

NEWS RELEASE

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Federal-Provincial-Territorial Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs Regina, Saskatchewan - October 14, 2005

Strengthening Canadian Francophonie: Ministerial Conference on Francophone Affairs marks 10th anniversary

REGINA, October 14, 2005 — Provincial-territorial governments and the Government of Canada marked 10 years of collaboration to promote the Canadian Francophonie and strengthen Canada's linguistic duality.

At the Regina Conference, the Ministers responsible for Francophone Affairs made substantial progress on a new mandate. Still under discussion, this new mandate will enhance provincial-territorial capacity to improve French-language services.

The delegates decided to formalize the federal government's participation in the federal-provincial-territorial portion of the Conference. From now on, the federal Minister responsible for Official Languages will co-chair the FPT session with his or her provincial-territorial counterpart.

"We are very pleased with this development, as it is directly in keeping with the Government of Canada's strong commitment to play an active role in the expansion and advancement of the Canadian Francophonie," indicated Mauril Bélanger, federal Minister responsible for Official Languages.

Taking stock of 10 years of collaboration on Francophone Affairs, delegates adopted a new name: "Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie." This wording better reflects the strength and vitality of all francophone and Acadian communities in Canada.

The Conference adopted a strategic plan, which focuses, among other priority sectors, on facilitating the development and implementation of Francophone Early Childhood Development programs, strengthening the francophone milieu, increasing access to quality health services in French and supporting francophone cultural development.

"The adoption of the first strategic plan for the Conference demonstrates that our table has made serious progress over the last 10 years," stated Len Taylor, Conference Chair and Saskatchewan's Minister of Government Relations.

During the federal-provincial-territorial meeting, the ministers discussed implementation of Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages, on which a Midterm report will be issued shortly. According to Minister Bélanger, the federal government pledges to attach special importance to enhance intergovernmental cooperation with an eye to the desired renewal of this action plan, which expires in March 2008. The provincial and territorial ministers stressed how important it is for Ottawa to renew its commitment so that the initiatives supported by the provincial and territorial governments, including in the areas of health and immigration, can achieve the desired results.

The provincial and territorial ministers also agreed to create a ministerial working committee that will identify issues facing the Canadian Francophonie and they will work in partnership with the Government of Canada to find solutions.

The next Ministerial Conference will be held in Ontario in the fall of 2006.

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[Summary-Strategic Plan attached](#)

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