

**Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs
St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador - October 4, 2002**

**JOINT GOVERNMENT ACTION KEY TO FRANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN
COMMUNITIES**

Governments reaffirmed their commitment to the delivery of French-language services and the development of Francophone and Acadian communities, during the seventh Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, on October 3 and 4, 2002.

The priorities referred to by Stéphane Dion, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for Canada and Minister responsible for official languages coordination, in his presentation on the proposed federal official languages action plan, largely match the priorities decided upon by the provinces and territories with respect to French-language service delivery and the enhancement and development of Francophone and Acadian communities.

Moreover, provincial and territorial governments will have a key role to play in the implementation of certain components of the federal action plan. Federal-provincial-territorial agreements on the promotion of official languages are an ideal tool in this respect. The upcoming renewal of these agreements is seen as an opportunity to reinforce Pan-Canadian collaboration in the delivery of French-Language services and the development of Francophone and Acadian communities.

The review of current and planned initiatives and approaches underscored the progress made regarding key francophone issues. These include health services, early childhood development, economic development, visibility of French, dialogue with the community and interprovincial-territorial cooperation. It is to be noted that activities and achievements vary from one region to another, given the different linguistic realities of Canada's provinces and territories.

In addition, ministers and elected officials acknowledged the need to facilitate the recruitment, selection, reception and integration of new Canadians in Francophone and Acadian communities, in partnership with various community, government and private sector stakeholders.

Minister Dion stated "Cooperation by our two levels of government is essential to the delivery of quality French-language services. I am impressed by the commitment shown by the Francophone Affairs ministers and elected officials and see them as key partners in the implementation of measures in priority areas for the Francophone and Acadian communities".

"Admirable cooperation and synergy are developing among those called upon to play a key role in the advancement of issues which will contribute to the true enhancement of our French-Language communities," noted Mr. Tom Lush, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs for Newfoundland and Labrador and Chair of the Conference.

The Quebec Minister for Canadian Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister responsible for relations with Canadian Francophone and Acadian communities, Mr. Jean-Pierre Charbonneau, took part in the provincial-territorial component of the Conference and delegated an observer to attend the federal-provincial-territorial component.

The next meeting will be held in Manitoba in 2003.