

Canada also takes part in two standing conferences: the Conference of Ministers of Education (CONFEMEN) and the Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (CONFESJES).

Since 1986, the Francophone movement has gained new momentum thanks to five conferences of Heads of State and Government of countries using French as a common language. These are now commonly known as the "Francophone Summits." Canada hosted the second Summit in Quebec City, which followed the Paris Summit and preceded the Dakar Summit, and has been actively involved in all phases of the Summit process. The Summit conferences have been held in Paris (1986) Quebec City (1987), Dakar (1989), Chaillot (1991) and most recently, Mauritius (1993). The next Summit will take place in Cotonou, Benin in December 1995.

Canadian participation in La Francophonie at the multilateral level is indicative of Canada's desire to project its image clearly on the international scene. Furthermore, this effort to bring the Francophone community closer together is of interest not only to the federal government, but to all Canadians.

Canada holds an enviable position on the international stage: not only is it a member of the major organizations of the international community, but its linguistic duality and cultural richness make it a partner that is in demand, both in the Commonwealth and in La Francophonie.

For Canada, membership in La Francophonie thus means membership in the rich network of 47 countries and governments that share the use of the French language. It also means revealing the traits of its identity to the rest of the world and giving French-speaking Canadians, and all Canadians who appreciate the French culture, a window to the world and opportunities to have an effect in a vast array of countries in every major region of the planet.

Quebec plays a leading role in the international community of La Francophonie, and the governments of the other provinces with a significant Francophone population also participate actively. Thus, in 1970, the representatives of four provinces (Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba) took part in the founding conference of the ACCT. Canada has the status of member state in La Francophonie, while Quebec and New Brunswick are recognized as participating governments.

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