

Non-governmental organizations

Canada has continued to encourage, and in many cases to provide support for, a number of French-speaking associations of persons in the professions and other fields of endeavour who wish to establish bonds of co-operation and mutual understanding. The interest manifested by these associations and the activities they have sponsored have contributed much to the progress achieved by the international French-speaking community.

An important development during the year was the creation of the Conseil international des radios-télévisions d'expression française (CIRTEF) - an international council of French-language broadcasting systems - to meet a need of the international French-speaking community in the area of communications. The decision to create CIRTEF was taken at an international symposium of broadcasting agencies held in Montreal from June 6 to 10. The symposium, organized jointly by the Department of External Affairs, the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs of Quebec, the CBC French network and the Quebec Broadcasting Bureau, was held under the aegis of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, bringing together representatives of radio and television bodies from about 30 French-speaking countries.

The Association of Partly or Wholly French-Speaking Universities (AUPELF) organized a meeting of departments of French studies from various parts of the world in Strasbourg from July 17 to 23. The International Association of French-Speaking Parliamentarians (AIPLF) held its eighth general assembly in Paris from July 8 to 14. In Canada, Laval University was host for a symposium with the theme "La Francophonie and the Commonwealth: myth or reality", from March 31 to April 2, and the University of Moncton held the seventh Biennale de la langue française from August 23 to 31 with the theme "The French language and cultural identity".

Within the UN system, the main event of 1977 was the adoption by the Security Council of a resolution imposing mandatory military sanctions on South Africa - the first occasion such action had been taken against a member state. A less-visible development was the emphasis on rearranging the economic and social sections of the UN system to provide better direction and greater resources for the many UN programs in these fields.

Although there were modest improvements in the UN's work, these activities did not generate much public enthusiasm and did not dispel public doubt about the UN's relevance to current international problems. This mood of public scepticism was perhaps linked to the feeling that the member states of the UN could and should do more to live up to the high purposes expressed in the UN Charter, to which they have all subscribed. Mr Jamieson, in his statement to the General Assembly during the general debate, referred to this attitude when he said that "the performance of the United Nations and of its member states is being examined more closely and critically than ever before, for the sound and obvious reasons that the stakes are higher than ever before".

Nowhere is this truer than on the question of the Middle East, which remained a major preoccupation throughout the UN system. The issue was not as disruptive as in previous years, but the General Assembly debate and the many resolutions it generated revealed no fresh thinking; not even Mr Sadat's dramatic trip to Jerusalem towards the end of the debate inspired a new approach within the UN.

The other major intractable political question facing the United Nations was the situation in Southern Africa, which several times during the year was the subject of intense debate in the Security Council and which led to the adoption of 30 resolutions by the General Assembly.

The Anglo-American proposals for a negotiated settlement in Rhodesia called for a major UN role to help bring the parties together and to ensure an orderly and peaceful transition to majority rule. Security Council Resolution 385 laid the basis for an