



The Summit

A Brief Overview

Several years' planning and preparation has culminated in the first Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Government of countries using French as a common language. This gathering will be a flexible and free-ranging high level discussion of issues under two heads: firstly, the substantial topic of the world political and economic situation, and secondly, the matter which will receive the most attention, co-operation and development within La Francophonie, with the main emphasis on the future.

This event will be the first of its kind for the Francophone world. Although there is already continuing dialogue among the Francophone countries and significant mechanisms for co-operation already exist—especially through the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT)—, the Summit is not a direct consequence of these activities. The special nature of the Summit lies in its uniqueness as a meeting of Francophone Heads of States and Heads of Governments, in the nature of their discussions and the impetus which this meeting will provide toward the strengthening of Francophone co-operation and a forward-looking attitude in La Francophonie and its institutions.

The preparatory work for the Summit has been carried out mainly by a group of the personal representatives (sherpas) of the Heads of State, or

Heads of Government, of France, Tunisia, Senegal, Canada and Québec. The original group was gradually expanded and greatly assisted by the active participation of the Francophone countries in the preparations for the Summit, which will be hosted by France.

The General Goals of the Summit

The Summit will serve to promote political and economic dialogue among Francophone leaders, and will breathe new life into Francophone co-operation through specific initiatives.

Since it will be from the outset a highly important forum for North-South dialogue, Canada will be particularly sensitive to this aspect. The issues at stake are significant and complex, especially for the developing countries which constitute the majority of the participants. In its bilateral relationships and through multilateral—mainly Francophone—institutions, Canada has already accepted the principle of North-South interdependence and has committed itself to a search for solutions that will reflect the concerns of the developing countries and provide a direction for the future.