

preceded it. It is a member of regional organizations and of the United Nations, but it does not duplicate the work of any. It has a position and characteristics of its own; it is important for the world that it exist, that it develop and that it expand.

Like all the other groups that I have referred to, the francophone community must also find its way in the world as it exists, without side-stepping any of the problems that it poses.

North-South issues are inevitably involved in the relationships between francophone countries. If there exists a natural solidarity between us, and we feel that there is, it must be channeled into a sustained effort to help those that are deprived through common action to promote a more equitable and more humane international economic order. There can be no solidarity without mutual assistance and no brotherhood without a desire to do away with the inequalities that divide us. To neglect this essential aspect of daily reality would be to divest the very concept of La Francophonie internationale of all its significance.

Some will feel that such a statement is imprudent, in view of the present economic crisis that is aggravating the problems of the poor countries and hindering the industrialized countries in their efforts at international co-operation. But the crisis is no excuse for inaction. On the contrary, it underscores the interdependence that unites us and the urgent need for a common effort, because it brings out the powerlessness of the North and of the South to overcome without each other the economic stagnation that is paralyzing both.

**Common
undertaking**

Finally, within the concept of La Francophonie that we envisage, all the major international questions should be approached at the highest level. Let the only condition be that the francophone community one day provide its full, original and important contribution to solving the world's problems, be they problems of war and peace, East-West or North-South relations, temporary crises, long-term planning, or collective security and disarmament.

Here again, we should not restrict our ambitions or our activities to a few arbitrarily chosen sectors. For the time being, we are putting up with the limitations that reality imposes, but we still feel that regular multilateral consultations open to all sovereign francophone countries and embracing international problems as a whole will soon be seen to be the necessary political completion of our common undertaking.

What would the purpose of bringing together our artists, our technicians, our academics and our scientists unless the political leaders of the francophone countries were assembled at the top level to complete the structure? In La Francophonie internationale there must be a place where various viewpoints can intersect and from which the common political desire of the participating countries can radiate. Without this, there would be continued complaints about a lack of political leadership because
