

Mr. Prime Minister (if present), dear colleagues, Mr. Assistant Director-General, Mrs. Representative of UNESCO in Quebec City, distinguished guests and dear friends,

It is with great pleasure that I will, in a few moments, and on behalf of the Canadian government, sign an agreement between Canada and UNESCO calling for the opening of an information office in Quebec, a city designated as a world cultural heritage site. This signals another in a long list of impressive international events that have taken place in this historic city. It was right here in Quebec that the Food and Agriculture Organization, commonly known as the FAO, was founded in 1945, as the plaque at the entrance to the Chateau Frontenac indicates. More recently, Quebec hosted the Superfrancofête of 1974 and the Francophone Summit of 1987, and was the city where the Energy Institute for Countries Using French as a Common Language was set up. International agreements such as this enable Canada to exercise its full sovereignty in harmony with the provinces. The one being signed here today is not the first of its kind, but it gives confirmation of Canada's ability to integrate more with the world, with the support of the provinces.

I am especially pleased to see so many representatives of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO here. The Commission is one of the most important links - in fact, the most important as far as the UNESCO program is concerned - between Canada and the headquarters of the organization in Paris. We are convinced that the excellent relationship between the Commission and UNESCO will be paralleled in that between the Commission and the UNESCO office in Quebec City. Quebec will seek to keep the Canadian media and public informed about the many programs and activities of UNESCO and will act as the organization's official representative and spokesman in Canada.

The mandate of UNESCO, as set forth in its founding statute, is immense. As has often been pointed out, UNESCO's role is often a catalytic one - it opens new avenues, in its areas of competence, by activities that inspire and encourage states, communities and individuals to undertake long-term action. Mr. Frederico Mayor, the Director-General of UNESCO, capsulized this thought when he said, "UNESCO's product is not bread, but yeast." Canada shares this point of view.

On behalf of my government, I am pleased to express a vote of confidence in UNESCO. We desire to play an active part in it. Mr. Perez de Cuellar, the UN Secretary-General, has described UNESCO as the brain of the entire United Nations system. I subscribe to this concept, which can be proven in every respect if one examines its major programs.

In the field of education, UNESCO is involved in the effort to eradicate illiteracy; it contributes toward the planning of education and the development of teachers, and