

Membership in the Commonwealth and pursuit of its work and goals are an important aspect of foreign policy. Canadian objectives have remained constant: to strengthen the association and its contributions to international peace and progress, and to assist its development as a vehicle for practical co-operation. The organization has no binding rules; decisions are by consensus rather than formal vote.

A Commonwealth secretariat in London organizes and services official Commonwealth conferences, facilitates exchanges of information between member countries and brings together their views. Canada pays its share of the budget of the secretariat and contributes to many other Commonwealth institutions and programs: a Commonwealth fund for technical co-operation, a Commonwealth youth program, a Commonwealth foundation, a Commonwealth scholarship and fellowship plan and the Commonwealth Games.

21.3.2 Canada and "la Francophonie"

The term "la Francophonie" generally describes 37 countries whose language is wholly or partly French. This term has also been used to designate a movement aimed at providing the French-language world with an organized framework and functional structures.

The federal government fosters the strengthening of ties with francophone countries. In the last few years relations with French-language countries of Europe, Africa and elsewhere have been considerably expanded and diversified.

Canada also participates in a multilateral organization, the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, and is a main contributor to its development program which has proved to be a successful tool of co-operation, especially for the African countries involved.

Canada is a member of the conference of ministers of education of French-language countries and of the conference of ministers of youth and sports of French-language countries.

The federal government is not alone in its efforts to draw francophone countries closer. On the bilateral level, the provinces take part in joint commissions and in the implementation of Canadian government aid programs. On the multilateral level, New Brunswick, Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec participate in some of the agency's activities. Quebec and New Brunswick have the status of participating governments in the agency's institutions, activities and programs.

Various non-governmental French-language associations also work to develop relations between their members around the world. The agency has helped and encouraged their activities. The Canadian government supports several that are either Canadian or have significant Canadian participation.

21.3.3 Canada and the OECD

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was established in Paris in

September 1961. It succeeded the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) founded in 1948 by the countries of Western Europe to facilitate reconstruction of their war-shattered economies and to administer the Marshall Plan. In the OECD, Canada and the United States and later Japan, Australia and New Zealand joined with countries of Western Europe to form a major intergovernmental forum for consultation and co-operation among the industrialized nations.

The aim of the OECD is to facilitate the formulation of policy conducive to stability, balanced economic growth and social progress of both member and non-member countries.

The International Energy Agency (IEA), established within the framework of the OECD in 1974, plays a role in four main areas: emergency oil sharing, consultations on the oil market, promotion of the accelerated development of new sources of energy, and relations between oil consuming and oil producing countries. Another agency of the OECD, the Nuclear Energy Agency founded in 1972, has been involved in the co-ordination and exchange of views of the technical aspects of nuclear power.

The OECD brings together government officials and representatives of business, labour, universities and other non-governmental sectors at the international level. Representatives of provincial governments attend OECD meetings when subjects of particular interest to the provinces are being discussed.

21.3.4 Canada and the United Nations

Since the inception of the United Nations, support for the UN system has been an integral part of Canadian foreign policy. Canada has played a significant role in the general assembly, the security council and a number of its special committees. In 1984, the general assembly had 158 members.

On the occasions when military personnel have been dispatched under the UN flag to deal with threats to peace and security, Canada has participated in providing personnel and equipment.

Canada has also served at regular intervals on the third principal organ of the UN, the Economic and Social Council. Generally, two sessions of the council are held annually, one in New York to discuss social and humanitarian questions, and one in Geneva to examine economic questions including food problems and international co-operation.

In recent years the UN has devoted more time to human rights, and new declarations, conventions and covenants have been promulgated. Canada has encouraged the preparation of such instruments and has stressed building better mechanisms for enforcement of standards.

Canada is a major contributor to the UN budget. Canada also makes voluntary contributions to the United Nations development program, the United