

THE THREE SUMMITS:

A UNIQUE DIPLOMATIC OPPORTUNITY



Prime Minister Brian Mulroney at the first Francophone summit in Paris, 1986, with French President François Mitterrand (left) and Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa (right).

In the 12 months beginning in September 1987, Canada will be the host of three key international summit meetings. La Francophonie and the Commonwealth of Nations are already scheduled to meet in Quebec City, September 2 to 4, and in Vancouver, October 13 to 17. Canada will also be the site for the 1988 Economic Summit of the seven major industrialized nations and the European Community.

Each of these organizations provides a unique diplomatic forum for the promotion of international cooperation and understanding. Yet each group has distinctive characteristics:

La Francophonie

A new association of 41 French-speaking nations and governments including 33 in the developing world, la Francophonie is working to find ways of building more structured links among its members. At its founding meeting last year in Paris, la Francophonie established a

world immunization program and a series of training bursaries for students from developing countries, both of which receive Canadian support.

The Commonwealth

Since the emergence of the modern Commonwealth in the 1950s, the association has grown to 49 member countries, including 44 in the developing world. Past Commonwealth meetings have taken strong positions opposing the *apartheid* regime in South Africa, supporting an orderly transition to independence in Zimbabwe, and asserting that economic disparities between developed and developing nations "are fundamental sources of tension and instability in the world" and must be lessened.

The Economic Summit

Beginning in 1975, leaders of the major industrialized nations and the European Community (EC), have met annually to discuss developments in the world economy, including monetary and trade

issues, and certain international political and non-economic subjects.

The first summit meeting was held in Rambouillet in 1975 at the invitation of the President of France. In 1976, Canada joined France, the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany, Japan and Italy at the economic summit table. The European Community has been represented since 1977.

The continuing objective of economic summits is to work towards compatible macro-economic policies to foster balanced growth. Summits are not decision-making forums, but they have enabled participating leaders to gain a deeper appreciation of the extent to which their economies are linked, to strengthen their consensus on key issues, to pursue a more co-ordinated and effective response to economic problems, and, where necessary, to generate new policy initiatives.

Round-table discussion at 1985 Bonn economic summit.

