

The second reason is that Canada has already played a leading role in putting agriculture on the international agenda. Mr. Mulroney raised the question as Canada's priority preoccupation at the Tokyo Summit last year, and we have maintained that pressure in the GATT, the OECD and elsewhere.

This initiative is proof that nations with a common interest can work together effectively. In this case, that is particularly important to farmers, whose livelihood is threatened by international subsidy practices. But it is also an important indication that the multilateral instinct is still strong in the world. Leadership in activities like this is a practical demonstration of the kind of role Canada can play in the modern world.

Now let me refer to how the unique nature of Canada contributes to our influence in the world.

We are a bilingual country, and each language connects us to a distinct and diverse family of nations - in one case, the Commonwealth; in the other La Francophonie. Both families will gather this year in Canada, La Francophonie in Quebec in September, and the Commonwealth in Vancouver in October.

It is only the second Summit of La Francophonie. For years, it was impossible to find a formula which would allow a Summit to be held. However, Prime Minister Mulroney and Premier Marc Johnson of Quebec reached an agreement which was acceptable also to New Brunswick, and allowed the first Summit of La Francophonie to be convened last year.

The Francophone Summit will become a pragmatic instrument for multilateral cooperation and is destined to become an integrating factor in the international system.

This was our vision when we emphasized the political aspect, thereby enabling the 41 heads of state and government of La Francophonie to consider it together.

No less important is the spirit behind this common undertaking. The recent Meech Lake agreement and the Johnson-Mulroney agreement on the Francophone Summit are the result of the feeling of confidence that now exists here.