

FRANCOPHONE SUMMITS

Rights Foundation; for police and security forces, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime; for unions, the Quebec Federation of Labour.

The objectives of the seminars were to provide opportunities for training important stakeholders in democracy, to deal with issues related to the exercise of their profession, to create networks and promote the establishment in their countries of special training programs to continue the development process and derive maximum benefit from its results.

“Journalism in democracy” was the theme of a training seminar for journalists from La Francophonie which was directed by Radio-Canada. The most recent seminar, the fourth of its kind, held from September 5 to October 8, 1996 in Montreal, and from October 3 to 8 in Yaoundé, brought together 12 participants from the Central African Republic, Senegal and Chad. Its aim was to increase the participants’ knowledge and introduce them to basic rights, human rights and freedom of the press in order to familiarize them with journalistic practice in a democratic society. As in the three previous seminars of this kind, African journalists expressed their thanks to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the Canadian government for this support provided the fledgling African press and its journalists.

Network of Legal Aid and Counselling Centres for Women in Francophone Countries

At the Chailot Summit, Canada also launched the project to develop a network of legal aid and counselling centres for women in Francophone countries. The purpose of this network, implemented by the Department of Justice of Canada, is to assist women in achieving legal and social equality. Centres in six additional countries have been added to the first three centres established in Benin and Cameroon. The network received a very good reception at the forum of NGOs at the United Nations World Conference on Women held in Beijing.

In most cases, the centres operate satisfactorily and assist women in achieving a situation of genuine legal and social equality. They offer lectures to groups of citizens, publications, tools to explain the legal system, representation before the courts, visits to correctional institutions and denunciations of situations involving violence.

Funds committed by Canada, a Swiss contribution and support from the ACCT assist the network in expanding and obtaining equipment.

In 1996, the Department of Justice of Canada, in co-operation with the network of legal aid and counselling centres, organized a seminar on management techniques and funding methods. Some 40 African women jurists from 15 different countries met in Dakar, Senegal, from November 12 to 15. The aim of the seminar was to provide the jurists who manage the network’s legal aid centres with the tools and documentation needed to enable them to ensure their survival and continued operation.