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THE HONOURABLE PIERRE DE BANÉ
MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS
ADDRESSES A DINNER MEETING OF
THE CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
ON CANADA AND LA FRANCOPHONIE
MONCTON, MARCH 23, 1982

A major speech on Canada and La Francophonie was delivered on March 23 in Moncton by the Honourable Pierre De Bané, Minister for External Relations, at the invitation of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

"La Francophonie, just like the Commonwealth, is the business of all Canadians, even though francophones are naturally more involved in it," said the Minister. He went on to point with satisfaction to the contribution of New Brunswick francophones and their government to the many international activities, governmental and otherwise, of La Francophonie in Canada, which "extends to the francophone regions outside Canada, to our solidarity with them, and to the sharing and mutual assistance brought about through our co-operative programmes."

The Minister went on to say that there was an important need for Canada's policy to bear the imprint of the country's French component, and this was why, when these countries became independent in the sixties, the federal government set up a development co-operation programme in francophone Africa of the same quality and scope as the Commonwealth Africa programme. In addition to this large-scale aid programme, the Canadian government is seeking more and more to develop trade with the francophone countries, as it is with the English-speaking countries.

The francophone element of Canada's foreign policy, continued the Minister, is exemplified by the role played by the federal government in the creation of Niamey, in 1970, of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, dedicated

to the development of exchanges between francophone countries, to dialogue between cultures, and to the cultural and technical aspects of human relations. Moreover, the federal government has not sought to be the exclusive Canadian participant in the Agency. On the contrary, it has involved provincial governments in its international francophone activities, in particular Quebec and New Brunswick, which enjoy the status of 'participating governments' within the Canadian delegation to the Agency.

"This status devised by the Canadian government is unique in its class," said the Minister. Nowhere else in the world can a similar arrangement be found, by which a federal government grants to the government of a province or federated or provincial state the status of 'participating government' having its own voice in an international or regional organization. In my opinion, this is a fine example of the federal government's flexibility in allowing the provincial governments, in areas that fall within their own jurisdiction and that are compatible with Canada's foreign policy, to participate fully in international organizations."

"Between Canada and the francophone countries, there is rich common ground that lends itself to mutual endeavours. In this world divided between the rich and the poor, between the industrialized countries and the developing countries, our country," concluded Mr. De Bané, "is in a good position to contribute toward bringing opposites together, and toward establishing ways of creating harmony with these countries and relaxing tensions. In this regard, the Commonwealth and La Francophonie are dynamic and valuable components of our foreign policy."