

WHAT IS THE SUMMIT?

Economic Summit meetings began in 1975 on the initiative of the French President and have met yearly since then. These meetings bring together the Heads of State and Government of the seven major industrialized democracies — Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. The President of the Commission of European Communities also participates (as does the Community Presidency) in discussions of matters over which the Community has competence for the European participants. Previous Summits were held in Rambouillet (1975), Puerto Rico (1976), London (1977), Bonn (1978), Tokyo (1979) and Venice (1980). The Ottawa Summit held on July 20 and 21, 1981 concluded the first cycle of Summits.

Summits form part of a broader network of consultations and cooperation aimed at dealing with increasingly difficult and serious international economic developments. The meetings of the Summit countries are the most important single element in these continuing consultations because of the size and importance of the economies of the Summit countries — individually and combined. Together, they account for over half the world's production of goods and services, and 80% of the production of the industrialized world. Because of their importance both economically and politically, actions taken by these countries have profound effects on the whole world community.

Summits have not produced quick or dramatic solutions to underlying economic problems. Rather, they have enabled the Leaders of the industrialized economies to gain a deeper appreciation of the extent to which their economies are linked, to pursue a more coordinated (and effective) response and to generate new policy initiatives. Summits have brought key leaders together in a group that is powerful enough to have an important voice in developments in the world yet small enough to make open and direct discussions possible.

All Summits have emphasized the interrelationship of world problems. Economic growth, employment, inflation, energy and the maintenance of a liberal trading environment are all facets of an interdependent world economy. Summits recognize the close connection between the prosperity of the industrialized countries and the developing world. The focus of Summits has shifted from year to year, reflecting the most pressing preoccupations at the time.

Canada has benefitted from being a member of the Summit group. Our participation at the table with the other major players has given us a voice in shaping policies with important consequences to Canada. It has enabled us to