

Ministerial Conference on the *Canadian Francophonie*

Canadian Francophonie:
Issues, Challenges and
Future Directions

Synthesis of Cross-Canada
Consultations Spring/Summer 2006

October 2006

*"As for me, I labour always to prepare a way
for those willing to follow." (Samuel de Champlain, 1605)*



CONFÉRENCE MINISTÉRIELLE | MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
SUR LA FRANCOPHONIE | ON THE CANADIAN
CANADIENNE | FRANCOPHONIE

Explanatory notes

Note (1)

This English version is a translation of the original French document.

Note (2)

This document is a summary report of cross-country consultations held with the provinces and territories and numerous sectoral, local, provincial/territorial and national organizations. This synthesis presents the main common denominators as they relate to the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie's (MCCF) viewpoint.

The ideas, suggestions and proposals contained herein reflect the main views emerging from the consultations. They were not necessarily expressed everywhere or during all consultations.

The inclusion of all details and variations of the views expressed would be beyond the scope of this synthesis.

Note (3)

Some of the issues raised were mainly noted in the summaries of consultations of the provincial/territorial governments and of the Francophone community associations outside Québec.

The Ministerial Committee

New Brunswick

Percy Mockler

Minister of Wellness, Culture and Sport
Minister responsible for the Immigration and Repatriation Secretariat
Minister responsible for La Francophonie

Ontario

Madeleine Meilleur

Minister of Community and Social Services
Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs

Québec

Benoît Pelletier

Minister responsible for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs, Francophones within Canada, the Agreement on Internal Trade, the Reform of Democratic Institutions and Access to Information

Saskatchewan

Harry Van Mulligen

Chairman of the Conference's Ministerial Committee
Minister of Government Relations

Yukon

Glenn Hart

Minister of Highways and Public Works
Minister of Community Services

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Abbreviations

AB:	Alberta
BC:	British Columbia
FPT:	Federal, provincial and territorial
MB:	Manitoba
MCCF:	Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie
NB:	New Brunswick
NL:	Newfoundland and Labrador
NS:	Nova Scotia
NU:	Nunavut
NWT:	Northwest Territories
ON:	Ontario
PEI:	Prince Edward Island
PT:	Provincial and territorial
QC:	Québec
SK:	Saskatchewan
YT:	Yukon Territory

Purpose of the Consultations

The MCCF's Decision

“In Regina on October 13, 2005, during the provincial/territorial part of the meeting, the Ministers responsible for Francophone Affairs agreed to create a Ministerial Working Committee with a mandate, jointly with the provincial/territorial governments and national representatives of Francophone communities, to conduct an inventory of the issues and challenges currently facing the Canadian Francophonie, particularly in terms of its relations with the Government of Canada. This Committee is composed of members from New Brunswick, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan and the Yukon Territory. They will be mandated to work in partnership with the federal ministers to find solutions.” (Translated from French version.)

The Committee's mandate has two components:

(Government perspective)

1. Examine and document the issues and challenges facing PT governments with regard to the Canadian Francophonie in order to improve co-operation and synergy with the federal government and identify potential solutions;

(Organizational perspective)

2. In partnership with representatives from national organizations, identify the issues and challenges for communities, as well as effective strategies and means for improving co-operation between different government levels and organizations in order to undertake promising initiatives concerning the Canadian Francophonie.

SUMMARY

As mandated by the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie (MCCF), the Ministerial Working Committee recently completed a cross-country consultation process to address the issues and challenges facing the Canadian Francophonie. This document provides a synthesis of the results.

Goals and approach

The MCCF, which was created in 1994 by the provincial and territorial Ministers responsible for Francophone Affairs as the Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs (MCFA), adopted a strategic plan aiming to enhance federal/provincial/territorial co-operation in order to expand and strengthen the promotion of the French language in Canada.

In October 2005, in Regina, Saskatchewan, the PT Ministers mandated a Working Committee to conduct an inventory of the issues and challenges facing the Canadian Francophonie, include its relations with the federal government, and to identify potential solutions. This mandate targets two goals: the MCCF aims to enhance co-operation and synergy among FPT government partners, and to support community representatives from the Canadian Francophonie in their relations with the Government of Canada.

To achieve its mandate, this Working Committee, made up of representatives¹ from the governments of New Brunswick, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan and the Yukon Territory, decided to proceed with a consultative process, following a procedure that they developed and adopted.

The broad themes proposed for the consultation process covered the following areas:

- Current and future issues and challenges for the Canadian Francophonie, including broad and specific issues;
- Strategic elements that could help respond to existing challenges;
- Role of the federal government with respect to the Canadian Francophonie and the establishment of identified priorities;
- Degree of co-operation to be established or strengthened between the PT governments and the federal government in this matter;
- Type of support from the MCCF with regard to interventions and requests submitted by national organizations to the Government of Canada.

Nine provincial governments and one territorial government actively collaborated in the process, and expressed their views and positions in formal reports. In most cases, reports were submitted following consultations with Francophone organizations active in their respective regions.

In addition, the members of this Working Committee consulted 18 national organizations in Ottawa on April 20, 2006.

¹ A list of representatives is found in the Appendix to this document.

Once the process was completed, several groups that were consulted expressed great appreciation for this MCCF initiative and for the consultations, whether for its regional, provincial/territorial and national scope or its multi-sectoral nature. It was suggested that this process be repeated regularly or periodically.

Common issues and challenges: Main findings

First, the synthesis discusses the main issues and challenges that are common to the Canadian Francophonie from the population's viewpoint, as reflected in the consultations:

- A precarious and uncertain demographic future, which raises serious concerns in some communities;
- An increasingly fragile perception of identity and feeling of belonging, along with linguistic erosion;
- The need to “accommodate” Francophone spaces, milieus and living environments “from cradle to grave” in order to support the overall development of Francophone individuals, particularly with respect to identity building areas, in parallel with the federal Action Plan for Official Languages (APOL, 2003-2008). The issues that were addressed include: culture and communications, whose absence from the APOL is regrettable, early childhood development and education, health, immigration, justice and economic development;
- The search for optimal approaches to give effect to a discourse shaped by modernity.

Second, the synthesis examines the issues and challenges that have a bigger impact on the actors, leaders and stakeholders of the Canadian Francophonie than the general population, including:

- The need for “capacity building” in the field within the associative and institutional communities, considering the substantial human resources issues faced by both volunteers and paid workers;
- The need to bring in new actors, e.g., municipalities, which were notably absent from the APOL;
- The need for the federal government, who should continue to play a dynamic and inspiring leadership role, to refine and better target its initiatives and funding, whether internally (interdepartmental action via Canadian Heritage), jointly with PT governments (sections 41, 42 and 43 of the Official Languages Act, a possible second APOL), or jointly with communities (agreements);
- The need for the federal government to acknowledge its particular relationship with the Francophone North and the territorial governments with regard to both official languages, specifically its obligation to meet its commitments for service delivery in French;
- A strong expectation that the federal government, in the administration of its programs and agreements, would eliminate certain obstacles and take a more flexible management approach that takes into account the specific characteristics of each community and province/territory;

- The accountability obligation of PT governments in matters related to the Canadian Francophonie; it is hoped that they would become full players in their areas of jurisdiction, including, to varying degrees, increased service delivery in French. It is believed that setting up federal, provincial/territorial and community structures, agreements and tripartite partnerships would favour this accountability;
- The expansion of bilateral and multilateral agreements, notably with Québec, which supports this idea;
- Implementation of effective, accountable management practices to optimize the outcomes of various initiatives;
- The relevance of establishing new alliances, for example with Francophiles and the “French immersion” sector.

Future of the Canadian Francophonie: Potential solutions?

The consultations reflected the vitality of organizations that are looking for new perspectives and solutions to respond to the issues and challenges. The main solutions put forward were as follows:

- Articulation of a mobilizing vision in order to rally the entire Canadian Francophonie, enrich strategic directions and open the way to future opportunities;
- Action-based research projects carried out with partners to better identify priorities and to measure the impact of completed actions, while furthering the evolving identity of the Canadian Francophonie;
- Effective communication and outreach campaign by the Canadian Francophonie through presentations at significant, high-media events in order to promote the Francophonie across the country and abroad between now and 2010;
- Establishment of a constructive dialogue between the MCCF, FTP governments and national/community organizations;
- Exercise by the MCCF and other players of a “real-time” influence, notably on the federal government, e.g., towards a second Action Plan;
- Development of large-scale, well-targeted projects bearing concrete solutions for the future of youth and immigration (two strategic areas for the future), economy and commerce, communications and new technologies (content).

All these proposed solutions could be effective only insofar as they are based on new synergies and effective co-operation in the short and medium term.

Proposed roles for the MCCF

From the consultations, there emerged a consensus on the appropriate roles that the MCCF should play; this includes clearly voicing the concerns of the communities to the federal government.

Moreover, it was felt that the MCCF could play the following complementary roles in a variety of ways:

- *Expert consultant and credible negotiator across Canada (provide “real leverage”);*
- *Leadership for the Francophonie, including political leadership.*

Therefore, the MCCF should be funded accordingly.

It is hoped that, through the MCCF’s assistance, the Canadian Francophonie will be listed on the agenda of new forums, for example, the Council of the Federation.

Contribution of the MCCF to the future of the Canadian Francophonie:

Proposed measures

The conclusion of the consultation and the identification of issues and challenges, as well as the dynamic created by these consultations and the new perspectives expressed, could be a turning point for the MCCF. Will it transition to a more proactive role as an increasingly influential interlocutor on the issues that will determine the future of the Canadian Francophonie?

Based on the proposed roles for the MCCF, its strategic plan and the main issues and challenges identified, the MCCF could adopt the following three priority areas (explained in detail below):

- *Contribute to the articulation of a mobilizing vision statement and directions that would garner the support of the entire Canadian Francophonie;*
- *Actively promote the Canadian Francophonie and communicate its current and future relevance at high-media events;*
- *Exercise leadership in matters of youth and immigration, through large-scale, concrete projects with multiple spinoff effects.*

Turning to the tools required to carry out these initiatives, the MCCF will take into account the above-mentioned potential solutions. To seek new perspectives, using a discourse of “modernity,” it will draw on the existing research and maintain a constructive dialogue with its diverse partners.

The areas of intervention can be described as follows:

- *Contribute to the articulation of a mobilizing vision statement and directions that would garner the support of the entire Canadian Francophonie*

There appears to be fertile ground for this initiative among the Francophonie and most of its representatives. As a spokesperson for all governments, the MCCF has a unique perspective and influence, which could result in a decisive contribution to a mobilizing vision statement with relevance for the future. This statement would be accompanied by broad strategic directions, which could serve to underlie an array of strategic plans developed by various stakeholders.

Moreover, the 2006/2009 strategic plan to be adopted by the MCCF in October should prove to be a fertile source of inspiration in the effort to formulate this vision statement.

- *Actively promote the Canadian Francophonie and communicate its current and future relevance at high-media events*

In response to the deeply held aspirations expressed by the communities and the strategic need for a strongly articulated position, the MCCF will mark its “switch to the offensive” by raising the profile of the Francophonie, using high-impact events of interest to be held this year and the next four years: the implementation of Québec’s new policy on the Canadian Francophonie (2006), the Francophone and Acadian Communities Summit (2007), the 400th anniversary of Québec City (2008), the 12th International Summit of La Francophonie (2008, in Québec City), the World Acadian Congress (2009, in the Acadian Peninsula) and the Vancouver Olympic Games (2010).

Before these events, the MCCF will develop a communication plan, with a specific “game plan,” that will include catchy themes and messages connecting with the issues and challenges, and with various audiences, forums, partnerships, means and resources.

- *Exercise leadership in matters of youth and immigration, in terms of large-scale, concrete projects with multiple spinoff effects*

Two key areas that were perceived as fundamental to the future emerged from the consultations, i.e., youth and immigration. Both these areas have direct bearing on the major issues of Francophone demography and identity. They also have ramifications for a wide range of activity sectors: early childhood services, new technologies and French content, intake and integration, etc.

The MCCF will take the initiative of occupying the youth niche, which is central to the agendas of all governments and communities. Its leadership will consist in finding ways to get Francophone youth engaged in their future as Francophones.

It will initiate projects that offer solutions to demographic and identity issues, thereby attracting new synergies.

More specifically, under this initiative, the MCCF could:

- Specify action priorities, using the existing research;
- Organize a national Francophone youth conference to identify and launch priority projects;
- Establish links with certain youth initiatives currently underway cross the country.

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INTRODUCTION

Objectives and process

Purpose of the consultation

The Ministerial Conference on Canadian Francophonie (MCCF), which was created in 1994 as the Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs (MCFA), includes the federal and the provincial/territorial Ministers responsible for Francophone Affairs. MCCF members meet to share their experiences and practices with regard to service delivery in French and support services for Francophones.

The purpose of the MCCF's current strategic plan is to enhance FPT co-operation in order to expand and strengthen the promotion of the French language in Canada.

At their last conference held in Regina, Saskatchewan, on October 12 and 13, 2005, the PT Ministers mandated a Working Committee² to conduct an inventory of the issues and challenges facing the Canadian Francophonie, particularly in its relations with the Government of Canada.

The MCCF included the following two goals in the Committee's mandate:

- Enhancing co-operation and synergy among the FPT government partners and
- Supporting community representatives from the Canadian Francophonie in their relations with the Government of Canada.

To carry out this mandate, the members of the Committee decided to proceed through consultations, especially since this is a useful means to ensure constructive and positive co-operation between government partners. Consultation also sets the stage for a constructive dialogue with national organizations.

Consultation strategy

In March 2006, the Committee proposed the following timeline, which is on track:

- Preparing an issue paper (March)
- Distributing the document to national organizations (March)
- Consulting with national organizations (April)
- Inviting PT governments to consult with their respective communities.
PT consultations (May, June and July)
- Preparing a summary report (August)
- Reviewing potential solutions (September)
- Ministers conducting a final review (October)

² The Committee is made up of representatives from New Brunswick, Ontario, Québec, Saskatchewan (the Committee chair) and the Yukon. The members are listed in the Appendix to this document.

Consultations

Using the proposed themes,³ the consultation process allowed a vast array of representatives, stakeholders and professionals who work for the benefit of the Canadian Francophonie to express their views, including:

- 18 national organizations;
- 10 PT governments;

Several other organizations representing various service areas (e.g., education, culture, health) and population segments (e.g., seniors, youth and women) from different regions of the country.

The 10 PT governments that actively participated in the process produced formal reports, which were often accompanied by summaries of the consultation proceedings, including (from east to west): Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Québec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon.

In several cases (Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Québec, Saskatchewan and the Yukon), the responsible Minister personally approved the report and/or summary that was submitted.

A summary of the consultation with national organizations (April 2006) was also prepared.

One can only appreciate the quality, diversity and depth of the views and perspectives that were shared.

At the level of PT governments, the governmental organizations responsible for Francophone Affairs or Intergovernmental Affairs oversaw the process, produced the consultation reports, and expressed their views and positions.

Following this exercise, several groups that were consulted expressed their great appreciation for this MCCF initiative and this consultation, whether it was for its regional, provincial/territorial and national range, its multi-sectoral nature or the confidence that it inspires for the future.

It was suggested that such a process be repeated regularly or periodically.

3 What are the main issues and challenges that the Canadian Francophonie is currently facing or could be facing?

In your area of intervention, what specific challenges have arisen or could arise over the next few years?

Have you developed strategies that you would like to implement and that could respond, at least in part, to some of the challenging currently facing your clients or the Canadian Francophonie, in general? If so, what are the main elements of these strategies?

What role could the Government of Canada be playing with regard to the Canadian Francophonie and the implementation of identified priorities?

What type of co-operation should be established or reinforced between the provincial/territorial governments and the Government of Canada with regard to the Canadian Francophonie?

How could the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie better support the interventions and requests submitted by the national organizations to the Government of Canada?

CHAPTER I

Common issues and challenges: Main findings

First, this chapter addresses the specific issues and challenges of the Canadian Francophonie as they relate to the population. Second, it addresses the specific issues and challenges of the Canadian Francophonie's actors and stakeholders.

1. Specific issues and challenges relating to the Canadian Francophone population

Four issues and challenges were identified:

a) Population and demographics

- i. A precarious and uncertain future:* Serious concerns were raised regarding perspectives for the future and continuity. The summary of the consultation with national organizations explained that “Francophones are losing ground, both demographically and politically” (translated from French).

The same summary outlined a number of explanatory factors, such as: “ageing population, impact of exogamy and immigration, rural migration and urbanization” (translated from French).

The factor identified as the predominant one varied depending on the location. While some communities cited low population numbers⁴, other communities cited urbanization (SK), dispersal of the population throughout the territory (BC), or a combination of several factors.

- ii. There were some nuances, however.* The consultation summaries indicated that in the field, this fundamental issue does not translate into similar life experiences.

Alberta's consultation report highlighted the growth of the Francophone community, despite its small numbers.

The report from British Columbia (host of the 2010

Vancouver Winter Olympic Games) stated that the current demographic evolution (composition of the population) constitutes a “revival” factor, despite low population numbers. The perspective taken on this matter was definitely forward-looking.

“Alberta is the only province where the Francophone population is growing faster than the Francophone populations of other provinces and is also growing faster than Alberta's Anglophone population.”

*(Excerpt from the Alberta report;
translated from French)*

⁴ Excerpt from the NL report: “Newfoundland and Labrador has the smallest and most dispersed Francophone community among all ten Canadian provinces. Therefore, Francophone affairs are not as present within the society as for other Canadian Francophone populations. The number of Francophones in NL has decreased over the past two or three years. It is becoming increasingly difficult to meet the needs of a population segment that is becoming smaller and cannot achieve the critical mass.” (translated from French)

b) *A perception of an increasingly fragile identity and feeling of belonging, as well as linguistic erosion*

The Francophone identity is perceived as threatened.⁵ Some reports stated that there is a dwindling feeling of belonging. The language itself is said to be impoverished or weakened by several factors. For instance, some mentioned a proportionately higher level of illiteracy, while others mentioned globalization, which gives a predominant place to the English language (especially in the business sphere), or new technologies that make greater use of English. In some cases, reports mentioned the official multiculturalism policy, which would make French lose ground.⁶

The Francophone population is becoming more diverse as it is integrating groups from ethno-racial and cultural minorities, although this is not the case everywhere throughout the country.

Consultation reports expressed further concern about the cultural consumption (above all music) of young Francophones, who favour English due to the mediums used. There were also concerns about French school attendance targets that are not being met, and the below-expectation retention rates of public Francophone school systems.

According to the reports, there seems to be less conviction than before. With regard to leadership, Manitoba's report noted "a lack of conviction within the Francophonie" (translated from French), and with regard to economic matters, New Brunswick's report noted that "English is the language of business [for French-speaking businesses]" (translated from French).

c) *Establish Francophone spaces, milieus and living environments*

i. *Social and virtual spheres*

Given the drastic changes to the population's way of life (neighbourhoods, villages, workplaces, parishes)⁷, strong expectations were voiced toward the establishment of new "Francophone spaces," which would include social and economic spheres, virtual and media spaces (NL), and "from cradle to grave" strategies in order to support the overall development of Francophone individuals.⁸

In short, and using modern terms, what the reports suggested was the establishment of a viable and durable Francophone living environment.

5 Québec's report mentioned "... the precariousness of the French language and Francophone cultures..." (translated from French).

6 These factors were identified at the consultation with national organizations.

7 Excerpt from the Working Committee's issue paper: "The urbanization and global economy phenomena, as well as the rapid development of communication mediums have weakened Canada's Francophone communities. When combined with a significant demographic decrease, these phenomena are threatening the very existence of Canadian Francophone communities..." (translated from French)

8 Excerpt from the PEI report: "The base of these [identified Acadian and Francophone] communities is seen as being a French school and community centre. With priority emphasis on children, women and seniors, the community envisions these centres as poles of influence around each of which a variety of services will be available so as to ensure the community members are able to **live in French** in Prince Edward Island..."

ii. *Schools: A necessary but insufficient condition*

To establish Francophone spaces, schools are consistently perceived as a necessary prerequisite.⁹ Schools are at the heart of everything; this is where the present and the future meet. “This is where everything starts...” (MB; translated from French).

While schools provide necessary social spaces, they do not constitute a sufficient condition in this 21st century. Schools must establish links with other dimensions of community life such as leisure, cultural and sporting activities (ON), social and community activities (BC, AB, SK), home-based¹⁰ and institutional day care (ON), seniors (SK). Ontario’s Aménagement linguistique Policy,¹¹ which was raised in the consultation, aims to strengthen the link between language, culture and education.

According to some provincial reports, time has come to strengthen relationships with Francophiles, especially with the “French immersion” segment.

iii. *Identity-building areas and sectors identified in the Action Plan for Official Languages* (hereafter referred to as the Plan)

Participants in the consultations answered specific questions on this matter.¹² Below is a summary of their comments:

- *Culture, communication and municipal powers: Issues absent from the Plan*

Given their fundamental contribution to identity-building, especially in an age where cultural industries are increasingly exporting their products, some reports criticized the fact that the Plan does not deal with the inter-related cultural and communications sectors. The cultural sector needs to obtain support for the creation, production and dissemination of works of art from Francophone creators (individuals, small organizations or small cultural businesses). This observation also applied to PT governments.

As for the vast communications sector, reports commented on federal institutions, including the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)¹³ and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), as well as on the industry that produces new media and technologies and develops local content in French (MB).¹⁴

9 See previous note.

10 To this effect, we are reminded that parents play a fundamental role that cannot be dismissed.

11 Ontario’s Aménagement linguistique Policy (2004).
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/linguistique/linguistiQCpdf>

12 With regard to community development, the APOL addresses the following issues: education, early childhood, health, justice, immigration, economic development, strengthened partnerships with PT governments, and assistance for community life.
http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/olo/default.asp?Language=E&page=action&doc=cover_e.htm

13 Excerpt from the PEI report: “Raise awareness among the Canadian population of the Canadian Francophonie, via the mass media (CBC).” (translated from French) – Excerpt from the MB report: “We need to ensure that the people of Québec are aware of the concerns of Francophones in other provinces, for instance, through panels on the CBC.” (translated from French)

14 Excerpt from the MB report: “New communication technologies – Women who are in a minority situation use the Internet less often due to the lack of relevant French content. French sites often come from Europe or Québec.” (translated from French)

The absence of a *municipal* component was noted in the Ontario and Prince Edward Island consultation reports.

- *Early childhood and education*

On this matter, reports often refer to section 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.¹⁵

Some reports (NL, BC, SK) highlighted the need to upgrade the public school network with a post-secondary network made up of recognized French colleges and universities.

Since education falls under provincial jurisdiction, consultation reports reiterated the need to secure sufficient funding to meet this objective, while also meeting the objective to enhance basic access to French education.

Further, reports often insisted on the fact that the transition to school must normally be preceded by early childhood development in a French environment (fundamental role of parents, day care centres, pre-schools), offering adequate services. Schools must establish links with these environments.

The issue of “family literacy,” which was also mentioned in the consultations (PEI, national organizations), was also seen as an integral part of the education component.

- *Health*

This issue was addressed in broad terms, within the larger context of service delivery in French within the communities, and as a significant component of a Francophone living environment. Consultation reports expressed various views on this issue. Some pointed out the lack of response from the federal government on a recent proposal (YT), while others questioned the relevance of granting funds to the community to develop health networks rather than granting them to the province so that it may serve Francophone users (NL). On the other hand, some reports noted

“It is of significant importance for all Francophones in a minority situation, especially for children who are part of a visible or ethno-cultural minority, to have a better access to day care services in French. Attending a Francophone day care can help prevent assimilation.”

(Excerpt from the Ontario consultation; translated from French)

“... The Government of Canada should consult with the provinces to determine to what extent they are interested in receiving funds specifically for services in French in some key areas.

... The NL Government does not currently receive any subsidy to develop primary health care services in French, which is a pressing priority for the province’s Francophone community.”

(Excerpt from the Newfoundland and Labrador report; translated from French)

¹⁵ Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. See http://lois.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/const_en.html#garantee.

a certain progress (BC), or pointed out a very promising legislative development (Ontario, with its new Local Health Integration Networks Act). finally, some reports stated that there was an opportunity here to develop a unique model for federal, provincial and community co-operation (SK).

- *Immigration*

Immigration, often perceived as an essential avenue (a “key area,” according to the BC report) for a more harmonious demographic development of the Canadian Francophonie, was the subject of many comments. Consultation reports stated that “immigrants must be integrated upon their arrival” (NL; translated from French), “otherwise we lose them” (MB; translated from French). Some reports indicated that the number of immigrants should be increased (NB, PEI), and that we should facilitate their integration, specifically through language instruction and recognition of prior professional certifications in their countries of origin. This latter issue was raised numerous times.

Reports mentioned the need to develop concrete strategies. Some provinces have launched special pilots to this effect.

Inter-provincial migration was also raised as an issue (AB, BC).

- *Justice*

This issue was not addressed at length in the reports. However, associations representing French-speaking lawyers participated in the consultations.¹⁶

- *Economic development*¹⁷

This important issue was addressed by some reports in terms of the development of Francophone entrepreneurship and the ownership of Francophone businesses (NB). Some reports mentioned the importance of municipalities as breeding grounds for socio-economic projects (AB, ON), while others mentioned the need to encourage entrepreneurs to do business in French (NB), given the largely predominant use of English in the economic and commercial sphere (QC). One report suggested to expand economic services provided in French (government programs) (SK).

d) *The quest for the best approaches to translate into action a more modern discourse, in a slightly more favourable context*

i. *New avenues:*

With regard to these critical issues, participants in the consultations suggested several avenues for the future. The summaries put forward solutions, some of which are based on known perspectives,¹⁸ but also some that provide more modern and proactive action perspectives. Reports

¹⁶ Excerpt from the Ontario report: “In appointing judges, the federal government should take into account provincial and territorial needs with regard to service delivery in French.” (translated from French)

¹⁷ See Le Réseau de développement économique et d’employabilité de la francophonie canadienne, www.rdee.ca.

¹⁸ For instance: language transmission, claims to fully benefit from existing legal protections, projects to prevent assimilation and the “tendency to lose the language”, recovery of targeted school student populations, etc.

discussed issues such as the promotion of the Francophonie,¹⁹ and the value added of the Francophonie and its contribution to Canadian social cohesion.²⁰

More concrete suggestions were also made:

Political action: Put the Francophonie on the agendas of new forums, such as the Council of the Federation.

Opening doors to the world: Take part in the organization of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games in British Columbia; initiate international awareness programs and cultural exchanges; recruit, welcome and integrate immigrants.

Persuasive communication: French content (new media); awareness activities to counter perceptions of isolation; social marketing campaigns to present the French language as a relevant economic, social and cultural advantage, in these early days of the 21st century.

Inter-provincial/territorial mobility within the Francophonie: Exchanges and transfers of expertise.

Integration: Full participation of the communities to social debates within their province/territory; partnerships with “majority groups”.

Horizontal action: Abolish the “sectoral silos” that were created over the years.

Strategic alliances: Establish new alliances, for instance with the French immersion sector and with the Francophile associations and groups.

Entrepreneurship: Help Francophone businesses to establish themselves and conduct business in French; economic development projects in French.

ii. *Youth and immigration*

As for the major demographic and identity issues, the consultations in certain communities highlighted the pressing need for efficient action. The actions that need to be taken relate to youth (e.g., French content in new media) and immigration (e.g., recognition of prior professional training and certifications obtained by immigrants in their countries of origin).

“In light of the upcoming 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games, the community will sign a memorandum of understanding with the VANOC to ensure ... the participation of the Francophone community in this significant international event.”
(Excerpt from the BC report;
translated from French)

“... [We need to] present the French language as a palpable reality and as a relevant economic, social and cultural advantage, in these early days of the 21st century.”
(Excerpt from the Ontario report;
translated from French)

¹⁹ This was expressed several different ways, e.g., “put the Francophonie on the map” (MB), “value Canada’s international leadership within the Francophonie” (national organizations).

²⁰ Cohesion is one of the strategic objectives of the Department of Canadian Heritage.
http://www.patrimoinecanadien.gc.ca/pc-ch/org/mission/index_e.cfm

iii. *The search for a better quality of life for Francophones*

This notion, which was raised as such in BC, was also expressed using other terms in a few other summaries.

iv. *Signs of improvement at the level of PT governments*

Some consultation reports mentioned perceptible signs of improvement at the level of PT governments; in particular, files pertaining to the Francophonie are better received and dealt with, and there are increased co-operation opportunities on specific projects (this was noted in BC with regard to economic development, and in MB, AB, QC and PEI).

2. Specific issues and challenges relating to the Canadian Francophonie's actors and stakeholders

a) *Human resources within associations, institutions and community networks*

i. *Diagnostic*

Most consultation reports discussed the state of “health” of field workers involved with the Francophonie, whether they come from associations (paid or volunteer workers) or institutions (health and education professionals, etc.). Some reports depicted a harsh reality: work overload, inadequate compensation in relation to the range of tasks, and lack of social benefits, which leads to dissatisfaction, exhaustion, and consequently, a high turnover rate and a shortage of personnel.

In this regard, national organizations spoke of the need for “capacity building.”

While few solutions were proposed, some reports expressed the need to recruit more personnel and to provide professional development opportunities, whether for the acquisition of language skills or for the integration of immigrants (AB, BC).

Finally, some consultation reports noted that there is a “lack of people who really believe in the Francophonie” (MB), and that it has become increasingly difficult to ensure a strong leadership.

ii. *Potential solutions?*

Saskatchewan's report suggested that this issue be addressed through the “preparation of succession plans within the associative networks of the Francophonie in co-operation with provincial youth organizations”²¹ (translated from French).

21 Excerpt from the Saskatchewan report.

b) *Municipalities as new players*

Strongly perceived importance of municipal governments

According to some of the provinces and national organizations, more attention is given to municipalities as favourable environments for development initiatives.²² On this topic, reports discussed issues such as service delivery in French, economic and socio-cultural development projects, and increased political representation.

For example:

i. ON: Municipalities are excluded from the French Language Services Act²³; absence of “follow-up mechanisms and indicators” (with regard to linguistic obligations) in cases where powers are delegated from the province to the municipalities, which has been quite frequent in Ontario over the past few years.

“Provide incentives to provinces and municipalities to better consider the needs of the local Francophone community, in cases when federal funds are transferred to the provinces for the purpose of municipal affairs.”

*(Excerpt from the Alberta report;
translated from French)*

ii. NB: It is important for Acadians to be increasingly present within the municipal political scene by running for office in order to influence developments at the municipal level. Various problems were also mentioned in relation to populations within unincorporated territories.

iii. AB: Need for municipalities to consider the Francophone perspective when federal funds are transferred to the province for municipal affairs.

iv. NL: Need for Francophone localities to diversify their economy.

v. National organizations: Greater awareness building within large cities; proposed co-operation with Ministers responsible for those large cities.

c) *Federal government*

Many comments were made regarding the federal government. Not surprisingly, given its legislative, regulatory and taxation powers, its financial resources, its support programs and its influence, the federal government is seen as a major stakeholder in the promotion of official languages and in the development of Francophone communities and of the Canadian and international Francophonie.

²² Excerpt from the PEI report: “The Acadian and Francophone community of Prince Edward Island is of the widely held opinion that the services provided by provincial and **municipal governments** have a greater impact on the day-to-day lives of Canadians than do the services provided by the federal government.”

²³ Ontario’s 1986 French Language Services Act. <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/english/FLSA.html>

i. *Concerns and “wait-and-see” approach with the new government*

The MCCF consultations were held shortly after the new government was elected. Given this government’s five-point agenda,²⁴ which does not make any reference to the Francophonie (PEI report), concerns were expressed regarding this wait-and-see approach, including:

- The expectation that the government might remove programs, due to its commitment to respect PT jurisdictions; and
- Questions regarding the lack of a vision for the Canadian Francophonie.

ii. *General observations*

The consultation reports did not question the federal government’s fundamental role, quite the contrary. Newfoundland and Labrador summarized this role, and reiterated that the federal government should continue to play a leading role.²⁵ According to another report, it must practice what it preaches.

Virtually all consultation reports referred to the implementation of sections 41, 42 and 43 of the Official Languages Act.²⁶ Numerous suggestions were made in this regard. For example, a fairly simple measure would be to provide adequate training to federal regional public servants on the provisions of

“Federal civil servants in Yukon are not well-aware of their obligations in this regard; there needs to be greater leadership by Canadian Heritage in its responsibility under section 42 and with the Yukon Federal Council.”
(Excerpt from the Yukon report)

²⁴ Accountability, lower taxes, child care, crime and health care. http://canada.gc.ca/main_e.html

²⁵ Excerpt from the NL report: “Obviously, the Government of Canada must continue to take the lead for the promotion of Canada’s linguistic duality and the protection of minority official language communities. After all, it is the Government of Canada that enacted the Official Languages Act, by which it is bound. The Federal Government must also co-operate with provincial governments to meet its commitments with regard to official languages, as many areas that fall under the Act are of provincial jurisdiction.” (translated from French)

²⁶ Canada’s Official Languages Act, as amended in 2005. Excerpts from sections 41, 42 and 43:

S. 41. (1) The Government of Canada is committed to

(a) enhancing the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development; and

(b) fostering the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society.

(2) Every federal institution has the duty to ensure that positive measures are taken for the implementation of the commitments under subsection (1). For greater certainty, this implementation shall be carried out while respecting the jurisdiction and powers of the provinces.

S. 42. The Minister of Canadian Heritage, in consultation with other ministers of the Crown, shall encourage and promote a coordinated approach to the implementation by federal institutions of the commitments set out in section 41.

S. 43. (1) The Minister of Canadian Heritage shall take such measures as that Minister considers appropriate to advance the equality of status and use of English and French in Canadian society and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may take measures to

(a) enhance the vitality of the English and French linguistic minority communities in Canada and support and assist their development;

(d) encourage and assist provincial governments to support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities generally and, in particular, to offer provincial and municipal services in both English and French and to provide opportunities for members of English or French linguistic minority communities to be educated in their own language;

(e) encourage and assist provincial governments to provide opportunities for everyone in Canada to learn both English and French.

sections 41, 42 and 43, and on service delivery in French. It was suggested that this could be done through awareness building with the federal regional councils.²⁷

Some reports stated that the development of any new federal legislation should include an analysis of the potential implications and impacts of each new bill on the Canadian Francophonie (PEI).

According to a frequently expressed view, any FPT agreement should include linguistic provisions that are beneficial to the Francophone communities.

The issue of the creation of a Francophone Affairs or Francophonie Department, or a Francophonie Secretariat²⁸ was often raised, particularly with regard to the recommendation to ensure a better horizontal (interdepartmental) management of initiatives related to the Canadian Francophonie.²⁹ Any new program that affects the Canadian Francophonie should be developed from this unit (SK).

Expectations were expressed in this regard, given that federal interdepartmental co-ordination under the umbrella of Canadian Heritage may not have yielded the expected results, according to some reports.

iii. A second Action Plan for Official Languages?

The previous section dealt with comments made on the contents of the current Plan,³⁰ expiring on March 31, 2008. Several expectations were also expressed (PEI, BC, NL, MB, AB, among others) on the potential development of a second Action Plan. Some reports stated that the outline for this plan should be discussed with the provinces and territories before it is developed (the Plan addresses areas that fall under provincial jurisdiction), based on PT and community plans (e.g., Vision Project in PEI – see footnote 43); communities should be more thoroughly consulted during the development of the Plan; accountability rules within the federal government for the implementation of the plan should be clarified and communicated to communities and PT governments.

iv. Relationship with the Francophone North and the Territories

The Yukon consultation report also expressed the need for the federal government to recognize its particular

“The Government of Canada should recognize its particular relationship with the Northern Territories with regard to official languages. It should meet its commitment for service delivery in French.”
(Excerpt from an amendment to the Yukon report; translated from French)

27 For more information on these regional councils, see the Website of the Treasury Board of Canada at: http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/frc-cfr/bkgrd-contexte/histoire_e.asp.

28 A Francophone Secretariat for the Arts, Culture and Heritage was reportedly created since then, within Canadian Heritage; the Official Languages Secretariat (horizontal action), formerly under the jurisdiction of the Privy Council Office, is now under the responsibility of the Minister for La Francophonie and Official Languages.

29 See, for example, the Canadian Rural Secretariat, a consortium regrouping 9 federal departments and agencies. www.rural.gc.ca

30 <http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/>

relationship with the Francophone North and the territorial governments with respect to both official languages, specifically its obligation to meet its commitments for service delivery in French.

v. *New approaches*

Consultation reports expressed the pressing need for a change in attitudes, practices and approaches within the federal government, and specifically, the need for the government to:

- Take into consideration the specific characteristics of each of the provinces/territories to develop services that are better adapted to their situation. In other words, some reports advocated greater flexibility in programs and services to respond to the values,³¹ characteristics and specific needs of communities and provinces/territories;
- Make a firm commitment towards service delivery in French;
- Provide increased funding, according to specific needs;
- Ensure horizontal harmonization between federal departments;
- Initiate more discussions with the PT governments³² and communities to create new synergies.

vi. *Agreements and programs: Governance and management*

Management-related issues were often raised (referred to as “governance models” by some), including issues with Canadian Heritage, such as:

- Community views should be better taken into consideration when programs are developed; these programs should reflect PT priorities and should be established following consultations with communities.
- A more flexible management approach should be taken with regard to various programs and agreements. Consultation reports mentioned the following frustrations: delayed approvals cause cash-flow problems to organizations; late payments; excessive reporting requirements; communication issues between federal headquarters and field offices.
- Some reports mentioned the issue of insufficient funding, sometimes unfair funding mechanisms (YT, NL) for provinces and territories, especially the smaller ones (PEI, NL), and for communities.
- Some reports supported the idea of establishing funding agreements based on a multi-year approach and also using a program funding approach rather than one based on punctual projects.

vii. *Service delivery in French by the federal government*

According to some reports, service delivery in French should continue to be improved through a more proactive, institutionalized delivery of services, but also with a new perspective where the federal government serves as a

31 Excerpt from the PEI report: “Community representatives feel that there is a significant difference in values between community groups and federal civil servants and programs. While the community values consensus building and common understandings based on identified community needs, federal programs seem to be more based on unilaterally identified federal objectives and changing political priorities.”

32 Excerpt from the letter of the responsible minister (BC): “A more robust and genuine consultation... would increase synergies...”

source of inspiration for PT governments (PEI, NL), and perhaps municipal governments. It was suggested that this could be achieved by establishing new joint FPT one-stop centres where services could be provided in French.

d) Provincial/territorial governments and multilateral agreements

Reflecting the noticeable signs of improvement noted above (PEI, AB, BC, MB), several comments were made to the effect that PT governments are increasingly taking into consideration issues related to the Francophonie. One report mentioned the “accountability obligation of provinces and territories towards the Francophonie”³³ (translated from French).

The expected outcome is that all provinces and territories would become full players; therefore, consultation between FPT governments and communities through a continuous dialogue is the proposed approach.

Several provinces and territories were strongly of the view that PT governments should harmonize their messages, specifically with regard to certain initiatives with the federal government.

It was suggested that the MCCF could play a role in this regard.

i. Initiatives in shared or exclusive jurisdictions

Varying views were expressed on this often-sensitive topic with regard to the appropriate degree of involvement by the federal government. There was, however, consensus that the best way to make progress was to proceed without impeding on PT jurisdictions and priorities. Considering the new wording (see footnote 26) of subsection 41(2) of the Official Languages Act (“carried out while respecting the jurisdiction ... of the provinces”), reports were in favour of FPT agreements, as they are believed to have the merit of involving the provinces and territories to a greater extent.

ii. Federal funding and selection of appropriate beneficiaries

It was noted that some PT governments (NL, YT) needed increased funding to implement certain actions required by the Plan; the need to ensure that beneficiaries of funds are strategically selected (PT government or community) was also expressed.

The national organizations suggested the establishment of structures or tripartite agreements; this was a recurring theme.

iii. Internal co-ordination of service delivery in French and of Francophone Affairs

One suggestion was made regarding the co-ordination of PT initiatives within the respective governments; it was suggested that PT government organizations responsible for these initiatives be given a much broader horizontal mandate, in order to increase their respective influence.

Some reports noted that the Francophonie is not sufficiently taken into consideration by PT government departments that are responsible for social and education services, culture, economic affairs and health care.

³³ Report of the consultation with national organizations.

iv. Services in French

This critical issue was raised numerous times in the consultations of certain provinces and territories, including NB (institutional bilingualism), SK (federal/provincial one-stop service centre), NL (the federal government could serve as a model for the provincial government), YT (request for adequate funding pursuant to the master agreement), PEI (full implementation of the provincial French Language Services Act) and QC (provision of expertise on the delivery of services in French).

The issue of a “proactive service offer” was also occasionally mentioned.

v. Inter-provincial/territorial bilateral or multilateral agreements

Those who expressed an opinion on PT bilateral or multilateral agreements stated that this was an interesting avenue, and some even stated that this is a vital one that requires to be maintained and reinforced (BC, MB, NL, QC).

Some reports also specifically referred to agreements with Québec (ON, MB, NL), whose active role within the MCCF is appreciated.

Agreements with Québec are reportedly implemented in a spirit of exchange, for instance on distance education (national organizations). This might be a way to bridge the “distance between young people in Manitoba and those in Québec” (MB; translated from French).

One of the main objectives of Québec’s initiative is also “to increase awareness, among the people and organizations of Québec, of Francophone groups and financial support programs for Francophones”³⁴ (translated from French).

The Québec report also expressed the willingness to enter into bilateral co-operation agreements with all provinces and territories, while making the MCCF the pivotal point of its multilateral action.³⁵

Moreover, the New Brunswick report highlighted this province’s unique status within the country, as a constitutionally bilingual province. It was submitted that this unique status should be promoted and taken into “consideration by the FPT governments.”³⁶ It was reported that the MCCF could play a role in this regard.

e) Initiatives based on efficient management and accountability practices

According to one specific expectation strongly and clearly expressed in some summaries, future initiatives related to the Francophonie should be based on more strategic and result-driven management practices, should be

³⁴ Excerpt from the Québec report.

³⁵ “While maintaining its support for civil society actors throughout Canada, the use of bilateral and multilateral institutional co-operation is one of the approaches that the government of Québec intends to adopt.” (Excerpt from the Québec report, page 3, August 2006; translated from French)

³⁶ Excerpt from the NB report: “The different levels of government, including the federal and provincial governments, should recognize New Brunswick’s particular status, as the only officially bilingual province... Develop a communication plan to have New Brunswick’s unique status recognized by the national organizations.” (translated from French)

research- and consultation-based, and should include accountability and reporting mechanisms. This would ensure greater efficiency and transparency.³⁷

f) *New partners?*

Of notable interest were comments made on several occasions on the need to establish new alliances, for instance with Francophile groups. The report from BC mentioned, for example, Canadian Parents for French.³⁸

“British Columbia’s Francophone community must solidify its base, and to do this, it must make efforts to come into contact with Francophiles. ... [To] be able to fully participate in social and political debates within our society, [it] must establish new partnerships with majority and multi-cultural groups.”

(Excerpt from the report by the Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique; translated from French)

³⁷ MB: “Combine Bill S-3 with accountability.” (translated from French) – PEI: “ Program objectives must not only be based on community needs, they must also be administered in such a way as to ensure maximum results, maximum impact on community vitality.”

³⁸ See <http://www.cpf.ca>

CHAPTER II

Potential solutions for the future of the Canadian Francophonie and conditions for success

Before addressing six potential solutions, first a few words regarding general observations made during the consultations on future courses of action.

Several reports noted that all potential solutions would be effective only insofar as they are based on new short and medium term synergies and co-operation.

In this regard, it was considered critical that we “speak the same language.”³⁹

Toward a paradigm shift

According to certain observations or suggestions made, the Canadian Francophonie is experiencing a paradigm shift, which means that it is now shifting to different assumptions⁴⁰; it is transitioning from a culture characterized by community development in survival mode, by community claims for the recognition of minority rights⁴¹ and by the predominant leadership of the federal government, to a much broader perspective in terms of goals (“put the Francophonie on the map,” national and international recognition) and of actors.

Some reports suggested that a “Premiers’ Conference on Linguistic Duality” could be held (national organizations), or that the Council of the Federation could “develop an ownership” of issues related to the Canadian Francophonie.

Two key areas for the future

Two fundamental key areas for the future emerged from the consultations, i.e., youth and immigration, two areas that are closely linked with the important demographic and identity issues. They also have ramifications for various areas of activity: early childhood services, new technologies and French content, intake and integration of immigrants, etc.

“Ensure action on a national level by the provinces and territories.”
(Participant in the consultations with national organizations;
translated from French)

“Increase the size of the Acadian and Francophone community through immigration and the retention of youth on the Island.”
(Excerpt from the PEI report;
translated from French)

³⁹ Excerpt from the report on the consultation with national organizations: “... that national and provincial organizations speak the same language.” (translated from French)

⁴⁰ Excerpt from the Québec report: “In these early days of the 21st century, the Government of Québec is of the view that the Canadian Francophonie should ensure the durability of its progress by projecting its action forward, i.e., by taking advantage of globalization, and by using the economic, political, cultural and technological tools that are available to it.” (translated from French)

⁴¹ This does not mean that this avenue should be abandoned. Excerpt from the PEI report: “Responsibility for awareness building of federal and provincial obligations should not sit on the shoulders of community groups or community members.”

Initiatives related to youth and immigration should be intensified to offset demographic pressures; an imperative strategic choice, according to some of the summaries.

a) Youth

A number of suggestions were made in different communities regarding initiatives or projects for Francophone youth.

In addition to initiatives related to early childhood development and schools, the reports suggested initiatives related to:

- Post-secondary education in French
- Employment (ensuring the availability of bilingual jobs, entrepreneurship development, local economic diversification)
- Culture and communications (French content in new media)
- Improvement of verbal and written language skills

“Promote the Francophonie in a way that reflects the realities and aspirations of young Francophones and Francophiles.”
(Saskatchewan report; translated from French)

b) Immigration

The consultation with national organizations highlighted the need to develop a strategy encompassing all dimensions of this issue: recruitment, intake, cultural and economic integration, regionalization.

(See also Chapter I, section 1-c-iii.)

The consultations resulted in the identification of six potential solutions, discussed below.

1. Think and act strategically at a national scale and with a contemporary perspective

Proposing a vision statement rallying the entire Canadian Francophonie and enrich strategic directions that open the way to future opportunities.

A number of reports expressed the need, or sometimes pressing need, for a new vision to be developed⁴² in order to rally various stakeholders and contribute to the creation of new and powerful synergies. From this vision, a number of global directions could be derived, which could then serve as the basis for numerous strategic plans from different stakeholders in the country. This could allow to gain new perspectives on known problems. Similar tools exist within several provinces and territories, for example the *Projet Vision* in Prince Edward Island.⁴³

42 Excerpt from the Québec report, page 1: “In addition, one of the conditions to the viability and development of the Canadian Francophonie is that Francophones in Québec and elsewhere in Canada must develop a common vision of the country’s Francophonie to consolidate and strengthen not only their relationships, but also their presence and influence in Canada.” (translated from French)

43 See http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/franco_global_F.pdf

This clearly spelled out vision and these directions could ultimately help a number of organizations to develop strategic objectives, to better identify priorities, projects and resources, to better target desired outcomes, and to develop performance indicators, accountability processes and reporting rules. The vision statement would be developed by taking into account the fundamental issues, the environment, the need for a new positioning, and the following considerations:

- Preparing for the future (youth, immigration, economy and trade, new technologies, globalization);
- Adopting a broader scope, which could include an international perspective
- Demonstrating the relevance and value added of the French language and Francophonie in the 21st century
- Establishing new relationships with Francophiles groups and the “immersion” segment
- Including municipalities as a development axis
- Removing inter-sectoral barriers (“silos”)
- Facilitating the “interprovincial-territorial mobility of the Francophonie,” expertise transfers and exchanges

“La Francophonie is larger than the Francophone and Acadian communities, and occupies a larger political space.”
(Consultation with national organizations; translated from French)

2. Action-based research: Gaining a better understanding

Carry out action-based research projects with partners to better identify priorities and to assess the impact of initiatives undertaken, while better understanding the evolving identity of the Canadian Francophonie.

Before any planning can be carried out, we have to gain a better understanding of the Francophonie. Therefore, several suggestions were made regarding research projects that could be developed to better understand the Canadian Francophonie and to “measure” its vitality.

Some reports stated that research should not delay action, but rather help identify priorities and measure results. Further, it was suggested to draw upon existing research.

While none of the consultation reports proposed a research tenet, there were a few interesting suggestions made, including:

- The Éducacentre College, a BC organization that participated in the consultation, suggested that the minister develop “a set of indicators... determining the overall vitality of the Francophone community.” These indicators of the vitality of BC’s Francophonie could perhaps be expanded on a national level.
- The PEI report suggested that program assessment tools tailored to the Francophonie could help government managers to better respond to the aspirations of the Acadian and Francophone community.⁴⁴

- Another suggestion was made to carry out qualitative studies to assist in “redefining” the Francophonie and better understanding the new realities of Francophones. The following three examples were noted: the “mobility of Francophones” (national organizations); a genuine analysis of issues and challenges, which has never really been done (MB); and a segmented or differentiated analysis, for instance an analysis to better understand the status of women within communities (MB).
- Some reports noted that studies on the economic implications, impacts and benefits of the Francophonie (at the national, provincial/territorial and regional level) would be very useful in the context of positioning the Francophonie in a modern context, and demonstrating the value added of the French language for Canada and its citizens.
- Recurring census issues, which mainly concern Statistics Canada, were also noted (national organizations).

“Demonstrate the concrete outcomes of Bill S-3, as well as the value added of French and its economic implications.”
(Excerpt from the Manitoba consultation; translated from French)

3. Significant communication initiatives: Promotion of the Canadian Francophonie

Develop a communication and marketing plan that will allow the Canadian Francophonie to benefit from highly visible forums, while raising awareness of its identity and its socio-cultural and economic relevance.

There are many new opportunities that might help raise awareness of the Canadian Francophonie, including Québec’s new policy on the Canadian Francophonie (2006), Canada Winter Games (from February 24 to March 10, 2007 in Whitehorse, Yukon),⁴⁶ the Summit of the Francophone and Acadian Communities (June 2007, in Ottawa),⁴⁷ Québec City’s 400th anniversary⁴⁸ (January to October 2008), the 12th International Summit of La Francophonie (October 2008, in Québec City),⁴⁹ the 4th World Acadian Congress (August 2009, in the Acadian Peninsula of New Brunswick),⁵⁰ and the Vancouver Olympic Games (February 2010).⁵⁰

This awareness building exercise should target various audiences, such as internal audiences (organizations, governments), the Canadian public as a whole, and targeted international networks.

44 Excerpt from the PEI report: “Tools could be developed with community input which would facilitate the work of public servants looking to ensure their programs are truly supportive of community aspirations and present no systemic obstacles to access by the Acadian and Francophone community. In fact, programs should go farther and ensure that the specific needs of this community are reflected in the program management.”

45 See <http://www.canadagames.ca/Content/Games/2007%20Yukon.asp?langid=2>

46 See www.fcfa.ca/home/index.cfm?id=257

47 See www.quebec400.QC.ca

48 See www.francophonie.org

49 See http://www.cma2009.ca/contenu_en.cfm?id=44

50 See http://www.vancouver2010.com/resources/PDFs/FrancophoneProtocole_EN.pdf#search=%22francophonie%20et%20jeux%20olympiques%202010%20vancouver%22

“... make [the French language] known as a powerful, valuable and prestigious language, so that the public, and especially youth, can understand that maintaining cultural and political diversity, and promoting the use of French in the context of trade, work environments and government, is a valid socio-political project. This is the approach that we need to take.”

(Excerpt from the Québec report; translated from French)

The message to convey is that the Francophonie is culturally, socially and economically relevant. It provides another window on the world.

This should be communicated in a consistent way. Therefore, as previously stated, all stakeholders will need to harmonize their messages.

4. Contemporary approaches based on a contemporary socio-political discourse

Develop a number of guidelines for future project planning and management.

The consultation reports indicate that communities and PT government organizations responsible for Francophone Affairs would like to see the Canadian Francophonie make significant progress through relevant initiatives, but also through contemporary methods and efficient management practices that reflect recent domestic and international trends. This includes the following recommendations:

- Strategic planning exercises should clearly identify expected outcomes, consistent with community aspirations. At all levels of intervention, it is expected that accountability rules or frameworks would be specified, as well as performance indicators and reporting mechanisms.
- With regard to horizontal action, all stakeholders should strive to ensure a better performance on a horizontal level, i.e., integrate the “Francophonie” perspective in their respective environments through interdepartmental initiatives, within the respective governments, or through inter-sectoral initiatives between different organizations.
- The Francophonie should be brought to the forefront by adding this topic to the agendas of new forums (such as the Council of the Federation); contacts with other networks and new alliances should be established, which would require new ways of doing things, such as higher-level strategic planning.

There clearly is a need for new dynamics and powerful synergies between the MCCF, FPT governments, national organizations and communities. This translated into various suggestions at the consultations: recurring, inter-sectoral consultation mechanisms that involve the communities; clear and efficient tripartite agreements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments and the communities; formal consultation and planning committees.

5. “Real-time” influence

Gain a better understanding of government partners (priorities, budget cycles, planning, etc.), and identify the most relevant mechanisms and networks to exercise an influence that “delivers” expected results.

The challenge for stakeholders here is to identify the most efficient mechanisms to exercise a “real-time” influence. This requires an extensive knowledge of how public sector partners operate (strategic planning, budget cycles, political priorities, practices).

According to some consultation reports, the process of developing a second Action Plan on Official Languages with the federal government could constitute a very relevant opportunity.

Moreover, since several PT action plans on the Francophonie will expire by 2009, it was thought that the existing dialogue within the MCCF could have a beneficial influence on the renewal of these plans.

“Ensure that the MCCF is in a position to exercise its influence with all federal government departments.”
(Excerpt from the New Brunswick report; translated from French)

6. Planning for the future: Large-scale projects with multiple spinoff effects

Identify priorities and define large-scale, significant and feasible projects focusing on areas keys to the future (e.g., youth, immigration). Identify resources and partners. Establish a results-driven project management process.

Some reports addressed the relevance for the Canadian Francophonie to undertake a few well-targeted, large-scale and significant projects focused on the future, rather than a multitude of smaller projects. In order to ensure gains for the overall Francophonie, this was said to be the preferred approach.

These projects would be focused on strategic and vital development areas for the future, including youth (culture and identity, education, employment, entrepreneurship), immigration, trade (economic development⁵¹), communications and new technologies (content).

Some reports expected that these projects would help us find concrete solutions to complex problems; in a second phase, these solutions could then be adapted by several jurisdictions and organizations.

“In 2004, the Ontario Ministry of Education implemented its language planning policy to ensure the vitality of the Francophone community through high-quality French-language education that values the links between language, culture and education. ... In partnership with the Office of Francophone Affairs, a symposium on language planning, called ‘Pour nous inscrire dans l’avenir’, will be held in Ottawa in October 2006 and will report on the accomplishments and milestones...”
(Excerpt from the Ontario summary; translated from French)

⁵¹ See the Website of the Réseau de développement économique et d’employabilité de la francophonie canadienne (RDÉE), at www.rdee.ca.

CHAPTER III

Proposed roles for the MCCF

The consultation reports expressed strong hope that the MCCF would exercise a constructive and dynamic leadership. Some added that its interventions should be systematic rather than punctual; and that it should maintain two-way contacts with communities and national organizations.

There seemed to be consensus on the appropriate roles that the MCCF should play; this includes clearly voicing, to the federal government (politicians and public servants), the concerns of the Francophonie at the local, provincial/territorial and national levels.

Views varied, however, on the activities and functions of the MCCF. These can be regrouped into two complementary categories.

a) An expert and a credible intermediary across Canada

Under this perspective, the MCCF would be a secretariat, a forum, a meeting place, and it would ensure that communities, national organizations, and sometimes provincial and federal governments, benefit from its solid expertise. It would provide “real leverage.”⁵²

The reports made the following recommendations:

- i.* Strategic planning: Develop a strategic plan (with the national organizations, as some suggested) that has a genuine influence on the resolution of major issues related to the Francophonie.
- ii.* Act as an influential representative with the federal government departments and the regional councils within the provinces/territories (see footnote 27).
- iii.* Research and innovation: The MCCF could, for instance, develop new agreement models between FPT governments and communities, and new types of partnerships.
- iv.* Analyze and communicate useful and strategic information to stakeholders (e.g., best practices, successes).
- v.* Hold annual or periodic consultations with the communities.

b) A leader of the Canadian Francophonie, including at the political level

Under this perspective, the MCCF would be a forum for “political reflection ... rather than a forum for information exchange” (translated from French), according to Manitoba’s report. The MCCF would therefore raise the profile of the Francophonie at the national level. In playing this role, the MCCF would:

- i.* Initiate an effective dialogue between PT ministers; the current dialogue is reportedly often restricted to dialogue between the PT government agencies responsible for services in French and Francophone Affairs; this dialogue would result in harmonized messages to the federal government (see Chapter I, section 2-d).

⁵² Consultation with national organizations.

- ii.* Articulate the vision and overall solutions;
- iii.* Instigate major political meetings on the Canadian Francophonie, at the highest levels;
- iv.* Anticipate the measures and decisions of the federal government, while developing positions and counter-proposals.

c) Efficient interaction with the Council of the Federation⁵³

Reflecting the need for the Canadian Francophonie to be included in the national political agenda, several reports suggested that the MCCF should actively intervene with the Council of the Federation so that it may address issues related to the Canadian Francophonie.

“It is critical for the MCCF to gain the respect of the Council of the Federation” (MB; translated from French).

d) Proposed approaches

Whatever roles the MCCF might play, some reports stated that the MCCF should strive to maintain close operational links with communities and national organizations (for instance, through periodic consultations). Moreover, it should make its actions systematic (e.g., strategic planning, research, consultation).

e) Adequate resources?

Some reports questioned whether the MCCF would benefit from adequate resources to carry out its mandate.

⁵³ <http://www.councilofthefederation.ca/index.html>

CHAPTER IV

Contribution of the MCCF to the future of the Canadian Francophonie: Proposed measures

The conclusion of the consultation and the identification of issues and challenges, as well as the dynamic created by these consultations and the new perspectives expressed, could be a turning point for the MCCF. Will it transition to a more proactive role as an increasingly influential interlocutor on the issues that will determine the future of the Canadian Francophonie?

Based on the proposed roles for the MCCF, its strategic plan and the main issues and challenges identified, the MCCF could adopt the following three priority areas (explained in detail below):

- *Contribute to the articulation of a mobilizing vision statement and directions that would garner the support of the entire Canadian Francophonie;*
- *Actively promote the Canadian Francophonie and communicate its current and future relevance at high-media events;*
- *Exercise leadership in matters of youth and immigration, through large-scale, concrete projects with multiple spinoff effects.*

Turning to the tools required to carry out these initiatives, the MCCF will take into account the above-mentioned potential solutions. To seek new perspectives, using a discourse of “modernity,” it will draw on the existing research and maintain a constructive dialogue with its diverse partners.

The areas of intervention can be described as follows:

- *Contribute to the articulation of a mobilizing vision statement and directions that would garner the support of the entire Canadian Francophonie*

There appears to be fertile ground for this initiative among the Francophonie and most of its representatives. As a spokesperson for all governments, the MCCF has a unique perspective and influence, which could result in a decisive contribution to a mobilizing vision statement with relevance for the future. This statement would be accompanied by broad strategic directions, which could serve to underlie an array of strategic plans developed by various stakeholders.

Moreover, the 2006/2009 strategic plan to be adopted by the MCCF in October should prove to be a fertile source of inspiration in the effort to formulate this vision statement.

- *Actively promote the Canadian Francophonie and communicate its current and future relevance at high-media events*

In response to the deeply held aspirations expressed by the communities and the strategic need for a strongly articulated position, the MCCF will mark its “switch to the offensive” by raising the profile of the Francophonie, using high-impact events of interest to be held this year and the next four years: the implementation of the Québec’s new policy on the Canadian Francophonie (2006),

Canada Winter Games (2007, in Whitehorse) the Francophone and Acadian Communities Summit (2007), the 400th anniversary of Québec City (2008), the 12th International Summit of La Francophonie (October 2008, in Québec City), the World Acadian Congress (2009, in the Acadian Peninsula), and the Vancouver Olympic Games (2010).

Before these events, the MCCF will develop a communication plan with a specific “game plan,” that will include catchy themes and messages connecting with the issues and challenges, and with various audiences, forums, partnerships, means and resources.

- *Exercise leadership in matters of youth and immigration, in terms of large-scale, concrete projects with multiple spinoff effects*

Two key areas perceived as fundamental to the future emerged from the consultations, i.e., youth and immigration. Both these areas have direct bearing on the major issues of Francophone demography and identity. They also have ramifications for a wide range of activity sectors: early childhood services, new technologies and French content, intake and integration, etc.

The MCCF will take the initiative of prioritizing the youth niche, which is central to the agendas of all governments and communities. Its leadership will consist in finding ways to get Francophone youth engaged in their future as Francophones.

This would result in projects that offer solutions to demographic and identity issues, thereby attracting new synergies.

More specifically, under this initiative, the MCCF could:

- Specify action priorities, using the existing research;
- Organize a national Francophone youth conference to identify and launch priority projects;
- Establish links with some youth initiatives currently underway cross the country.

APPENDIX

Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie. Canadian Francophonie: Issues, Challenges and Future Directions. Synthesis of Cross-Canada Consultations, Spring/Summer 2006.

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