



DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
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MEETING OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS  
IN DAKAR ON DECEMBER 8 AND 9, 1980

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Dr. Mark MacGuigan, announces that in response to the invitation of His Excellency Léopold Sedor Senghor, President of Senegal, he will participate as Head of the Canadian Delegation at the meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers to be held in Dakar on December 8 and 9. The Honourable Pierre De Bané will also be on the delegation in his capacity as Adviser to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The governments of Quebec and New Brunswick have each been invited to appoint one senior official who would be named an **adviser on the Canadian Delegation**.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs had an opportunity today in Ottawa to discuss the issue of Quebec representation with Claude Morin, Quebec's Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. MacGuigan first of all explained how the ministerial meeting in Dakar was fundamentally different from meetings of the existing organizations of "La Francophonie internationale", and why a separate provincial representation was therefore inappropriate. He then explained that the federal government's proposal respects the provisions of the Canadian constitution in matters of foreign policy, and that it is in harmony with the usages and customs of international law as well as with current practice for international meetings of this kind. Mr. MacGuigan added that Canada's participation in this meeting was a matter of exclusive federal jurisdiction and concerned only Canada. In these circumstances, it would be inappropriate to go outside our country to seek to involve other countries in a matter which can only be settled within Canada.

The meeting of December 8 and 9 is a meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers, and this implies ministers from independent countries. It is clear that, internationally, a country can have only one minister, one spokesman, one voice. Moreover, the meeting will discuss primarily organizational and procedural matters in connection with a new initiative, i.e., an "organic community". The Ministers will prepare the agenda for a future conference of **Heads of State and government of independent countries which use French, to varying degrees, as a language of communication.**

The items on the agenda of a future summit of interested countries will be many and varied, although they remain to be specified. According to the report prepared by a group of experts who met in Dakar last September, which will serve as the working document for the discussions, the topics will be essentially foreign policy issues. The Heads of State and government may discuss, for example, the questions of peace and disarmament in the context of development; the North/South dialogue; or ways of strengthening the links of co-operation and exchange between entirely or partially French-speaking countries.

In Dakar in December, and at a future summit of Heads of State, matters of education, culture, youth and technology, for example, will not be specifically discussed as there are already specialized intergovernmental Francophone institutions which are very active in these fields, such as the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT), the sectorial conferences of ministers of education and youth, as well as other specialized organizations: the International Association of French-speaking Parliamentarians (AIPLF), the Association of Partially or Entirely French-language Universities (AUPELF), the International Council of French-Language Radio and Television Broadcasting (CIRTEF), and so on. In this regard, Quebec and New Brunswick have participating government status within the ACCT, and have an identified provincial representation at ministerial level in sectorial ministerial conferences dealing with matters under provincial jurisdiction. This form of provincial participation could be applied to other sectorial ministerial conferences set up within an "organic community" which might arise out of a summit meeting.

It should be pointed out that the formula for provincial participation which was drawn up in the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, under an agreement and with the full support of the Canadian government, is unique in international organizations.

In concluding his statement, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mark MacGuigan, expressed the hope that Quebec and New Brunswick would be represented on the Canadian Delegation at the meeting in Dakar.