
The Summits

La Francophonie has been revitalized by the regular meeting of member countries' heads of state and government since 1986. These summits provide an opportunity to engage in open dialogue on international issues that are of interest to the participating states, and to mobilize the resources required to support priority areas of activity.

Canada distinguished itself during the fourth and most recent summit (Chaillot, 1991), when it proposed the creation of a human rights unit and emphasized the need to tie international aid to respect for democratic principles and fundamental rights.

Provincial Participation

The federal government, mindful of Canadian realities, has found original solutions to ensure that the provinces can participate fully in the activities of la Francophonie. For example, the status of participating government was given to Quebec and New Brunswick, thus enabling those governments to be involved in the ACCT in an active, personalized way. Ontario and Manitoba, for their part, are involved in the national delegation. As with the ministerial education or youth and sports conferences, provincial participation can even take the form of a provincial minister being named head of the Canadian delegation and speaking on behalf of Canada. This open-minded attitude has led to an arrangement whereby Quebec and New Brunswick have been able to attend the Summits and participate fully in the co-operative realm, while the federal government has primacy in the political and economic areas, and Quebec and New Brunswick have "interested observer" status.

Anchored in La Francophonie

Canada's participation in la Francophonie multilaterally is an expression of its desire to clearly establish its identity internationally. This effort to bring together the Francophone community is not confined to federal government interests, but is a matter of interest and a benefit to all Canadians. 