

Summits

The Francophonie has been revitalized by the regular meeting of member countries' heads of state and government since 1986. These summits give participants an opportunity to speak openly about the international issues that concern them and to mobilize the resources needed to support priorities.

Canada distinguished itself during the fourth summit, held at Chaillot, France, in 1991, when it proposed the creation of a human rights unit and emphasized the need to link international aid to respect for democratic principles and fundamental rights.

Provincial Participation

The federal government has looked for creative ways to make sure that provinces can participate fully in the activities of the Francophonie. For one, the status of "participating government" was given to Quebec and New Brunswick, so that all three governments could play active and distinct roles in the ACCT. Ontario and Manitoba, on the other hand, are involved as part of the Canadian delegation. Provincial participation sometimes involves a provincial minister being named head of the Canadian delegation and speaking on behalf of Canada. This happens, for instance, at the ministerial conferences on education and on youth and sports. This openness has made it possible for Quebec and New Brunswick to attend the summits and participate fully in the co-operation area. Although the federal government takes the lead in the political and economic areas, Quebec and New Brunswick have "interested observer" status.

Canada: An Integral Part of the Francophonie

Canada plays a key role in the Francophonie, a role that makes clear its commitment to promote French language and culture both at home and abroad. This role includes serving the interests of all Canadians by encouraging reconciliation and solidarity among the countries using French as a common language.