9.0 INTERNATIONAL AREAS OF CANADA'S SPHERE OF POLICY INFLUENCE ON AFRICA

Most African countries are either members of Commonwealth or members of la Francophonie, including the Lusophone countries such as Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome e Principe, Cabo Verde, and Mozambique.

Canada considers its involvement in both institutions an integral part of its foreign policy. The Commonwealth and la Francophonie are seen as a model of multilateralism, ideal instruments with which to broaden international understanding and consensus. Membership in these institutions helps Canada play a constructive role in North-South issues and adds weight and credibility to Canadian foreign policy efforts in general.

Commonwealth:

A founding member in 1931, Canada is one of the Commonwealth's strongest supporters and promoters. The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 54 diverse, independent states, consulting through a largely informal network of governmental and non-governmental links. Today, while half the members are small states with populations under one million people, member states represent nearly one quarter of the world's population and one third of the membership of the United Nations.

La Francophonie:

La Francophonie, an international organization that was established in Niamey, Niger, in March 1970. La Francophonie now consists of 55 member states and participating governments on all five continents, representing a population of 625 million people.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is the main source of funds granted by Canada to Francophonie cooperation programs and managed by la Francophonie Affairs Division. In addition to CIDA and Canadian Heritage, which play an essential role in la Francophonie, other departments, such as Industry Canada [information technologies], Justice Canada [democracy, legal cooperation] and Environment Canada [particularly management of the Energy and Environmental Institute of la Francophonie (Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie) are also involved.