

La Francophonie

The year 1976 was important in the history of La Francophonie, the international community of about 30 French-speaking nations.

In particular, the structures of intergovernmental French-speaking institutions were consolidated and procedures were established to encourage wider co-operation and closer relations among these institutions. In addition, the orientation of programs was redefined, with greater attention being paid to projects that would be more likely to satisfy the needs of the less-developed member countries.

Canada's role

Canada continues to work towards strengthening and broadening the international French-speaking community to make it a useful forum for dialogue and an effective framework for co-operation, particularly between industrialized and developing countries. Canada's constant support in the past, and the constructive role it continues to play, have earned the nation a place at the forefront of the international French-speaking community.

Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation

At the June and December meetings of its Administrative Council, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation began to implement the decisions made at the General Conference held in Mauritius in November 1975. The Agency's administrative and managerial reorganization was completed. The Administrative Council also completed the organization of, and regulations for, Agency staff.

The programs approved by the Administrative Council fall within the three major areas of concern delineated by the General Conference: development, the promotion of national cultures and languages, and educational, scientific and technical co-operation. The projects, which are to be carried out mainly in rural areas, meet the criteria established by the General Conference for the promoting of

a few relevant, high-priority, activities that can generally be managed with little supervision.

Implementing the decision of the General Conference, the Council adopted in June the regulations for a special program of promoting development through economic, social and cultural co-operation, including education and training, and through the pooling of economic, financial, technical and cultural resources. The special program, financed through voluntary contributions, complements the Agency's other programs and fills the gaps in other bilateral and multilateral co-operation activities. Its purpose is the study and implementation of development projects corresponding to needs expressed by each country, especially in the fields of education, training, research, agriculture, health and social communication. It is open to all countries that are members of the Agency and the French-speaking ministerial conferences. At the discretion of the Administrative Council, non-members of these institutions may also participate.

Canada, one of the originators of this program, has pledged a \$750,000 contribution that it hopes to increase to \$2 million during the next three years of special-program operations. Other countries, including Gabon, Senegal, Tunisia, Haiti, Upper Volta, Togo and Mauritius, have also announced their intention of contributing. An interim committee will be formed to study details of the program. While awaiting the definitive start of the special program, Canada has offered a one-time, untied contribution of \$250,000 in order to help the Agency carry out in 1977 some projects of the type the special program is intended to support.

Another important aspect of the Agency's activities in 1976 was the Council's authorization of the renewal of the program to assist the Comoro Islands in the secondary-education sector. A contingent of about 50 teachers was organized for the next school year. Canada is to send about ten teachers.

The second Festival de la Jeunesse was postponed until the summer of 1978 at the request of the host country, Gabon.