



NEWS RELEASE

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20th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE

THE 20TH MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE IS HELD, AS PART OF THE 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH PRESENCE IN ONTARIO

Toronto, June 18, 2015 – The ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie held their 20th meeting, during which they discussed a number of topics that have an impact on the development of the Canadian Francophonie. Their discussions focused on French-language government services, economic development, tourism as a tool for promoting the Canadian Francophonie, Francophone immigration, and the French-language media.

“It is an honour for me, as we celebrate 400 years of French presence in Ontario, to welcome my counterparts from the federal, provincial and territorial governments to Ontario,” said the province’s Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur. “This is a great time to focus on a number of major issues for the Canadian Francophonie and to ensure that Francophones throughout the country continue to achieve their full potential now and in the future.”

“This 20th meeting of the Conference demonstrates the ongoing commitment of all governments across Canada toward the Canadian Francophonie,” said Jacques Gourde, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, for Official Languages and for the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec on behalf of the Honourable Shelly Glover, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages. “This forum—the only one of its kind in the country—is an opportunity for our governments to work together for the advancement of our Francophonie, and to promote it as a value that fosters the development of ties between all Canadians, strengthens our national identity, and furthers our prosperity.”

The ministers in attendance first had an exchange with Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada, and François Boileau, Ontario's French Language Services Commissioner, who shared their vision on French-language government services that could contribute to the continued development of the Canadian Francophonie.

Economic development within the Canadian Francophonie was another topic of the ministers' discussions. The ministers discussed the idea of supporting the networking between Francophone economic organizations and entrepreneurs in order to expand the pan-Canadian Francophone economic space.

Promotional initiatives were also presented to the ministers, including tourism as a driver for the economic development of Canada's Francophonie, which inspired the participants' discussions. Francophone tourism was identified as an important component of provincial and territorial tourism markets benefiting the Canadian Francophonie. In this regard, ministers agreed to create a working committee to explore opportunities of collaboration on tourism projects, including a concept of a francophone tourism circuit.

The ministers discussed the potential opportunities offered by the current immigration system for recruiting French-speaking newcomers. Francophone immigration remains a priority for the Conference and ministers agree on the importance of determining actions that can be taken in this respect to support the labour market, workers mobility and the vitality of Francophone communities across the country.

The ministers also had the opportunity to identify and appreciate the various changes affecting the media and the opportunities offered by these changes for the advancement and development of the Canadian Francophonie. Mr. Pierre C. Bélanger, Full Professor at the University of Ottawa's Department of Communication, gave the ministers a current overview of the Francophone space in the context of the digital transformation.

The ministers took part in the official launch of activities to commemorate 400 years of French presence in Ontario at the Royal Ontario Museum, along with Franco-Ontarian community representatives, marking this major event. This summer, the Pan American and Parapan American Games will also be held in Toronto from July 10 to 26 and August 7 to 15.

The next Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie will be held on June 22 and 23, 2016, in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie, created in 1994, is the only intergovernmental forum that brings together the ministers responsible for the Canadian Francophonie. The Conference strives to encourage an open, dynamic and diversified Francophonie that contributes to and participates fully in the growth of Canadian society. Visit the website of the Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie at <http://www.cmfc-mccf.ca>

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