

Working through the Commonwealth and La Francophonie

A spirited campaign to elevate the international profile of human rights, democracy and good governance marked Canada's participation at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the Francophone Summit in the fall of 1991. At both of these major international gatherings, Canada proved its willingness to act promptly — and occasionally alone — on those principles.

Human Rights: A New Priority

As the Commonwealth heads of government gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe, in October, to discuss new directions for the 50-country organization, Canada's Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, described what he saw as a significant and appropriate new priority in international decision-making: "Nothing in international relations is more important than respect for individual freedoms and human rights. We shall be increasingly channelling our development assistance to those countries that show respect for the fundamental rights and individual freedoms of their people. Canada will not subsidize repression and the stifling of democracy."

A month later, at the 40-country Francophone Summit in Paris, Mr. Mulroney continued the campaign, stating that Canada is "entitled to decide what takes place with the money of the taxpayers of Canada."

While Canada was the most vocal country in drawing a direct link between the distribution of aid money and the human rights performance of recipient countries, the Prime Minister said he found "no disagreement on the goals" among the other leaders he encountered. Written dec-

larations from both meetings, the Francophonie's Declaration of Human Rights and Democratization, and the Harare Commonwealth Declaration awarded high priority to the link.

Financial Contributions for Human Rights

As a major aid contributor to developing nations of both multilateral organizations, Canada was well placed to back its words with action. At the Paris meeting, Prime Minister Mulroney announced a \$1.4-million contribution to help developing countries



make the sometimes rocky transition to democracy. The funds will help create a special human rights unit within the Francophonie's Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT). The unit's activities will include providing organizational experts and observers for democratic elections, offering courses in journalism in democracies and sensitizing law enforcement officers to human rights issues.

Similarly, in Harare, Canada announced a \$400 000 contribution to support the human rights activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat itself.

Equality of Women: The Ottawa Declaration

One important facet of human rights championed by Canada at both Summits was the equality of women. Commonwealth leaders adopted the Ottawa Declaration on structural adjustment policies and their effects on women. The statement emerged from the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministerial Meeting in Canada's capital in October 1990.

At the Francophone Summit in Paris, Mr. Mulroney strongly appealed to countries to fight injustice against women, and

for French-speaking Countries. The program, administered by the Canadian International Development Agency, allows about 350 students from developing Francophone countries to pursue their studies at Canadian universities. Efforts will be made to ensure that half of those students are female, according to the Canadian announcement.

Aid to South Africa

In Harare, Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall announced that Canada would provide \$9 million over three years for a special fund for South Africa. The money, which will be available to Canadian organizations working in South Africa, will be used to help the long-term needs of victims of inequality. It will support health care, co-operatives, communications, education, literacy, management and vocational training, as well as the development of institutions.

Canada's concern for justice and social development in Africa was also underlined by the announcement by Minister McDougall that Canada would contribute another \$1 million for a Special Commonwealth Fund for Mozambique. Canada's contribution to the fund, which was launched at the 1987 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, now stands at \$3 million. The money will go to technical assistance and training in trade and financial management, mining and oil development, and industrial rehabilitation. Some of the money will be used to bring Mozambican students to Canada. ♦

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (left) at the opening ceremony of the fourth Francophone Summit held in Paris last November.

he announced a \$600 000 Canadian initiative to set up legal aid clinics specifically targeted for women in developing countries. The Prime Minister also made special mention of women when he announced a \$50-million, five-year contribution to the Canadian Fellowship Program

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