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CANADA TO HOST FIRST CONFERENCE OF FRANCOPHONE EDUCATION MINISTERS

The Honourable Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development and Minister Responsible for La Francophonie, is pleased to announce that the first Conference of Education Ministers of Countries Using French as a Common Language will be held in Montreal June 15 to 17. The decision to hold the conference was made by the Heads of State and Government at the Chaillet Summit in November 1991.

Minister Landry expressed particular pleasure that the conference, to which 47 education ministers have been invited, will coincide with the 350th anniversary celebrations of the City of Montreal.

The dual purpose of the conference is to give fresh impetus to multilateral Francophone co-operation in education and to prepare an action plan for the coming decade. Participants will focus on five main topics: support for the teaching of French, the training of education personnel, the production of teaching material, technical and professional training, and distance training. The overall aim and general theme of the conference is "Excellence in Education."

According to Mrs. Landry, the Canadian government's involvement in this area arises from the experience it has gained both at the level of bilateral co-operation and in the context of La Francophonie. She pointed out that three of the five main conference topics were the result of projects initiated and funded by Canada. They concerned the production of teaching material, the launching of a scholarship program for technical and professional training, and distance training. These projects draw on the expertise of Quebec institutions such as, in the case