



# STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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## A FRENCH COMMUNITY IN AMERICA

Remarks by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau  
to the Opening Session of the General Conference  
of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation,  
Ottawa, October 11, 1971.

It is a great honour for Canada to welcome the representatives of so many countries who have come from almost every continent to be here today. This great assembly constitutes in a way a mirror of the world, and we find in its decision to meet here, in this still-growing country of the New World, a source of profound joy and pride.

Almost four centuries have passed since the first French presence on this soil. In all that time, despite many difficulties and despite the ubiquity of the English language in North America, the French "fact" has survived and the French language has been spoken and jealously preserved here. Not only has it survived but, as you will find on your travels in this country (particularly in Quebec), it is sung and celebrated.

We all know of the community of spirit that binds the French-speaking peoples of the world together, but you will appreciate how deeply we are moved to see them assembled here in a common resolve. It is as if the permanence of French Canada were being acknowledged in every corner of the world.

Not only does this General Conference of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation hold a very special importance and significance for Canada, it is also a major turning-point in the life of the Agency.

In less than two years, it has grown so rapidly that we can already see the international stature of its influence abroad in the world. A noble idea has taken concrete form to serve the common good of peoples. The Agency is one of those all-too-rare institutions that enable different continents, races and cultures to make common cause. Its function in the world is one of co-operation, exchange and development.

Now that it has acquired permanence, your deliberations this week will endow it with maturity, and you will then be able to initiate the various kinds of activity that will occupy its future. Cultural promotion, mass education using the latest teaching techniques, the training of technologists and administrators, the dissemination of scientific and technological