

confront the problems that face them and thereby contribute actively to carving out a place for themselves in the world economy. Canada has participated directly in funding certain programs that accompanied these reforms.

Mr. President, a beautiful African proverb says, "No paths lead to trees that bear no fruit."

If there are so many of us gathered here around this table, it is surely because we all share the firm conviction that La Francophonie generates activities of considerable significance and inspires hope for our community.

Indeed, how much progress there has been since Niamey! How can we fail to pay homage here to that veritable backbone of La Francophonie, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), for its work over the past 25 years? Mr. Secretary-General, receive our gratitude and expressions of confidence in the future of your agency. How much the Association of Wholly and Partly French-language Universities (AUPELF) has changed! It is now known as the University of French-speaking Networks (UREF) and is one of the driving forces in La Francophonie. Who would have thought 10 years ago that by 1995 our movement would give birth to a world television network? And already we are knocking on the door of world telecommunications in French. Together, we will project our voice, in all its various accents, over our rainforests and snowy plains, over our mountains and rice fields.

The French-speaking countries can and must participate more actively and with more imagination in shaping the world of today. The recent tragic events in French-speaking countries concern us directly and pose a challenge to us. La Francophonie is summoned to take action, as far as its means allow, together with the large international institutions. We clearly do not lack for challenges. As I stated at the 49th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York on September 29, "These challenges are peacekeeping and international security, as well as development, justice, democracy, human rights and the fight against inequalities."

Canada will vigorously pursue the idea of a permanent UN standing force in the hope that the international community will hear our call, just as it did nearly 40 years ago, when former Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson proposed the creation of the first UN force. This new proposal aims to give hope and confidence back to those societies subjected to violence and all its terrible consequences.

Last October 15 in Port-au-Prince, I was privileged to witness the return to Haiti of President Aristide. Hope is returning to this courageous people, who have always supported their