

But perhaps you are still wondering: what exactly is this Francophone Summit that everyone seems so keen about?

We are told that it is not a cultural get-together, that it is not a trade initiative. It discusses politics and economics but it is also very interested in development assistance. It is not exactly like the Commonwealth, nor is it an abstract idea; it is rather an instrument for concrete, modern realizations, designed to help the international Francophone community to cope with the challenges of modern-day living.

I shall answer simply and directly: the Francophone community is what we Francophone Canadians are and will be.

And in this respect, you, the Francophones outside Quebec, have already made your contribution. Because to this day you are still what your parents, your grandparents and your great-grandparents wanted you to be; you have already helped to fashion a rich, unique country, one that arouses the admiration of the other Francophone nations.

Because, through sometimes trying and always difficult circumstances, you have kept the French