

Minister of Foreign Affairs



Ministre des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

Dear readers,

Ever since the Chaillot Summit, la Francophonie has sought to find ways to contribute to conflict prevention through its democratic development and human rights program. Despite these efforts, which will yield long-term benefits, the experiences of Rwanda and Burundi challenge us to do more, to do what is necessary to keep conflict from degenerating into violent confrontation. This was why, at the Ouagadougou Ministerial Conference of la Francophonie in 1994, I invited Francophone countries to visit Canada to discuss the issue of conflict prevention and resolution in depth.

La Francophonie responded enthusiastically to our invitation. "The International Francophone Meeting on Conflict Prevention: African Perspective" took place in Ottawa from September 19 to 22, 1995. Of the 51 governments invited, 45 — or virtually all the participating governments as well as some Commonwealth countries — were in attendance. Also represented were the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, the Conseil permanent de la Francophonie, the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and a wide range of non-governmental organizations. In all, there were some 160 delegates at the event.

The following pages contain the proceedings of the Meeting, setting forth what was said by the participants in the plenaries and workshops. We hope that this report will do justice to the deliberations in all their richness. As you will observe in reading the text, it contains an impressive number of noteworthy ideas.

From the Meeting, I draw the distinct impression that la Francophonie is ready to start working actively in the field of conflict prevention. We must now find an innovative approach that will support the actions of the United Nations and regional institutions, such as the Organization of African Unity, working to achieve security and stability for our peoples. I truly hope that the Ottawa Meeting will be the first step in achieving co-operation between la Francophonie and the other international bodies in the vital task of conflict prevention and resolution.

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "André Ouellet".

André Ouellet