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.

At the time of its founding, Manitoba had a population that consisted of equal numbers of Francophones and Anglophones and thus established a legislative framework that conferred equal status to French and English before the Courts and in the legislature. Manitoba continues still today to acknowledge the contribution of the Francophone community to the Province's economic and cultural diversity and is committed to supporting the development of Manitoba's Francophonie.

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.

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 :

- promoting the French language and the Canadian Francophonie as key elements of Canada's identity and a strength to be drawn upon, particularly through the presence of a national broadcaster that reflects the reality of the regions and contributes to their development;
- 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 in order to enlarge the *espace francophone*, particularly by ensuring access to French-language schools and health care services in French;
- 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.

This Statement, signed in Winnipeg on this 18th day of January 2016, is intended as a demonstration of unwavering support for and a guarantee of the future vitality and longevity of the Canadian Francophonie.

Original signed by:

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Greg Selinger
Premier
Minister of Federal-Provincial Relations
Minister responsible for Francophone affairs

Original signed by:

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Philippe Couillard
Premier

Original signed by:

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Jean-Marc Fournier
Minister responsible for Canadian
Intergovernmental Affairs and the
Canadian Francophonie