

involved. Thus representatives of four provinces (Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba) were part of the Canadian delegation to the founding conference of the Agency in 1970. As the main centre of French language and culture in Canada, Quebec from the outset has held a special position in La Francophonie at the government level, having the status of participating government in the Agency. In December 1977, New Brunswick, the population of which is 42 per cent French-speaking, requested and received from the federal government the same participating-government status.

The important contribution made by the provincial governments, especially Quebec and New Brunswick, is not confined to the activities of the Agency. It also applies to the Conference of Education Ministers and the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sports. Indeed, the leader of the Canadian delegation to such ministerial meetings is often a provincial minister speaking on behalf of Canada. In addition, the governments of these provinces are actively involved in the work of the non-governmental Francophone organizations.

Participating-government Status

In 1971 the federal and Quebec governments agreed on the form of Quebec's participation in Agency institutions, programs and activities. Identical arrangements were made with New Brunswick in 1977.

Participating-government status allows Quebec and New Brunswick to be specifically identified in the Canadian delegation, to have a seat and an identification plaque at the Conference table (in other words, the right to speak). They also communicate directly with the Agency on questions of program structure. These two governments pay a separate contribution to the Agency, equivalent to a fraction of that of Canada. There are few such arrangements elsewhere, whereby a federal government grants to the government of a federated or provincial state the status of a participating government in an international or regional organization.

Information and consultation arrangements have been established between Quebec, New Brunswick and the federal government, in order to make active, original participation possible for each of them while ensuring unity of action within the community of Agency members.