
In fact, the central government is not solely responsible for this effort at creating closer ties. This concerns all Canadians and indeed benefits all Canadians, since the Commonwealth implies the Canadian population as a whole. While Quebec naturally became interested in the French-speaking community very early, the federal government on the other hand has tried to urge the governments of the other provinces with large French-speaking populations to also play an active role in this regard. For instance, representatives from the four provinces, Ontario, New Brunswick, Manitoba and, of course, Quebec were part of the Canadian delegation to the conference that established in 1970 the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation. The major centre of French language and culture in Canada, the province of Quebec, in agreement with the Canadian government, has held from the start a special place in the governmental francophonie, through its status of participating government.

**Provinces
participation
status**

In December 1977, New Brunswick, as a 42 per cent French-speaking province, applied to the Canadian government for that same status of participating government. What exactly is involved by the participating government status? That status allows the Quebec government and the New Brunswick government to participate on their own behalf, but within the Canadian delegation, in the Agency's activities and programs. That status allows them to have a seat and an identification plate at the discussion table, with the right to speak. It allows them to communicate directly with the Agency on matters involving program planning. These two governments contribute financially to the Agency's budget. Their contributions, also identified, are computed as a fraction of the Canadian contribution of which they are an integral part.

That type of status, developed by the Canadian government is absolutely unique. Nowhere else in the world is to be found a similar arrangement, under which the federal government grants to the government of one of its provinces or federated states a special status to participate on its own behalf in an international or regional organization. This is to be found nowhere else in the world, and I suggest it is the most perfect example of the flexibility of the federal government to allow provincial governments, within their own fields of jurisdiction and to the extent compatible with Canada's foreign policy, to fully participate in international organizations.

Information and consultation mechanisms have been established between two participating governments and the national government to ensure active and genuine participation from the three governments, while ensuring united Canadian action within the community of the Agency's members.

Canada is involved in all of the Agency's programs, with a view to maintaining a balance between cultural and technological activities. To that end, in 1975 Canada proposed the establishment of the Special Development Program, or SDP for short, patterned after the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. Financed through voluntary contributions, the SDP reviews and carries out modest technical assistance programs geared to the needs expressed by any ACTC member, especially in the fields of education, training, research, agriculture, health and social communications. By establishing the SDP Canada wanted to revitalize the ACTC and turn it into a concrete instrument of solidarity to complement more significant bilateral
