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MADAME LANDRY SALUTES THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

The Honourable Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development and Minister Responsible for La Francophonie, made a presentation today in the House of Commons to commemorate the International Day of La Francophonie.

"March 20 is a banner day for more than 430 million people in over 45 countries," the Minister pointed out.

Officials of La Francophonie have selected March 20 to commemorate the creation of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation in 1971. Although still young, La Francophonie has already demonstrated its vitality and its desire to promote the expansion of an international Francophone community by dialogue and co-operation in all areas of interest common to its members.

La Francophonie was established through a series of summits, and was characterized first by its worldwide cultural emphasis. Today it also encompasses all the fields of technological and scientific co-operation among the French-language communities of both the north and the south. Since the last Summit, held in Paris last year, at Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's instigation, La Francophonie expanded its terms of reference to the human rights and democratic development dimensions.

In the course of her presentation, Mrs. Landry reminded the Members of Parliament that to date, Canada is the only country with concurrent memberships in the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the Organization of American States and the United Nations, all of which are major international institutions. This distinction should be noted and even celebrated, said the Minister, since it is precisely the reason why Canada has such an influence in the world.

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