change.

It's time for New Democrats.

In 2011, New Democrats will bring change to Queen's Park.

And I am just the woman to do it!

It's time!