

FRANCOPHONE SUMMITS

B) Political Objectives

1. To raise the political profile of the Summits;
2. to make the follow-up structure more sensitive and responsive to sudden changes and topical developments between Summits;
3. to place greater emphasis on human rights issues, on strengthening the rule of law, on promoting democracy and on conflict prevention.

C) Institutional Objectives

1. To ensure the continued existence of La Francophonie by providing it with durable institutional foundations;
2. to promote the multilateral approach in decision-making, thereby enhancing the ACCT's role, while avoiding a process that is unnecessarily bureaucratic and one that may result in a demobilization on the part of the member states;
3. to simplify the institutional mechanics of the Summits, while strengthening political follow-up through the work of the Permanent Council of La Francophonie and the ministerial conferences.

The Canadian Presence in La Francophonie

Canada's objectives in participating in La Francophonie, while clearly defined, are not based on the hope of an immediate return or, even less, on the prospect of financial gain. The advantages that Canada expects to receive may be less focussed, but they are nevertheless real. They are related to equilibrium, to Canada's potential influence on a community that includes more than one quarter of the world's nations, and to the cultural, scientific and other benefits it can derive from its association with them.

As in the case of any valid foreign policy, Canada's "Francophone policy" must be based on its domestic realities and concerns, and in the international sphere, on the comparative advantages that maximize its influence abroad.

Therefore, at the domestic level, La Francophonie is regarded as:

- a means of highlighting Canada's linguistic duality;
- a vehicle for reaffirming and developing the French fact in Canada; and at the international level, as:
- a natural sphere of influence for Canada, comparable to its role in the Americas (Organization of American States [OAS]), the English-speaking world (the Commonwealth), the West (NATO), and so forth;
- a multilateral forum in which a middle power such as Canada is in the best position to exert its influence and operate at its full potential;
- an enclave for co-operation and discussion on the issues that concern us and the values we would like to share.

The ultimate objective of La Francophonie is to create a real community which strengthens the ties of interdependence, thereby establishing true solidarity among its members. This objective is particularly difficult to attain because La Francophonie consists of many diverse entities which are asymmetrical in their stages of development, politically heterogeneous, and geographically dispersed.

In other words, it is a "community in the making" whose emergence has been assisted to a great extent by existing institutions and associations. The political will emanating from the Summits and the methods that are agreed upon there should give it its final configuration as an active and unified organization.