

News Release

Minister for
External Relations
and International
Development



Communiqué

Ministre des
Relations extérieures
et du développement
international

No. 123

June 11, 1992

CANADA TO HOST FIRST CONFERENCE OF FRANCOPHONE EDUCATION MINISTERS

The Honourable Monique Landry, Minister for External Relations and International Development and Minister Responsible for La Francophonie, is pleased to announce that the first Conference of Education Ministers of Countries Using French as a Common Language will be held in Montreal June 15 to 17. The decision to hold the conference was made by the Heads of State and Government at the Chaillet Summit in November 1991.

Minister Landry expressed particular pleasure that the conference, to which 47 education ministers have been invited, will coincide with the 350th anniversary celebrations of the City of Montreal.

The dual purpose of the conference is to give fresh impetus to multilateral Francophone co-operation in education and to prepare an action plan for the coming decade. Participants will focus on five main topics: support for the teaching of French, the training of education personnel, the production of teaching material, technical and professional training, and distance training. The overall aim and general theme of the conference is "Excellence in Education."

According to Mrs. Landry, the Canadian government's involvement in this area arises from the experience it has gained both at the level of bilateral co-operation and in the context of La Francophonie. She pointed out that three of the five main conference topics were the result of projects initiated and funded by Canada. They concerned the production of teaching material, the launching of a scholarship program for technical and professional training, and distance training. These projects draw on the expertise of Quebec institutions such as, in the case

of distance training, the Télé Université of the University of Quebec at Montreal.

As Canada's Minister for External Relations and International Development and representative of the host country, Mrs. Landry will open the conference.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Service
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874

GENERAL INFORMATION

Origin, Background and Structure of the First Conference of Education Ministers of Countries Using French as a Common Language

At the Palais de Chaillot summit meeting held last November in Paris, the Heads of State and Government made the decision to hold a conference of Francophone education ministers in 1992 and to expand participation in this 44th session of the Conference of Education Ministers of Countries Using French as a Common Language (CONFEMEN) to all the participating states and governments.

Created in 1960, the CONFEMEN is the oldest of the institutions of La Francophonie.

In its capacity as secretariat for the summits, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation (ACCT) was given the responsibility of organizing the conference, in conjunction with the CONFEMEN. This responsibility was given because the ACCT covers the same range of members as do the summits, while until quite recently the CONFEMEN comprised only 30 member countries. The decision to expand the 44th session in Montreal was made as a result of the marked interest of the Heads of State and Government in education. Accordingly, the education ministers of all 47 member countries and governments of La Francophonie were invited to the conference.

In preparing for the conference, the federal government has been working closely with the governments of Quebec and New Brunswick to define the roles and responsibilities of the three parties. Together they have agreed that the meeting of experts that precedes every conference of this scope will be held in Moncton from June 11 to 13, under the chairmanship of New Brunswick, while the ministerial session will be held in Montreal from June 15 to 17, chaired by the Quebec Department of Education.