

Finally, we must link this theme to the results of the conference on information highways to be held in Montreal, Canada, in May 1997. It would be unrealistic to think that the action plan that will emerge from it will be able to find funding before Hanoi. The seventh Summit must therefore devote a significant share of its resources to this purpose, in the knowledge that access to information means an end to isolation, participation, a say in things, transparency and enlightened decisions – all essential ingredients for sustained and sustainable economic development.

The strategic framework that we are developing for Hanoi will therefore combine the following three elements:

- the new economic development themes proposed by our Vietnamese partners;
- the continuation of the Cotonou projects that are most significant in terms of development;
- The “action plan” of the Montreal conference on information highways will be a powerful engine that we can attach to our various economic, social or cultural objectives.

Canada intends to divide its resources equally in support of these three objectives. To make this framework truly strategic it is necessary to reconcile continuity, novelty and synergy by making these objectives correspond to Cotonou, Hanoi and Montreal. The amalgamation of these three dimensions will give the seventh Summit its originality and its true impact.

#### 4) The New Institutional Structure of La Francophonie

The mark left by the Hanoi Summit will not be merely pragmatic and developmental. This seventh Summit will provide the opportunity to adopt a new “Charter of La Francophonie” which will redesign the organization’s institutional architecture. Hanoi will also see the creation of the position of Secretary-General of La Francophonie, as opposed to the existing position of Secretary-General of the ACCT. This new spokesperson for La Francophonie as a whole will be elected by the heads of state themselves.

The new position of Secretary-General represents a major qualitative change compared to the present situation. Its incumbent:

- will no longer be the “boss” of a single agency for co-operation (ACCT), but the head of all the institutions and organizations of La Francophonie;
- will, as such, have power to allocate the budget and make decisions concerning all Summit implementation agencies;
- will serve as “political spokesperson” of La Francophonie.
- will chair the deliberations of the Permanent Council of La Francophonie;
- will have the latitude to take political initiatives with regard to the observation of elections and conflict prevention.

Canada, which has always expressed support for a more political role for La Francophonie, therefore cannot but agree to this expanded role, provided that the states retain the final prerogative of adoption and sanction.

The new “Charter of La Francophonie,” which will be endorsed at the same time, is characterized by a similar balance. It is a question of making La Francophonie more political and