

GENERAL INFORMATION

Origin, Background and Structure of the First Conference of Education Ministers of Countries Using French as a Common Language

At the Palais de Chaillot summit meeting held last November in Paris, the Heads of State and Government made the decision to hold a conference of Francophone education ministers in 1992 and to expand participation in this 44th session of the Conference of Education Ministers of Countries Using French as a Common Language (CONFEMEN) to all the participating states and governments.

Created in 1960, the CONFEMEN is the oldest of the institutions of La Francophonie.

In its capacity as secretariat for the summits, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT) was given the responsibility of organizing the conference, in conjunction with the CONFEMEN. This responsibility was given because the ACCT covers the same range of members as do the summits, while until quite recently the CONFEMEN comprised only 30 member countries. The decision to expand the 44th session in Montreal was made as a result of the marked interest of the Heads of State and Government in education. Accordingly, the education ministers of all 47 member countries and governments of La Francophonie were invited to the conference.

In preparing for the conference, the federal government has been working closely with the governments of Quebec and New Brunswick to define the roles and responsibilities of the three parties. Together they have agreed that the meeting of experts that precedes every conference of this scope will be held in Moncton from June 11 to 13, under the chairmanship of New Brunswick, while the ministerial session will be held in Montreal from June 15 to 17, chaired by the Quebec Department of Education.