



CONFÉRENCE MINISTÉRIELLE | MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
SUR LA FRANCOPHONIE | ON THE CANADIAN
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Joint Press Release

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Youth Citizenship: A Priority for Canadian Francophonie Ministers

During the 12th Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, held in Halifax on September 12 and 13, the ministers responsible for Canadian Francophonie adopted a strategy to encourage active citizenship among young Francophones.

A youth consultation enabled the identification of three key elements: citizenship, leadership development and communication. The Conference will ask an implementation committee which includes youth representatives to support, among others, the organization of a gathering of francophone youth from across the country in 2008. They will then be invited to present their report during the 13th Conference.

"To ensure that the Canadian Francophonie stays vibrant and committed, it is important that the governments work constructively with youth to implement projects that will allow them to develop a sense of pride in their Francophone and Acadian identity, and to fully engage in their role as citizens," said the Honourable Chris d'Entremont, Nova Scotia Minister of Health and Minister of Acadian Affairs.

During the Conference, the Ministers also talked about the renewal of intergovernmental agreements on French-language services, which expire in March 2009. The Ministers agreed on a common approach to facilitate the timely renewal of these agreements.

"Canada's New Government is committed to actively working with the Provincial and Territorial Governments to ensure the continued development of Francophones in Canada," said the Honourable Josée Verner, Minister of Canadian Heritage, Status of Women and Official Languages. "Today's discussions confirm that the Conference is an ideal forum for the promotion of more concerted action among governments aimed at strengthening support and services for the Canadian Francophonie."

Held for the first time in 1994, the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie aims to strengthen the ties between the Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments in order to enhance French-language services for citizens and to strengthen the Canadian Francophonie.

The next Conference will be held in Quebec City on September 17 and 18, 2008, on the 400th anniversary of the city's founding.

See attached backgrounder for more details on the Youth Strategy.

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BACKGROUNDER

Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie Youth Strategy

Background

- In the spring of 2007, the Intergovernmental Network on Canadian Francophonie, which supports the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, identified existing youth initiatives to determine the areas where intervention would be effective and necessary.
- During the summer of 2007, the INCF initiated dialogue with youth representatives across the country in order to align its actions with the priorities established by Canada's young Francophones.
- The dialogue led to the following findings:
 - **Citizenship** was identified as a key area for the future of the Francophonie;
 - “**By and for youth**” was confirmed as the fundamental principle for any action by the MCCF in this area;
 - There was a need and willingness for **increased cooperation** between the various youth associations and among the government and community players in this field.
- The MCCF will focus on sharing best practices and providing strategic leadership to the partners and will not be involved in program creation or delivery.
- In the context of this strategy, **citizenship** refers to the involvement and social participation by youth in local, provincial, territorial, regional or national development.

Youth strategy

- Encourage MCCF member governments to take action to facilitate citizenship by young Francophones.
- Encourage increased cooperation among Canada's Francophone youth stakeholder groups with regard to citizenship.
- Support the development of leadership in Canada's young Francophones.

2008 Action Plan

- Strike a committee with youth representation to implement the strategy.
- Help organize a gathering of young Francophones in 2008:
 - Leadership development and dialogue forum on citizenship;
 - Participants could present a report to the 2008 MCCF in Quebec City as part of the activities held in connection with the Francophonie Summit.