

The Dakar, Chaillot and Mauritius Summits all recognized the importance of economic co-operation within La Francophonie. As the world celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Bretton Woods agreement and looks back on the progress made, La Francophonie must consolidate its own achievements and continue its own efforts in the area of greater economic co-operation.

The creation of the World Trade Organization is a step in the right direction. But we must support the less-developed countries so that they can participate more fully in this organization and derive greater benefit from it.

Many other issues must be considered as well: the need to make markets in the Francophone community more open, the burden of debt, the environment, economic management, developing the private sector in less-advanced economies. All these things must be a cornerstone for growth and renewal.

But we must not stop there. It is essential for us to consider other issues, such as international migration, population growth, democratic development and sound social and political management, because they also strongly influence the economic development of every country.

For millions of Francophones, however, life's most fundamental necessities go unmet. The Cairo Conference reminded us of the urgent need for effective action to grapple with the problems of population and development. We cannot solve these problems without fully recognizing the role of women. I therefore consider it essential for La Francophonie to work to establish a new development strategy focused on women at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. We must also actively help to prepare the new *Agenda for Development* proposed by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Mr. President, at the Mauritius Summit, our heads of state and government recognized that the time had come to more clearly identify the ambitions of La Francophonie. Toward this end, they created a study group on strengthening La Francophonie. New challenges such as those I have just mentioned make the time ripe for such a group. We are all looking forward to the interim report that this group's chair, Mr. Dehaybe, will present to us tomorrow.

This extremely important committee still has a year until it submits its final report, and I do not want to make any presumptions about its findings. But I do want to stress the need to clearly define the mission of La Francophonie. We must target areas of co-operation based on the characteristics that unite us. We must concentrate on a few major programs in these areas and mobilize our efforts around them. Only in this way can La Francophonie hope to become a credible, respected player on