

Honourable Ministers,

Your Worships,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure today, as Minister for External Relations, to welcome our guests from abroad.

I am equally delighted by the initiative taken by the International Association of Mayors Responsible for Capital Cities or Metropolises Partially or Entirely French-Speaking in organizing this symposium on urban information management.

This symposium is yet another step toward fuller understanding of the problems faced by municipalities in both industrialized and developing nations. It is primarily a forum for the exchange of ideas between persons with the same goal: to manage scarce resources so that the growing demand for urban services can be met. This forum will allow us to share our expertise and determine ways to transfer and adapt this expertise.

I believe the theme you have chosen for your symposium, urban information management, is an excellent example of the type of debate we must stimulate at another important event soon to take place in Quebec City. The second Summit of Heads of State and Heads of Government of Countries using French as a Common Language will be held here from September 2 to 4. I would like to take this opportunity to salute our Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, whose historic vision, expressed through his policy of national reconciliation, made possible the organization of the first summit held in Paris last February.

Credit for the great success of the Paris summit must go to France, which managed to organize the event in a very short period of time. And credit must go, in particular, to the leaders of the nations and governments who accepted President Mitterand's invitation, thus demonstrating their confidence in the international Francophone community. This confidence was reaffirmed when it came time to accept the invitation extended by the Prime Minister of Canada, in association with the Premier of Quebec, to attend the Quebec City summit.

At the political level, the foundations of solidarity between Francohone communities around the world have thus been laid. And, following in the footsteps of the Paris summit, the Quebec City summit will, we hope, refine and reinforce the spirit of mutual aid and solidarity that has always sustained the ideal of "La Francophonie". Above all, we hope that further progress will be made toward establishing concrete action plans designed to promote the welfare of French-speaking peoples.