



**Speech of His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al -Mohammed
Al –Ahmed Al -Jaber Al -Sabah during a ceremony held
at the Canadian Embassy on the occasion of the
International Day of the Francophonie**

Tuesday, on the 19th of March 2013

Dear Ambassador of Canada,
Dear Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to share with you again the celebrations of the International Day of the Francophonie, in order to emphasize the importance of the latter in the service of dialogue and cultural diversity in a globalized world. I would like to thank the ambassadors of Senegal, Canada, France, Switzerland and Belgium for organizing this evening, distinguished by the presence of good friends.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If the language contains generally the history and experiences of Nations, the Francophonie today do not only contains the experiences of the French Nation, but goes much beyond to cover Nations in Europe, America, Africa and Asia. Hence, the French language is no longer the private property of the French people or their way of expressing their cultural production. There are about 13 countries that use French as their official language, in addition to about 16 other countries that use French as an official language alongside their native official language. The peoples of these countries can use the French language to express their ideas, perceptions and values. Thus, the idea of the Francophonie was born outside of France. It was designed by a group of African leaders who felt that they all share this language. The French television channel TV5 has confirmed this diversity, since the five countries organizing this celebration (Senegal, Canada, France, Switzerland and Belgium) are those who provide this channel with programs produced in their own countries and cultures.



However, the Francophonie I know is not only a common language. It is a set of universal and contemporary values present in the minds of the generators of thoughts, opinions and legislation in the international community. It is in French that the Swiss intellectual Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote his book "Social Contract"; it is in French that the ideas of the French Revolution were expressed; it is in French that Napoleon wrote his famous civil law. It is also in French that the Belgian Count Maurice Maeterlinck wrote his literary works, that the Canadian Gabrielle Roy wrote her stories, and that Léopold Senghor expressed himself in his finest poetic works. The Francophonie no longer means speaking in French; it means the exchange of ideas and values that the French language represents; it is to cooperate in order to progress. The presence of the Francophonie in the light of globalization expresses the insistence on multiculturalism and multilingualism, because the dominance of one language in the international community will lead to the weakening of other languages and the deprivation of humanity from its rich linguistic heritage and its cultural diversity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kuwait is considered to be a cultural, vital and active center in this region, thanks to its people who formerly lived on the coasts and established relationships in Africa and Asia through their ports, trades and businesses; they acquired the sense of openness to others, to their languages, to their cultures and to their ideas. That is why we can find among our fathers and grandfathers those who speak Indian, Malay and African- Eastern languages. We are pleased in Kuwait to extend our hand to the Francophonie to learn more about it, to exchange ideas and constructive values, and to discover new intellectual and cultural production, especially as we will never forget the honorable position of your countries during the occupation of our beloved country, and your valuable contribution to the liberation of Kuwait.

Please accept, ladies and gentlemen, my sincere greetings...