

A number of Commonwealth ministerial conferences took place in 1987, including the Conference of Education Ministers and the Meeting of Finance Ministers. Canada was also active in special meetings such as the August 1987 meeting of Commonwealth Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, held in Harare, Zimbabwe. The ministers adopted a Commonwealth Plan of Action on Women and Development, aimed at ensuring the full participation of women as agents and beneficiaries of development in all sectors of society. The Plan was subsequently endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Vancouver. Canada has agreed to serve as host for the next ministerial meeting on this subject in 1990.

Canadian participation in Commonwealth co-operation endeavours at the technical and non-governmental level was exemplified by attendance at a wide range of conferences or meetings including, for example, the Commonwealth Surveyors Conference held in July 1987 in Cambridge, and the Fourth Commonwealth Pharmaceutical Association Conference held in May 1987 in Nairobi. The Ottawa Branch of the Royal Commonwealth Society sponsored a "Commonwealth Conference for Young Leaders" in September 1987, which attracted participants from all regions of the Commonwealth.

La Francophonie

The Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of Countries Using French as a Common Language was held in Quebec City in September 1987. Canada not only received the leaders of some 40 countries at this meeting but also helped to create a status for the Francophone summits as a major forum of co-operation, dialogue and decision-making on the political, economic and co-operative levels between Francophone partners.

Following the Summit, the Conference of Sports and Youth Ministers held its 19th session in Quebec City in March 1988, preceded by a meeting of experts in Moncton. The major result of this conference was the decision to hold the Francophone Games in Morocco from July 8 to 22, 1989. Canada was designated to chair the Conference and also the Games Organizing Committee.

The Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT) held its General Conference in December 1987 in Paris. This provided an opportunity to continue the reform process already under way, and above all to prepare the ACCT for the enhanced role it will eventually have with the summits. Canada confirmed that it would serve as host for the ACCT General Conference in 1989, which will be held in Ottawa.

Canada supported a number of non-governmental organizations which are active in a diverse range of Francophone fields. Among these are the Association of Partly or Wholly French-Speaking Universities and the Association of French-Speaking Parliamentarians, whose president for the current term will be Senator Martial Asselin.

Human rights and social affairs

The pursuit of human rights is an integral element of Canadian foreign policy, and is carried out on both a bilateral and multilateral basis. Standard-setting activities at

the international level continue to be important, and Canada has a continuing role in areas as diverse as international aboriginal rights and rights of the child. In June 1987, after having completed all necessary changes to federal legislation, Canada ratified the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The ratification enabled Canada to remain up-to-date with all major international human rights instruments and to be one of the first countries to ratify the new Convention. Professor Peter Burns of the University of British Columbia was elected to the committee that will oversee the implementation of the Convention.

Canada also participated in the human rights reporting functions of the United Nations. In December 1987, the government submitted its second periodic report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. An extensive consultative network, involving provincial, territorial and federal authorities, has enabled Canada to present comprehensive reports to international bodies incorporating all available information on the state of human rights within the country. This same network, whose participants meet twice yearly and, on occasion, convene at the ministerial level, is to provide leadership and to ensure timely Canadian reports under the major international instruments. The network will also assist in specific functions, such as the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in December 1988.

Canada was active in the work of the Commission on Human Rights during the past year, with a delegation headed by Gordon Fairweather, who was until recently Canada's Human Rights Commissioner. As in earlier years, the Department arranged consultations with Canadian NGOs active in the field of human rights prior to the session of the Commission.

Canada co-sponsored some 24 resolutions at Commission meetings. Acting on an earlier Canadian initiative, the Commission set in motion the operation of a Voluntary Fund in the field of advisory services. The Fund will promote human rights through support for a variety of developmentally oriented projects. The Fund will, *inter alia*, assist in the establishment of law libraries and in the training of officials in the fundamentals of human rights. Canada was the first country to make a financial contribution (\$150 000) to the Fund.

Canada's main statement to the Commission on Human Rights expressed concern at continuing violations of human rights in many parts of the world. It stressed that action in the delicate and controversial area of human rights must be based on the integrity of UN fact-finding procedures.

Canadian missions abroad continued their program of reporting on human rights questions, conveying Canadian views and assisting persons and groups in support of human rights objectives. To assist missions in this activity, the Department inaugurated a human rights training course in 1987 for all foreign service officers. CIDA has authorized numerous projects in the broad area of human rights, including many by NGOs. These provide a tangible link between human rights and development assistance efforts.

Human rights issues were taken up bilaterally during visits abroad by the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and other ministers and senior officials. In May 1987, the Standing Committee on External Affairs