



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the
"Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie" (APF)**

to the

**Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee of
the APF
Antananarivo, Madagascar
March 21-22, 2006**

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch that attended the meeting of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) held in Antananarivo, Madagascar, on March 21 and 22, 2006.

Report

Composed of Mr. Michel Guimond, MP, the delegation was accompanied by Mr. Jacques Maziade, Acting Executive Secretary to the Branch.

The following branches were represented: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, French-Speaking Community of Belgium, France, Gabon, Jura, Mali, Morocco, Macedonia, Madagascar, Ontario, Quebec, Romania, Switzerland and Valle D'Aosta.

On Tuesday, March 21, an official ceremony opened the two-day meeting. The Speaker of the Malagasy Senate, the Deputy Speaker of the Malagasy National Assembly and the Mayor of Antananarivo all welcomed the meeting's participants. The Chair of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee, Mr. Ego Perron (Valle D'Aosta), also welcomed the APF members and thanked the Malagasy Branch for its warm welcome. He spoke of the importance of the Committee's work, which consisted of preparing drafts of reports and resolutions to be submitted for the members' approval during the Annual Session of the APF next July in Rabat, Morocco. He concluded by urging the Committee members to do everything they could to make the meeting a success.

The meeting opened with the President's reporting on the Committee's recent activities. He spoke, among other things, of the Committee's most recent session in Brussels, the World Summit on the Information Society, and the APF's involvement in UNESCO's 33rd General Assembly, held in Paris from October 3 to 21, 2005.

The next item on the agenda was the presentation of the draft APF Opinion for the Bucharest Summit on the theme *Francophonie vers la société de l'information et du savoir par l'éducation pour tous* (Taking the Francophonie into the information and knowledge society through universal education). Mr. Jacques Chagnon (Quebec), as co-rapporteur with Senator Joël Bourdin (France), presented a very detailed draft Opinion. The rapporteur proposed a series of recommendations dealing with everything from the benefits of education to disparities in access to new technologies and the effect that new technologies have on human development. The recommendations were addressed both to governments and to international organizations involved in education development. The representative of the Canadian Branch, Mr. Michel Guimond, informed the Committee of his concerns about the recommendation imposing certain criteria on the funding of educational projects in developing countries. The Rapporteur pointed out that these were internationally recognized criteria in this area. The text of the Opinion will be finalized for the next Committee meeting, in Rabat in July 2006, and will take the comments made into account. On this topic, the Committee heard Ms Hima Hadiza, Secretary General of the Conference of Ministers of Education in French-Speaking Countries (CONFEMEN), who described quality universal education as one of the Millennium Development Objectives.

The Committee then examined and adopted the draft Opinion on the follow-up to the Ouagadougou Summit on education presented by Messrs. Didier Berberat (Switzerland) and Bakoni Ballo (Mali). The text will have to be harmonized before being integrated into the APF's General Opinion.

The next item on the agenda dealt with the ratification of UNESCO international conventions. The Committee examined a number of draft reports. One was on the ratification of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions adopted by UNESCO last October. The rapporteur, Mr. Jacques Chagnon, mentioned that Canada was the first to ratify this convention. Each of the countries represented around the table described the status of the ratification process in his or her jurisdiction. The other report concerned the conventions on the protection of cultural heritage. The report was presented by Messrs. Ibrahim Abbalele (Niger) and Clément Dongho (Cameroon). The Committee mandated its Chair, in cooperation with the Parliamentary General Secretary of the APF, to follow up with and encourage the Member States of the Francophonie to ratify these conventions. This subject will be on the agenda of the Committee's next meeting in Morocco.

The next item on the agenda concerned the use of French in institutional and business communications. The rapporteur, Mr. Bruno Bourg-Broc (France), concluded that "[translation] As a result of globalization or, rather, internationalization, the use of a primarily English idiom ... spreads because it is easy and there is a lack of reflection." Using multiple examples from various Francophone countries, he described the legislative tools used to mitigate this phenomenon. The presentation was followed by a discussion on the relationship between economics and language and on the French policy of giving visas and bursaries to nationals of Francophone countries. A draft recommendation will be prepared for the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the APF's participation in the Games of *La Francophonie* held in Niger in December 2005. During the Games, two people received the Prix de l'APF. The Committee decided to reopen the debate on the relevance and future of the Prix de l'APF at the Games of *La Francophonie*.

Finally, the Committee decided, while deploring the publication of caricatures of the prophet Mohammed, which offended Muslims, and the excessive violence that followed, not to rehash this event but instead to reflect on the peaceful coexistence of freedoms, cultures and religions. The Committee designated Ms Victoire Lasseni-Duboze (Gabon) and Messrs. Didier Berberat (Switzerland) and Razvan Emil Theodorescu (Romania) as rapporteurs to lead this process of reflection.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Michel Guimond, M.P.

Member of the Canadian Branch

Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Travel Cost

ASSOCIATION	<i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), Canadian Branch</i>
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)</i>
DESTINATION	Antananarivo, Madagascar
DATES	March 21-22, 2006
SENATORS	
MEMBERS	Mr. Michel Guimond, MP
STAFF	Mr. Jacques Maziade, Acting Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 20,905.69
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 996.34
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 362.92
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 47.50
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 23.10
TOTAL	\$ 22,335.55