

Statement on Canadian Francophonie

We take this historic opportunity of the 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017 to recognize:

- ♦ **the key role played by Francophones in the founding and building of Canada and their importance to Canada's future;**
- ♦ **that Francophonie is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian identity.**

We are committed to working, in collaboration with the other governments in Canada, towards the promotion, protection, longevity, and vitality of the French fact.

Canada was built on the principles of cohabitation, linguistic duality and diversity. The presence of Francophones throughout the country, and the recognition that Quebec is the principal hub of the French language in Canada and that Quebecers form a nation within a united Canada are an eloquent reflection of the fundamental contribution of the French fact to the Canadian reality .

The Quebecois and Acadian people and Francophone communities across the country form the basic constituent of the Canadian Francophonie. Francophiles and newcomers enhance and expand the Canadian Francophonie, making it more diversified and inclusive.

As the only Francophone state in North America, Quebec acknowledges its historical and unique responsibility with respect to the Francophone and Acadian communities, and intends to continue to exercise collaborative leadership, together with the other provinces and territories, in order to support the development of these communities.

For almost 200 years, French-speaking people have been exploring Yukon, settling in the territory and contributing to its development. In 1988, the Government of Yukon adopted the *Languages Act* recognising English and French as the official languages in Canada and accepted to take steps towards implementing the equality of status of English and French in the territory. Yukon acknowledges the contribution of the Francophone community to the Territory's social, cultural and economic fabric and is committed to supporting the development of Yukon's Francophonie.

As a result, the governments acknowledge the important role they have to play in this regard and with respect to their Francophone communities, given that the Francophonie is a precious heritage to be preserved and an asset to be shared and drawn upon.

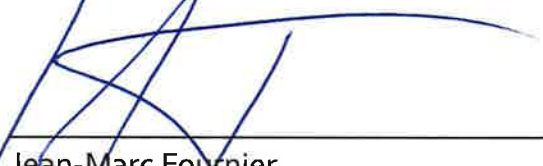
Given the importance of government commitment and leadership with respect to the Canadian Francophonie, particularly with the approaching 150th anniversary of Confederation in 2017, and while taking into account the different realities of the provinces and territories and in a spirit of solidarity and openness, we undertake to work closely together with respect to the Canadian Francophonie, notably by :

- ♦ increasing intergovernmental cooperation through dialogue and collaboration between our governments, particularly by promoting exchanges between young Francophones and Francophiles, in order to support initiatives that meet the needs of Francophone communities and that have significant impacts on their vitality, growth and development;
- ♦ promoting the French language and the Canadian Francophonie as key elements of Canada's identity and a strength to be drawn upon;
- ♦ taking concrete action to ensure that the demographic weight of Francophones is maintained all across Canada, particularly by means of Francophone immigration;
- ♦ encouraging the active offer of services in French, notably in supporting the implementation of the Yukon's strategic framework for French language services and the three priorities identified by the Yukon francophone community: health, education and culture.

This Statement, signed in Whitehorse on this 31st day of March 2016, is intended as a demonstration of unwavering support for and a guarantee of the future vitality and longevity of the Canadian Francophonie.



Elaine Taylor
Deputy Premier, Minister Responsible for
the French Language Services Directorate



Jean-Marc Fournier
Minister responsible for Canadian
Relations and the Canadian Francophonie