



Statements and Speeches

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CO-OPERATION WITHIN THE FRENCH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY

A Speech by the Honourable Jean Marchand, Minister of State, to the Fourth General Conference of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, Port Louis, Mauritius, November 15, 1975.

This fourth General Conference is unquestionably a turning-point in the life of this unprecedented but very necessary institution that our governments decided to create five years ago, since the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation has already left behind the first stage of infancy; it is no longer a question of baby talk and first steps. It can be said that five years is a very short time in the life of an international institution, but this period has sufficed to demonstrate the vigour the Agency can acquire if it is allowed to develop normally, and has afforded a glimpse of the benefits it will provide for its members if they continue their collective action with determination, in the spirit of co-operation affirmed by the Niamey Convention.

It is true that we can see the difficulties and pitfalls in our path better today. Some problems of orientation and implementation have been identified; and during the discussion or execution of certain projects we have seen a variety of viewpoints among the members. In all this I see only signs of life; the Agency is alive and well, because it is not afraid to come to grips with reality. We should be grateful to the Secretary-General and his colleagues for having withheld nothing, when preparing their recommendations to the Council, that could have slowed the Agency's growth or limited the relevance of its activities. We should also congratulate ourselves because the Council did not try to dodge the differences -- minor ones, I think, but nevertheless requiring expression in order to put them into the proper perspective -- between the situation, and the perception of that situation, of each of the members.

But we, the delegates to the General Conference, the political authority of the Agency, were responsible for overcoming the difficulties and solving the problems raised by the very existence of the institution. We have done so without difficulty -- mainly, in my opinion, because each of us realized what makes the Agency unique and what makes it necessary.

In the first place, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation does not result from any political subordination or parental relationship between the member states, nor does any geographical
