

Am I going to talk about the debate that we are hearing rumours about, between those who would like to emphasize only the cultural aspect, and others who would bypass the cultural and concentrate only on the technical? No. I do not feel that this is a valid issue. From the very beginning of the Agency, we have always considered these two functions to be complementary, and I personally would take exception to pitting one against the other. I even find it futile to try to say which half of this twofold mandate is more important than the other. It is obvious that in practice, no cultural undertaking is conceivable today without the technical facilities required to support it. Likewise any activity in the technical field that is severed from its cultural inspiration would be senseless.

The Cotonou conference, held under the auspices of the Agency from October 28 to 30 last, and the UNESCO conference held last summer in Mexico, both concluded that culture is a fundamental aspect of the developmental process. It was even suggested that cultural identity might constitute the motive and the primary mobilizing force of all initiatives taken within human societies. No closer relationship could be established between the cultural and the technical.

Agency goals

Having said this, what objectives do we feel the Agency should concentrate its activities on in the coming years?

There is one need that is self-evident and that is already being pursued by the Agency. I am referring to cultural promotion. Let me be more specific: given the extreme diversity of the international francophone community, there is a need to promote all the cultures that coexist within it, whether they use French or some other language as their mode of expression.

The international language common to us is a valuable instrument that is so flexible yet so precise that it opens the way for all kinds of inter-cultural exchanges, be they literary, scientific or philosophical. It also gives us hope for the day when all the world's francophones will be conscious of belonging not only to a given people or a given country, but to a vast and prestigious fraternal community whose resources they share.

It is obvious that our francophone communities, many of which still exist in relative isolation, have a pressing need to communicate with one another, to put an end to their solitude, to pool their resources, to receive and to give. It is equally obvious that every form of cultural progress takes its sustenance from contacts and comparisons, and from confrontations too. Finally, it is a fact that the free circulation of ideas, of cultural property, of persons, of artists and of scientists is a condition essential to the success of any such undertaking.

Canada pledges help

It is with this view that Canada is prepared to make available to its partners in La Francophonie the considerable knowledge, experience and technical resources that
