

THE AGENCE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE (ACCT)

The two 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.

The important contribution of the provinces, particularly Quebec and New Brunswick, is not limited to ACCT activities: they are also involved in the work of other institutions such as the CONFEMEN and the CONFES. The head of the Canadian delegation to these ministerial meetings, who speaks on behalf of Canada, may even be a provincial minister. Such an eventuality is particularly likely in the case of the CONFEMEN, since education is not, strictly speaking, under federal jurisdiction. Finally, it should be mentioned that the provincial governments co-operate actively in the projects of Francophone non-governmental organizations.

GOALS OF THE ACCT

The goal of the Agency, which now has 38 member states (including Canada), five associate states and the two participating governments of Quebec and New Brunswick, is to develop among its members ties of mutual co-operation in the major fields of sustainable development. While maintaining the existing forms of co-operation, the Agency considers itself the voice of a new solidarity among industrialized and developing countries. In addition, it supports member countries in the promotion and expansion of their cultures, and fosters greater understanding among the peoples of these countries.

OPERATION OF THE ACCT

Since the Chaillot Summit, the Francophone Ministerial Conference has brought together ministers of foreign affairs or of La Francophonie, and is required as a joint body to sit as the Board of Directors and General Conference of the Agence de la Francophonie, in addition to serving as a Summit follow-up conference.

The Agency also fulfils its role of co-ordination and co-operation among Francophone communities by holding sectoral ministerial conferences. For example, it has assembled the ministers of Culture (Cotonou, 1981 and Liège, 1990), Scientific Research (Yamoussoukro, 1984), Communications (Cairo, 1985), Justice (Paris, 1989 and Cairo, 1995), the Environment (Tunis, 1991), Education (Montreal, 1992), and the ministers responsible for Children (Dakar, 1993). Another conference of ministers of communications will be held in Montreal in 1997 and be concerned with information highways.

On each occasion, Canada is present, participates in the conference proceedings and is a major player in implementing the action plans adopted.