

Francophone Non-governmental Organizations

The majority of Francophone associations are professional in origin or were created on the basis of common goals.

The involvement of these organizations in a wide variety of fields and many programs and activities is a particularly important dimension of La Francophonie, and imparts to it an even more dynamic character, taking it well beyond the government sector.

Accordingly, the federal government supports a number of these associations, which are either Canadian in origin or possess significant Canadian participation. This support consists of annual subsidies, contributions to congresses, symposiums or seminars, or loans to personnel granted by the Office of the Federal Co-ordinator for La Francophonie of External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC).

At a time when co-operation among peoples and cultures is rapidly increasing, international non-governmental organizations are becoming more important. Such contributions are intended to provide tangible encouragement to the various groups of Canadians actively involved in international affairs.

A. International Association of French-speaking Parliamentarians (AIPLF)

The AIPLF was formed in Luxembourg in 1967, in response to the vigorous efforts of countries seeking to expand the influence of La Francophonie. Canada was one of the founding countries. Today, 36 parliaments are represented in the AIPLF. Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario are autonomous sections with equivalent standing to Canada. Until 1990, the President of the Association was Senator Martial Asselin of Canada.

The goal of the AIPLF is to establish close co-operation among the parliamentarians who are its members by examining cultural, economic and social issues of common interest, thereby strengthening the solidarity created by the common use of French and helping establish a true cultural dialogue.

B. Association of Partly or Wholly French-speaking Universities (AUPELF)

The AUPELF, founded on the initiative of a Quebec journalist, Jean-Marc Léger, has its headquarters in Montreal. The majority of Francophone universities are members of the Association. By promoting exchanges and co-operation, it contributes to the development of university teaching, research and management.

In addition to its fraternal activities, and with the support of governments such as Canada, the AUPELF has established an International Fund for University Co-operation (FICU) to create North-South and South-South exchanges.

At the Quebec Summit, the AUPELF was assigned the task of establishing a university of French-language networks (UREF), a French-language open university whose purpose is to consolidate into a network the research and operational capacities of Francophone universities.

The Canadian government reaffirmed its support for the UREF at the last Summit in Dakar. This program can and must help Francophones develop a response to current scientific challenges.