

STATEMENT DISCOURS



NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS
BY THE
MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS,
THE HONOURABLE PIERRE DE BANE,
TO THE MONCTON BRANCH OF THE
CANADIAN INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS,
MARCH 23, 1982

CANADA AND FRANCOPHONIE

(TRANSLATION)

The task of speaking to you about La Francophonie and Canada's role in its development is quite understandably a very agreeable one for me. I have been working in this area for some time now - first with the International Association of French-speaking Parliamentarians, or the AIPLF, then as Francophone Affairs advisor to the Prime Minister and to my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs - duties which have often taken me to francophone countries - and today as Minister for External Relations.

La Francophonie can mean many things. Perceived in different ways, according to one's own sensitivities, it is a word charged with emotional overtones, unlike the neutral word "Commonwealth." For us francophone Canadians, La Francophonie carries over to the francophone regions outside Canada, to our solidarity with them, and to the sharing and mutual assistance brought about through co-operation. It also expresses our desire to keep French, one of our two official languages, alive and functioning in Canada and throughout the world.

This was all started by initiatives from non-governmental sources. Most of the international francophone associations came into existence or made themselves known just after the last war. I am thinking of the Institute for the Right to Expression in French, or the IDEF; the Association of Partly of Wholly French-speaking Universities, or the AUPELF; the International Association of French-speaking Parliamentarians, or the AIPLF; the International Union of French-speaking Journalists, or the UCJLF, and others. These were all started by French-speaking Canadians - Quebecers, Acadians and Franco-Ontarians - who were tired of being isolated and who wanted to reach out to other francophones around the world.

There was an important need for our foreign policy to bear the imprint of the country's French component. Just as our membership in the Commonwealth resulted in a large proportion of Canadian cooperative aid being channeled to India and East Africa right after the war, so beginning in the sixties, the new francophone republics of West Africa became recipients of Canadian development aid. When the first important intergovernmental agency of La Francophonie,

namely the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation, was created in 1970 in Niamey, Niger, Canada was among the founding states. We were one of the very first countries to seek political expression for non-governmental francophone institutions, and we have sought to make such expression a reality.

Canada has been participating actively in the activities and conferences of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation for more than ten years. But what actually is the Agency's role? I would say that it is first of all dedicated to cooperation for the development of mankind, or, more precisely, for developing the cultural and technical aspects of human resources. Moreover, this is the direction in which the Agency's programs have proceeded in recent years: specifically, toward the development of national languages and cultures, education and training of the sort provided by the Ecole internationale de Bordeaux; preservation of national heritage; technological and scientific exchanges; communication by means of books, cinema, audio-visual devices and records; and horizontal technical development, by the Special Development Program or the PSD. All the human development activities of the Agency have had a second objective in view: to stimulate exchanges, cultural dialogue and the formation of closer ties between the people of the francophone countries. In other words, communication between francophones - individuals or States - has been both the means and the end of the Agency's vocation. There is now a broad consensus on what should be expected from the Agency: it is an organ of cooperation and communication designed to bring about cultural and technical exchanges between member countries. The record of its activities to date has on the whole been favourable, as is indicated by the general satisfaction of its members, and, what is even more significant, by the steady growth in membership, from 20 States at the beginning to 36 today.

The federal government has not sought to be the exclusive Canadian participant in the Agency. From the outset it has endeavoured to involve provincial governments in its francophone activities. Thus two governments enjoy the status of what are called participating governments in the Agency: Quebec, since 1971, and New Brunswick, since 1977. We were pleased and reassured to see a province that is 40 per cent francophone become so closely associated with the activities, programs and institutions of the Agency. This status of participating government allows New Brunswick representatives, who are members of the Canadian delegation, to express their own views on subjects that concern them. Incidentally, one week from now, Mr. François Owono-Nguema, the new Secretary-General of the Agency, who took office on March 1, will be in Fredericton, and I think he will also

stop here in Moncton. New Brunswick's participation in the Agency is greatly appreciated.

This status devised by the Canadian government is absolutely unique in its class. 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. Mechanisms to inform and to consult have been established between these two participating governments and the federal government to ensure that all three can participate in an active, original manner while maintaining unity of Canadian action within the community of Agency members.

Although the Agency is an important institution in La Francophonie, mention should also be made of the other intergovernmental organizations and private associations. In this connection, I am pleased to welcome the Physical Education Department of the University of Moncton for its consistent participation in the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Sports in Africa, and to congratulate the Department of Education employees for their participation in the activities of the Conference of Ministers of Education. In regard to non-governmental francophone organizations, I am pleased that last September your Department of Education was able to second one of its officials for a two-year period, to the African office of the AUPELF, the Association of Partly or Wholly French-speaking Universities in Dakar. With the assistance of a sizable annual subsidy from CIDA, a few years ago the AUPELF was able to establish the International Fund for University Cooperation, or the FICU. The African office in Dakar is closely linked with the administration of the FICU, which promotes horizontal cooperation among universities. Finally, I would also like to draw your attention to the close cooperation of the University of Moncton, which joined with my Department to prepare an annual program that, beginning in September, will enable an Acadian from Louisiana to study at the Master's and Doctoral levels in Moncton. Also through the cooperation of the New Brunswick government, my department will again, in April, send a cultural resource person to the Louisiana Franco-Americans for one year.

In sum, La Francophonie is the business of all francophone Canadians, and, I would say, of all Canadians. Like the Commonwealth, it is something of interest to us all.

In addition to the multilateral channels that I have just discussed, La Francophonie is an element in our bilateral relations. In this context, we have established a network of bilateral diplomatic representation with all the francophone countries. With many of them we have developed an important program of development assistance. We have either started or we are involved in political dialogue on major international issues, as well as being a member of all multilateral francophone organizations. I will not take time to discuss our bilateral relations with the francophone countries of Europe. French-speaking Canadians have their roots there and they are fairly well aware of the nature of these relations. I am now going to look at the active, sustained bilateral relations that Canada is pursuing, ever more intensively, with Africa.

What are the goals of our bilateral relations with these countries, for which I personally feel a special affinity? Today, Canada-African relations have reached an advanced stage of maturity, and we are beginning to have a solid experience in Africa. Canada is actively pursuing the main objectives of its foreign policy in Africa. To begin with, we wish to contribute effectively, in the interest of social justice, to the development of the African countries, especially the least advantaged ones. The scope of our activities in this area is an indication of our serious approach and our good intentions. Secondly, we wish to manifest our national identity on the world scene, and especially in Africa, by developing and strengthening our ties with the Francophone countries as well as with the members of the Commonwealth. Thirdly, we wish to form durable and mutually beneficial economic ties with the African countries. We have great confidence in the development of Africa, a continent that has so much potential, and we realize that aid must increasingly give way to the formation of beneficial trade relations, this being part of the reason for the North-South dialogue. Fourthly, we wish to contribute toward maintaining peace and security in Africa, as we did in the former Congo, in Zimbabwe, in Uganda, and now in Namibia. Of course, we do not wish to interfere in the domestic affairs of these countries, as we respect their desire to find their own solutions to the major conflicts that are still affecting certain regions of the Continent. Fifthly, we wish to contribute toward improving the quality of life, especially the environment. Let me point out here that the first Secretary-General of the United Nations Environment Program headquartered in Nairobi, was Mr. Maurice Strong, a Canadian.

I have been on official visits to many African countries. I can tell you that these countries have

a good deal of esteem for Canada and its people. Canada is liked everywhere, because all these countries realize that Canadians are inclined not by tradition, by history or by temperament to seek their own zone of influence, but their sole interest is to give concrete expression to their feeling of solidarity and brotherhood toward the rest of humanity. Canadian aid, which presently totals around \$150 million per year in Francophone Africa alone, is appreciated because it is given without ulterior motives or constraints and because it meets the important needs expressed by the governments with which we wish to maintain close relations. On account of this, and because it is administered by highly competent Canadian representatives and experts, Canadian aid is seen to be very effective in all these countries. I also noticed that our relations with them were marked by an attitude of honesty and warm friendship. Wherever I went, the conversations were open and constructive. Canada's opinions, as well as its support, are sought after and valued everywhere.

Finally, a word about our trade in Africa. The figures for our exports to Africa are as follows: in 1980, \$660 million went to Arab Africa, almost \$400 million of which was received by Algeria, by far our biggest partner; to Black Africa, \$350 million; to Southern Africa, \$200 million. The rate of expansion is illustrated by our exports to francophone Africa: in 1960, they amounted to less than \$10 million; in 1970, they were almost \$40 million; in 1980, \$627 million. Add to these figures the exports of services, which are not added up, but which represent some hundreds of millions of dollars, plus the global value of Canadian investments in Africa, which also amount to several hundred million dollars.

Between Canada and the francophone countries, there is some rich common ground that lends itself to mutual endeavours, both bilaterally and multilaterally. In this world divided between the rich and the poor, between the industrialized countries and the developing countries, between the North and the South, the East and the West, we are in a good position to contribute toward bringing the opposites together, and toward establishing with these countries ways of creating harmony and encouraging development. The visits made by Prime Minister Trudeau have shown this. My travels have convinced me of it. We have everything to gain by drawing closer to countries that, like us, use the French language. In conclusion, I would like to mention the efforts of the many Canadians - missionaries, development workers, and businessmen - who are working and investing throughout the francophone countries. Be they from Quebec, the West, New Brunswick or elsewhere, all these Canadians are contributing in an appreciable way toward helping the Canadian government's cooperation effort.