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Dept. of External Affairs
Min. des Affaires extérieures

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LA FRANCOPHONIE

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La Francophonie is unique. It has been defined as a community of individuals and people using the French language to varying degrees.

It is not an international organization like the United Nations, nor an alliance like the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO), nor an economic group like the European Economic Community. Rather, it is a grouping of nations aspiring to engineer common actions/activities aimed at fostering cultural and economic growth for individual members. It is different from even the Commonwealth, an association whose members share a certain common heritage.

It can be viewed as an institutional framework of governmental and private organizations pursuing dialogue and cooperation in areas of activity and interest shared by its members.

Although the mutual interests of its members have a long history, it is a relative newcomer to the international scene. Governmentally institutionalized by the creation of l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (ACCT) in 1970, it held its first Summit in 1986 in Paris. Its second Summit takes place in Quebec City in September, 1987.

La Francophonie was founded on the French language. Yet while the members share this cultural background, they have diverse roots, and they have different political and economic views of the world.

Canada, for example, is a country where only some parts have French as their first language. And Switzerland has three official languages — French, German and Italian. Francophonie members from Africa and Asia have a different cultural heritage from the European members. In Vietnam, French is not an official language but that country belongs to La Francophonie.

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