

The Commonwealth Tradition

La Francophonie differs from the Commonwealth in that its basis is a common language rather than a common past. In 1949, the task of the Commonwealth was to give a different character to the existing links between its members, the most important of which was allegiance to the British Crown. In contrast, the heritage which is the basis of La Francophonie is cultural, rather than political. Its role was to bring together countries having in common only a language they used, some to a greater, some to a lesser extent. The Francophone Summit therefore represents the culmination of this process of closer association, raising the dialogue among Francophones to the highest level and directing it to a firmly based long-term perspective. The Francophone Summit lacks not only the long Commonwealth tradition, but also—at this stage—a comparable institutional basis. In this respect, the results of the Summit will certainly be the best assurance that it has a future and that its work will have an outcome, though the mechanisms required for this purpose still remain to be settled.

Its experience in the Commonwealth has enabled Canada to make a valuable contribution to preparations for the Francophone Summit, with due regard for the historical, political and cultural differences underlying this international Francophone event. Both the Francophone Summit and the Commonwealth are reflections of Canada's own cultural mosaic and are highly appropriate settings for the enunciation of Canadian foreign policy. Through the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Nassau in October 1985, attended by 42 countries, and the Francophone Summit, to which 39 countries have been invited, Canada's Prime Minister will have had the opportunity to meet almost half of the world's leaders during the last six months.

LIST OF INVITED COUNTRIES

Belgium
Benin
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cameroon
Canada
 Canada-Québec
 Canada-New Brunswick
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros

Congo
Djibouti
Dominica
Egypt
France
Gabon
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Haiti
Ivory Coast
Laos
Lebanon
Luxembourg
Madagascar
Mali
Mauritania
Mauritius
Monaco
Morocco
Niger
Rwanda
Saint Lucia
Senegal
Seychelles
Switzerland
Togo
Tunisia
Vanuatu
Vietnam
Zaire

UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC CONCERNING THE FRANCOPHONE SUMMIT

Desirous of cooperating for the purpose of making an effective and original contribution of the highest quality to the Summit, the Government of Canada and the Government of Québec have agreed as follows:

1. Nature and Structure

The Summit will consist of two distinct, consecutive parts. The first part will deal with the world political and economic situation and the second with cooperation and development.

In preparation for the first Summit the two governments will make joint efforts to secure approval of an agenda which will, to a substantial and significant extent, be devoted to the world political and economic situation; they agree, however, that questions of cooperation and development will occupy a major portion of the Summit agenda.