

THE FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT: A REALITY IN THE MAKING (continued)

the South, East and West, different political systems, different lifestyles, different standards of living, different values.

From Francophonie to the Francophone Summit

The political leaders who emerged from decolonization in French Africa in the 60s, wanted to expand institutional and functional cooperation within the francophone world. With their newly acquired freedom, independence and equality, they wished to create new mechanisms of consultation, cooperation, and, whenever deemed appropriate, policy coordination at the political level. Such ideas were fostered by men like Leopold Senghor of Senegal and Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia.

As with the Commonwealth's leaders, consultations between political leaders of Francophonie progressively covered all areas of endeavours and activities, political, economic, social, technical and cultural. What emerged in the process was a political solidarity at the highest level which demanded both the type of formalization best suited to heads of state or government and the structure to energize this cooperation on a systematic basis: a summit.

The story of the Francophone Summit itself is short: Bourguiba and Senghor wanted a Francophone summit. Many francophone heads of state agreed with the idea but several concepts of the summit emerged in the 70s.

Several African countries saw it as a way to expand their access to sources of development assistance, a mini-North-South dialogue. France envisaged the Summit as some form of an enlarged Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation at the level of

Heads of Government to talk language and culture.

Québec's goal at the time was to use the Francophone Summit project to foster its quest for international recognition and status while participating in the major cultural and other common endeavours of francophone countries. Québec wanted a summit to focus on issues within its constitutional prerogatives in the fields of language and culture.

As far as Canada was concerned, the government had always been convinced that regular multilateral consultations at the highest level would assure that all our individual endeavours in Francophonie would benefit from a common political will. To us, a cultural summit would not meet the challenge and the Agency already covered the waterfront. We agreed that a summit which would only focus on North-South issues would duplicate efforts carried out elsewhere while fueling undue expectations which could never be met entirely. Our approach was comprehensive and global: we wanted a summit that would have a strong political dimension and a macro-economic component in addition to an examination of cultural cooperation and development issues. In the end, this was the formula agreed to for the Paris Summit.

The Prime Minister of Canada led the Canadian delegation as a whole. The provincial premiers acted as "interested observers" in the discussions on political and economic issues and as "active participants" in the discussion of cultural cooperation at large and development.

The role of President Mitterrand in the launching of the first Summit was critical. He displayed a most gener-

ous view of Francophonie and joined Canada as well as his African colleagues in a broad view of what the Summit should be.

From Paris to Québec

The Paris Summit of February 86 was an historical event. It had been fraught with risks of failure. It turned out to be a great moment of federal-provincial cooperation in the international arena. It showed that one could give Québec its legitimate place in Francophonie without tampering with federal primacy in international relations.

The Paris meeting also allowed the Canadian concept of political consultation "*à la Commonwealth*" to prevail, notably on South Africa. Similarly, an important resolution on the financial situation and food needs in Africa was sponsored by Canada and reflected the macro-economic perspective we thought this new international institution should provide.

On specifics, the Canadian-sponsored immunization program was extended to francophone countries, and a program of scholarship was created. A technical training and assistance program in the field of energy was announced, and important measures were taken in telecommunications to expand the francophone audio-visual space, which is clearly an area of expertise in Canada.

In Québec City, in addition to the political and economic "volet" likely to focus on issues such as South Africa, the Middle East, and international trade, the "cooperation volet" will address five major sectors of common endeavour: culture and communications, agriculture, language industries, energy,