

Such round tables will make it possible to take a new look at conflict prevention and will produce well-targeted and feasible proposals for action if they take into account the need to provide the participants with effective means of intervention. In short, through its proposal, CECI means to contribute to conflict prevention in the African countries of La Francophonie by pursuing the following objectives: familiarizing new political and social players with their role in conflict prevention, identifying at the outset problems likely to turn into conflicts and equipping the participants for more effective conflict prevention and management. CECI should begin to hold round tables in the spring of 1997.

At the Mauritius Summit, the heads of states, of governments and of delegations declared their intention to pursue strengthening of the rule of law and support the democratization of political and civil society. At the Cotonou Summit, they agreed to make full use of all regional mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of conflicts and to help strengthen the preventive diplomacy supported by the UN, particularly in Francophone areas. The challenge to La Francophonie is there.

The remarks of the President of the CPF, Émile-Derlin Zinsou, made in 1995, still apply: the considerable progress made since the start of the Summit era should not disguise the problems to be overcome in completing the institutional construction of La Francophonie and providing it with the legal foundations required for the achievement of a genuine Francophone and multilateral political plan.

### **3) The Economic Dimension of the Hanoi Summit**

Our Vietnamese partners have proposed an economic development theme for the seventh Summit. We intend to follow them on this difficult terrain. This Summit must be a success for them and for us. We therefore intend to fully support them despite the objective difficulty of making La Francophonie a genuine springboard for economic development.

It should be acknowledged that La Francophonie has never really succeeded in making its mark in this area, if only because of the heavy investments that such objectives require. We continue to believe, however, that breakthroughs are possible on this front. The Conference on Technical and Professional Training and the Copenhagen Social Development Summit are two paths that steer us in the right direction and provide for financially less onerous investments which nevertheless produce massive returns in economic development.

The commitment to support this new theme cannot, however, be made at the expense of credible follow-up on our commitments of the last Summit. These Summits would be only an ineffectual flash in the pan if the follow-up on the previous meetings were to be swept aside at the next meeting.

Moreover, we believe that many of the projects announced at Cotonou already were characterized by modernity and impact on development. Unfortunately, we cannot pursue all of them, the resource situation being what it is. For its part, Canada, intends, for projects funded with tied funds, to give priority to the pursuit of those that have proven their viability, popularity and ability to attract additional multilateral funding. Difficult choices, however, will have to be made.