

## Victoria Declaration 1999

### JOINT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Shared Priorities in Education at the Dawn of the 21st Century  
Future Directions for The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada  
September 1999

### Leadership in education

We, the ministers responsible for education, unanimously reaffirm our responsibility for providing leadership in education at the pan-Canadian level through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. While the provinces and territories remain responsible for education in their jurisdictions, there continues to be a need for joint action. We believe that our collective will to work together will create a synergy that will benefit each province and territory.

### Why we need to work together

As ministers responsible for education, we are committed to providing the highest possible quality of education to citizens at every stage of their lives. We place a high value on developing and adapting education policies for the needs of regions and communities, and on administering programs at the local level, close to the people served by the education systems.

Residents of all provinces and territories, however, recognize that, when faced with the same challenges, it is often in their own interest to work together to address them. We are aware of the challenges that continue to be posed by our rapidly changing world: youth unemployment, the development of a knowledge economy, economic globalization, and technological advances that are having an impact on our daily lives, as well as the job market. In all regions, there are similar challenges and, as a result, the desire for provinces and territories to work together in a cooperative manner.

Provinces and territories will collaborate on shared priorities through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. Sharing our perspectives on particular issues will enhance our ability to reach creative solutions and to add value to what we are doing in our respective jurisdictions.

### Values and beliefs

We believe that education is a lifelong learning process and that we must continue to strive to create a learning society in which the acquisition, renewal, and use of knowledge are cherished. We also believe that the future of our society depends on

informed and educated citizens who, while fulfilling their own goals of personal and professional development, also contribute to social and economic progress. On the international scene, our activities should reflect these values and our priorities, while contributing to strengthening our role globally. Above all, we want all citizens to have a fair and equitable opportunity in whatever educational and training endeavours they may pursue.

### Priorities for joint action

While our specific action plan may change from time to time, for the next five years, our work together through CMEC will be carried out in the following priority areas:

- Focussing on education outcomes
- Sharing information on best practices
- Collaborating on curriculum initiatives
- Promoting policy-related research
- Strengthening the postsecondary sector and increasing access
- Supporting international activities
- Promoting mobility
- Enhancing CMEC as a forum for effective and fruitful cooperation with the federal government

Our work must involve cooperation with our partners — students, parents, educators, trustees, education organizations, federations and institutions, business and labour, the Forum of Labour-Market Ministers, aboriginal governments, and where appropriate, certain federal departments and agencies. All cooperative activities must be carried out in the full respect of the jurisdiction of the various partners. In most cases, this work will involve all members of CMEC, but sometimes the programs or projects will be carried out by a group of members that does not necessarily include all provinces and territories. Our actions will continue to be guided by five themes: accountability, quality of education, accessibility, mobility, and responsiveness to learner needs.