

## SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

### I. PLENARY SESSION DISCUSSIONS

The discussions addressed the nature and causes of conflict in Africa, guidelines and recommendations for conflict prevention, and the original contribution that la Francophonie might make complementing other national, bilateral and multilateral initiatives.

a) Many participants referred to the tensions and conflicts that had arisen in Africa during the rapid restructuring that followed the end of the Cold War. With globalization of trade and the end of bipolarity, the number of stakeholders has increased on the world scene and problems of a transnational nature have arisen. As a result, the boundaries between domestic and foreign policy have become blurred.

b) In this new context, military force has taken a back seat to economic power. The nature of conflict has also changed. Conflict most often arises now within states. What used to be a consequence of war — massive migration and destruction of the environment — has now become a causal factor. The economic slowdown of recent years has noticeably affected the developing countries, especially on the African continent. The inability to meet basic needs, aggravated by galloping population growth, has itself become a source of tension.

c) In Africa, in addition to creating problems within countries, tension and conflict contribute to regional instability because of the porous nature of boundaries. In this context, the dogma of national sovereignty becomes problematic. The tensions arise from an accumulation of social problems, attacks on rights and freedoms, lack of democracy and failure to observe the rule of law. The quality of governance adds new complications to these factors.

d) While a lack of development gives rise to conflict, expenditures on humanitarian aid (necessitated by the conflicts) simply divert money from development.

e) In the face of these challenges democracy, the rule of law and a strong, independent judiciary are the foundations of stability. This structure is essential for preventive diplomacy. In this connection, the words of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of the UN, at the Davos Forum were cited:

By setting in motion these activities to promote democratization, the UN is not trying to encourage states to mimic anyone, or to borrow political forms from elsewhere, or to please certain Western states. On the contrary, let me emphasize again, democracy is no one's private preserve. It can and must be assimilated by all cultures. It can be moulded into many shapes, and made to suit various