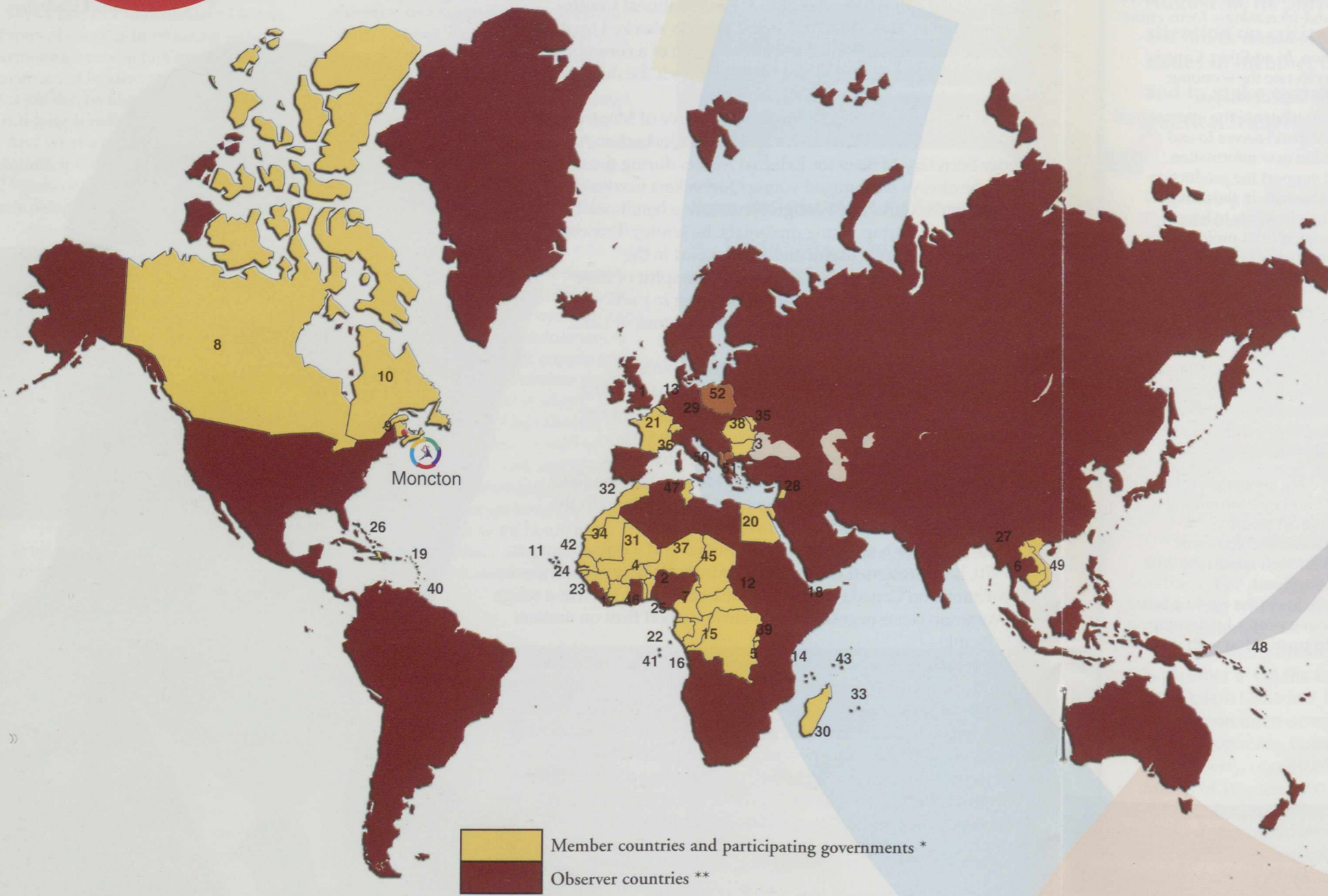


La Francophonie

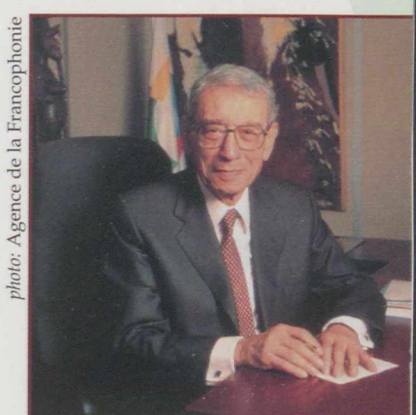


A community built on sharing and dialogue



It all started in 1970 in Niamey, Niger, with the founding of the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique, now known as the Agence de la Francophonie. Canada was one of the original members and continues to play a leadership role.

Since its first Summit, held in Paris in 1986, La Francophonie has become a valuable forum for exchanges and political dialogue. Today it consists of 52 states and governments from five continents representing 500 million people, of whom 170 million speak French. Other languages spoken in member countries include English, Arabic, Vietnamese, Romanian, Flemish and a host of African tongues. The diversity of cultures constitutes an extraordinary source of wealth, creativity and dynamic energy. This is the perfect forum for collectively dealing with the globalization-triggered trends toward uniformity and homogeneity.



Secretary-General

Born in Cairo, Egypt, on November 14, 1922, Boutros Boutros-Ghali was elected the first Secretary-General of La Francophonie in November 1997 at the seventh Summit in Hanoi, Vietnam. Previously he had served as the sixth Secretary-General of the United Nations, from 1992 to 1996.

Boutros Boutros-Ghali has long been involved in international affairs as a diplomat, jurist, academic, politician and renowned author. As Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, he participated in the Camp David summit in September 1978 and played a role in negotiating the Camp David accords, signed in 1979.

Prior to that, from 1949 to 1977 Mr. Boutros-Ghali was a professor of international law and international relations at the University of Cairo. He has been a member of the International Commission of Jurists, the International Institute of Human Rights and the Académie des sciences morales et politiques (Institut de France, Paris), among other organizations.

The organization

In 1995 La Francophonie underwent restructuring, transforming itself into a more flexible, efficient organization. It has several main components:

- The Summit, meeting every two years, is the top decision-making body of La Francophonie.
- The Conférence ministérielle ensures that the decisions taken at the Summit are carried out.
- The Conseil permanent is in charge of Summit preparations and follow-up.
- The Secrétariat général is headed by a Secretary-General, who is elected for a five-year term. Boutros Boutros-Ghali is the first person to serve in this capacity.
- The Agence de la Francophonie is responsible for carrying out the cultural, scientific, technical, economic and legal co-operation programs adopted at Summit meetings.

The programs of La Francophonie cover five major areas: democracy and development; culture and communications; knowledge and progress; economic development; and international relations, including co-operation with other organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth and the Organization of African Unity. La Francophonie also organizes standing and sectoral ministerial conferences, including a conference of education ministers and a conference of youth and sports ministers.

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