

of the Government of Canada and in accordance with the procedures that Canada would jointly define with them.

Accordingly, the governments of Canada and Quebec have established the terms and conditions whereby the government of Quebec is now a "government participating in the institutions, activities and programs of the Agency".

Through its resources and the interest it has shown in the Agency, the government of Quebec has made a special contribution to our effort. Henceforth it will be in an even better position to continue and broaden its assistance. Indeed, this is the point we wished to make by proposing that a portion of your work be carried out in Quebec, the cradle of French civilization in America.

There is a place for a French community in America. If this were not so, why would the French "fact" have persisted here? Why would the Government of Canada have recognized French as one of its two official languages? Why would Canadians look upon it as a factor in their identity, a guarantee of their independence and therefore an essential heritage for each and every one, whatever his culture and his language?

By holding its first full, regular meeting in Canada, the Agency, and the French-speaking communities of Europe, Africa and Asia, acknowledge once and for all that they have both a future and a partner in America.

The word *Francophonie* describes to perfection the bond that unites us -- a common language, French. Because of it, the obstacles normally raised by so many differences in culture, temperament and attitude are easily overcome, even swept aside. We can all communicate directly without having our exchanges distorted and our thoughts watered down -- as inevitably occurs when an interpreter is required. For each of us, our words are meaningful human expression. Nothing is more enviable than such ease of communication between statesmen and between senior officials in a world where peace and harmony are increasingly dependent on our ability to understand one another.

New programs, designed to further our common objectives, will undoubtedly result from your discussions. The countries represented here will again have an opportunity to appreciate the inestimable value of concerted effort. At the same time, the quality and importance of your work, your projects and your achievements will, I am sure, impress upon the other French-speaking countries that have yet to join our association not only the usefulness and dynamism but also the apolitical nature of the Agency. Perhaps in this way these countries will be prompted to join us sooner or later. If such should be the case, I believe that I speak for this Conference when I say that they would find generosity, open-mindedness and good fellowship in our company.

Ladies and gentlemen, I extend to you the warmest and most friendly of welcomes, and hope that your discussions will bear fruit.