



THE AGENCY FOR CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

ORIGINS

In 1968 the initial steps were taken to establish the concept of "La Francophonie" at the government level as the basis for a new form of multilateral co-operation. Government leaders from the African and Malagasi Community (OCAM) met and made plans to inaugurate an annual conference of Francophone heads of state.

First, they asked that the ministers of education of the countries concerned meet to investigate ways of organizing this co-operation. A resolution was passed which paved the way for the first Intergovernmental Conference on February 17, 1969 in Niamey, Niger, attended by representatives from 28 Francophone countries. This conference adopted the principle that there should be an Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, and an acting secretary-general was instructed to prepare a report which was submitted at the second conference in early 1970.

CANADA'S PARTICIPATION

In 1971, the federal government and the government of Quebec reached an agreement on the conditions for Quebec's participation

in ACCT institutions, programs and activities. An identical agreement was signed with New Brunswick in 1977.

Their status as participating governments allows the governments of Quebec and New Brunswick to be recognized as such, to have a seat and a nameplate at the discussion table (in other words, they have the right to speak), and to contact the Agency directly on questions of program structure. Both governments make separate contributions to the Agency, thus supplying a portion of Canada's contribution. It is rare, as well as innovative, for a central government to make such arrangements to grant a federated or provincial state the status of participating government in an international or regional organization.

Both participating provinces and the federal government have established mechanisms for providing information and for consultation among themselves, to ensure both that their actions are consistent and that their participation in the Agency is distinct and vigorous.