



**XII^e SOMMET
DE LA FRANCOPHONIE**
Ville de Québec • 2008



October 17, 2008

XII^e Sommet de la Francophonie

Official opening ceremony

Speech from The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

Excellency, Madam Governor General,
Premier of Quebec, Co-Host of this Summit,
Premier of New Brunswick, Summit Partner,
Ladies and gentlemen, heads of state, governments and delegations,
Secretary General of La Francophonie,
Secretary General of the United Nations,
President of the European Commission,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you to Quebec City for this Sommet de la Francophonie, the third to be held in Canada.

Four hundred years ago, the French made their presence known here in North America when Samuel de Champlain landed in Quebec City.

Champlain not only founded this city. His name is on Rideau Hall, the Governor General's residence, the first in a long line of Canadian Governors.

As an heir of Champlain, it is always a great pleasure for me as I travel throughout our vast country, to see that the French language is alive everywhere in Canada.

It plays an important role in our history, our identity and our day-to-day lives.



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And we continue to enhance it, by, among other things, investing over one billion dollars to defend the interests of our minority language communities.

For those of us who operate in a society which is bilingual, diversified and open on the world, the international Francophonie is unavoidable.

Our support of the Organization's objectives is indefeasible.

We are proud to contribute in several ways to the larger Francophonie family.

One of our preferred approaches is still TV5.

This year, Canada will chair the conference of ministers responsible for TV5 MONDE.

As part of this, we are allocating an extra \$25 million to TV5 over the next five years.

We also contribute to La Francophonie by striving to promote international democracy, peace and security.

In addition to celebrating Quebec City's 400th anniversary, we are also celebrating the 250th birthday in Nova Scotia of parliamentary democracy in Canada.

For a country like ours, this latter anniversary says a great deal about our confidence in the state of law.

Canada is delighted to welcome for the third time the International Francophonie Summit.

I'm sure our deliberations will be very constructive and useful.

I know all the leaders here will be addressing the current global financial crisis that is of great concern to all of us.

Our organization also has an important role to play in the global financial crisis that we are all facing.

For example, earlier this morning, during the Canada-European Union Summit, President Nicolas Sarkozy and I discussed ways of strengthening our economic partnership.

The Government of Canada is committed to taking action to stabilize financial markets and support world economic growth.

We all need to be aware of how this crisis is affecting developing countries.



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In this period of instability, not only do we need to maintain an open global economy, but we must also demonstrate increased economic openness.

The actions of La Francophonie must be focused and effective.

These actions must be taken in co-operation with other international and regional organizations. To mitigate the crises facing our planet, in particular certain Francophone countries, we must find collective and realistic solutions.

La Francophonie has made the necessary decisions in a number of areas.

Our recent efforts to re-establish democracy in Mauritania are proof of this.

The commitment of La Francophonie in Haiti remains essential.

Our solidarity with Haiti is more vital than ever before.

Haiti is the largest recipient of Canadian long-term development assistance in the Americas.

Just like Canada, several members of our organization are present in Afghanistan.

And we share the same goal: to leave the Afghan people with a country that is better governed, more peaceful and more secure.

And along with other countries represented here, whose contributions are worthy of mention, Canada has contributed financial, material and human resources to the peacekeeping efforts in Darfur.

Dear colleagues,

The Quebec Summit will explore issues that are critical to our countries.

Not the least of which is the environment.

Moreover, the necessary steps are being taken to make this summit a carbon emissions neutral gathering.

For the first time, Canada has a strict regulatory framework on greenhouse gas emissions.

We are also committed to the process of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

That is because we believe that all the major emitters have to be part of the solution.

Responsible management of natural resources is also essential.



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Canada will do its part and is prepared to support the countries of the Francophonie in that regard.

Another subject that will be addressed during the Summit will be the necessary modernization of our organization.

Multilateral organizations have to be effective, responsible and accountable.

Canada is open to the world. Canada reflects diversity. That is another reason why the international Francophonie is vital for Canada.

This summit must produce concrete results.

I know that, with your collaboration, it will be a success.

My dear colleagues,

all this year Canadian men and women are celebrating with pride this magnificent city that gave birth to Canada.

I will tell you again what I told you in Bucharest:

Here we have a saying that all individuals have to have two cities in their heart: their own and Quebec City.

I hope that, after your stay here, that will be true for you!

Thank you very much.