



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Meeting of the Co-operation and Development
Committee of the APF**

**Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie (APF)**

**Hanoi, Vietnam
March 6 to 8, 2007**

Report

The Parliamentary Delegation of the Canadian Branch, which attended the meeting of the Co-operation and Development Committee of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), held in Hanoi, Vietnam, March 6 to 8, 2007, has the honour to present its report. Composed of the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator and rapporteur of the Committee, the delegation was accompanied by Jacques Maziade, Acting Executive Secretary of the Branch.

The following branches were represented: Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Chad, French Community of Belgium, France, Jura, Morocco, Niger, Ontario, Quebec, Val d'Aosta and Vietnam.

Before the start of the Committee's proceedings, the President of the Vietnamese Branch, Nguyen Ngoc Tran, welcomed the participants.

Address by the Committee Chair

The Committee Chair, Mahama Sawadogo (Burkina Faso), noted that he had attended the Parliamentary Conference on the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva in December 2006. He emphasized that the WTO was interested in further developing its relations with the APF by organizing "WTO Days" like the one that was to be held in context of the Committee meeting and that would be facilitated by two representatives from the organization. The Chair said he considered this synergy with the WTO is crucially important for the APF.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Follow-Up to the Ouagadougou Summit on Sustainable Development would be the subject of a hearing of a representative from the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), Patrice Dallaire, Acting Director General of the *Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie*.

Lastly, the Chair informed members that an opinion on migration policies had been sought from the *Parlement francophone des jeunes* in anticipation of the Committee's meeting in Libreville, Gabon in July, 2007.

Presentation and review of draft reports

Evaluation of the implementation of the Cotonou Convention: impact on the development of ACP (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) Francophone countries

The rapporteur, Jacques Brunhes (France), drew a detailed historical picture of the adoption and implementation of the co-operation conventions entered into between Europe and the ACP countries. The Cotonou Convention was the last, adopted in June 2000, following the two Yaoundé Conventions (1963, 1969) and the four Lomé Conventions (1975, 1979, 1984 and 1989). Mr. Brunhes recalled that those conventions have set an example of co-operation and partnership between Europe and the ACP countries.

In the rapporteur's opinion, the first EU/ACP conventions are a unique north-south international co-operation model between vast geographic entities (15 member

countries of the EU and 77 countries of the South – 48 in Africa, 15 in the Caribbean and 14 in the Pacific). However, according to Mr. Brunhes, the economic results of those conventions have been mixed for the countries of the ACP area as a whole, particularly, though for different reasons, in sub-Saharan Africa.

In 1995, the European Commission and the ACP countries undertook a broad process of reflection that led to a renegotiation of their relations and culminated in the Cotonou Convention of June 2000. The rapporteur noted that the new convention reinforced the political aspect by introducing new elements such as peace consolidation and conflict prevention, international migrations, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance, non-compliance with which could result in suspension measures.

In conclusion, the rapporteur recalled that the central objective of article 1 of the Cotonou Convention is the reduction and, ultimately, the eradication of poverty in the ACP area. He said he thought the European Commission was turning its back on this objective and negotiating in an authoritarian and non-transparent manner.

Lastly, Mr. Brunhes suggested that the APF appeal to the European Commission. Participants and the rapporteur agreed to draft a text addressing the issues of the Cotonou Convention for both the EU and the ACP countries. The draft resolution will be debated at Libreville, and participants expressed the wish that the draft be circulated among Committee members before that time. In view of the importance of the agricultural sector, the rapporteur and a number of members said they thought this theme should be the subject of a future Committee study.

Follow-up to international trade negotiations conducted in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)

In the absence of Claude Cousineau (Quebec), the Committee Chair, himself co-rapporteur on this theme, presented the document. The Chair provided a brief review of the international trade negotiations of the Doha Round, which began in November 2001 under the aegis of the WTO.

Since 2003, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Parliament have each year jointly organized one or two parliamentary conferences on the WTO. Following one vain attempt, the APF was granted full-fledged “participant” status at future conferences.

Exercising that new status, the APF was represented by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Co-operation and Development Committee at the second Parliamentary Conference of the WTO held in Geneva, on December 1 and 2, 2006. That conference was held in the context of the suspension of multilateral negotiations announced in July 2006. It made it possible to gain a clearer understanding of the reasons for that suspension and the apprehended negative consequences of a delay, indeed failure, in concluding the Doha Round. The conference also debated the role of parliamentarians in restarting negotiations and on the need to reform the WTO.

The Parliamentary Conference on the WTO concluded with the adoption of a document expressing parliamentarians’ concern about the prospect of failed negotiations and called on the major trade players to soften their demands.

In addition, it was said to be crucially important that parliaments rigorously and efficiently exercise their constitutional role of overseeing and monitoring government action on international trade.

In conclusion, the co-rapporteur said he thought that few voices had been heard questioning the WTO process. On the other hand, he said it seemed clear that, faced with the prospect of failure, the WTO needed parliamentarians' support to legitimize its existence and actions.

The co-rapporteurs were of the view that the APF's first participation in the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO had been very beneficial in terms of information gathered. With a view to the next Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, the Committee was called upon to make a substantial contribution to the debates and positions of the parliamentarians of the Francophone world in favour of fair international trade.

The co-rapporteurs' motion concerning the OIF's involvement in developing expertise in multilateral trade negotiations was seconded. The idea of sensitizing and educating the populations on these issues was also adopted. The next step, which would be to make the APF a member of the steering committee of the Parliamentary Conference on the WTO, received broad support and was the subject of a motion that was adopted by consensus.

Migration policies

The rapporteur, Lahcen Daoudi (Morocco), Deputy, presented his draft report entitled "*Émigration : quelles perspectives? – Le cas africain*" [Emigration: What are the prospects? – The case of Africa – Tr.]

The rapporteur said he thought that the migratory pressures of the countries of the South could be explained as a result of poverty and that resistance to those pressures in the countries of the North was being expressed through increasingly harsh restrictions on entry, even the closing of borders.

The demographic pressures in developing and developed countries (aging population and the search for poorly skilled or unskilled labour) suggest that migratory flows will continue, including "illegal" emigration, which, in the rapporteur's view, is the only way for poor populations to flee their condition. In the host countries, on the other hand, social tensions characterized by xenophobia are appearing. In the rapporteur's view, the situation is untenable for both sides and compromises must be found.

A cooperative approach based on sustainable development is still the only alternative for re-energizing local economies and, consequently, for controlling migratory flows. The brain drain and the flight of relatively trained and skilled labour are also harmful to economies of origin.

In conclusion, the rapporteur noted that illegal emigration is a necessity, not a choice. Unless a process of sustainable development is quickly triggered in Africa, youths will make every effort to slip through border controls.

Follow-up to Ouagadougou Summit: Contribution by La Francophonie to the adoption of national sustainable development strategies and to the development of national policies on ecosystems and natural resources management

The rapporteur, the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool (Canada), Senator, recalled the origins of this recurring subject for the Committee. At the Ouagadougou Summit in 2004, the OIF was called upon to implement decisions in favour of sustainable development in the Francophone world. The OIF included those decisions in its 10-year strategic framework and multi-year programming. In that programming, Mission D, entitled "Developing co-operation for sustainable development and solidarity," is of particular interest to the Committee. The architect of Mission D is the *Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie*, which is attached to the OIF and headquartered in Quebec City.

Since the Ouagadougou Summit, the Committee has ensured permanent follow-up to the actions of La Francophonie in favour of sustainable development by appointing a rapporteur, who, meeting after meeting, has presented reports on that question. A new idea is being tried for the Hanoi meeting: the hearing of an OIF representative before the Committee.

Senator Losier-Cool introduced Patrice Dallaire, Acting Director General of the Institut. By way of introduction, the senator stated that, as representatives of their populations, Francophone parliamentarians have a right and duty to know and comment on the government's actions in favour of sustainable development, and to propose corrective measures as necessary or new actions. In return, the authorities of the Francophone world can rely on parliamentarians' support in carrying out their actions.

Mr. Dallaire made a presentation and outlined the findings on global warming and its long-term consequences. He recalled the two strategic objectives of the Mission D, which are to reduce poverty through a sustainable development strategy and to integrate developing Francophone countries into the global economy. He suggested that energy and environmental issues had a cultural dimension and that respect for cultural diversity was a sustainable development practice.

Mr. Dallaire then presented an interim report on Mission D in the areas of reinforced capabilities and training, information and actions in the field. Programming has established an extensive network of partners and taken concrete, innovative and leading-edge actions costing \$12 million.

Mr. Dallaire concluded his presentation by providing budget figures on Mission D, then answered questions from the senator and Committee members.

Mr. Dallaire stated that the OIF's overall budget for sustainable development had been maintained at previous levels. He estimated operating costs at 26% of the total budget and stated that one-third of the budget remained in Canada, as the Institut relied to a large degree on Canadian consultants for various projects.

Lastly, Mr. Dallaire acknowledged that the OIF was unable to fund all sustainable development and noted that the Institut supported the Kyoto Protocol.

Committee members were of the view that the hearing of an OIF representative on sustainable development questions was very positive and that the format should be repeated for those Committee meetings held between annual sessions of the APF.

Contribution by the *Parlement Francophone des jeunes* to the Committee's work – In view of the many migratory flows, what migration policies should there be for the future? The youth viewpoint.

Mark Elsen (French Community of Belgium), Deputy, informed the Committee that the *Parlement francophone des jeunes* (PFJ) would consider the subject in Libreville and that the Committee might perhaps like to consider that contribution by hearing a PFJ representative. It was therefore decided that a PFJ representative would be invited to meet the Committee in Libreville.

Date, place and themes of the next Committee meeting

The Chair informed members that the Committee would meet in Libreville in early July 2007, as an adjunct to the Annual Session, and that the Committee would also have to renew its Bureau. The themes on the agenda will be:

1. migration policies;
2. evaluation and implementation of the Cotonou Convention: impact on the development of the ACP Francophone countries;
3. desertification;
4. follow-up to the Ouagadougou Summit on sustainable development;
5. follow-up to international trade negotiations conducted under the aegis of the WTO.

WTO Day

The Chair recalled that the Committee had organized a similar meeting with WTO experts in Marrakesh in 2004. Since then, the Committee had decided to proceed with a follow-up to trade negotiations and to inform the Assembly on a regular basis.

The Chair introduced the two WTO representatives who would facilitate the Day, Willy Alfaro, Director of the External Relations Division, and Said El Hachimi, Advisor to the Division.

Mr. Alfaro began his presentation by emphasizing the very important role of parliamentarians and Parliaments in the WTO process. Although it is governments that negotiate the agreements, parliamentarians ratify them. Parliamentarians should therefore follow the process through to its end.

WTO: principles and operation

Mr. El Hachimi first defined the WTO as a set of multilateral trade rules concerning custom tariffs, trade in goods and services, trade-related intellectual property, dispute settlement, multilateral agreements and trade policy review. The agreements are

established by the WTO's 150 member-countries, are reached by consensus, and are signed by members and ratified by Parliaments.

Among other things, the WTO's principles are: non-discrimination among trade partners, trade liberalization, the promotion of fair competition, development and reforms through flexible measures for developing countries.

As a dispute settlement body, the WTO has a mission to enforce trade rules. Its decisions are binding and can result in penalties or compensations.

A number of Committee members expressed a certain degree of mistrust, even disappointment, in the WTO, citing the need for complete liberalization of trade in agricultural products, the privatization of the public health sectors, increasingly tough membership conditions for new members and the temptation to enter into bilateral or regional agreements to the detriment of multilateral agreements.

Trade negotiations of the Doha Round

Mr. Alfaro recalled that the Doha Round began in 2001 and was scheduled to terminate in January 2005. The agenda consisted of 21 subjects, the main ones of which were agriculture, non-agricultural products and services. Other subjects were anti-dumping rules, subsidies, regional trade agreements, intellectual property, the facilitation of trade and the settlement of trade and environmental disputes.

The main players in the negotiations are the United States, the European Union, India, Brazil and the G20, G10, G33 and Cairns Groups. Negotiations resumed in February 2007, and efforts focused on agricultural and non-agricultural products. As regards prospects for success, the WTO representative admitted that flexibility and political compromises will be required at the highest level. Failure will mean the indefinite postponement of any hope of re-balancing the multilateral system. However, the voices of parliamentarians can help the negotiators see reason.

Agriculture, non-agricultural products and services

Three key sectors in the multilateral trade negotiations of the Doha Round currently present the most difficulties.

With regard to agriculture, the objective of the Round is to establish a fair market-based trade system over the long term. The idea is to reinforce the rules and develop specific commitments concerning the support and protection of agriculture and, ultimately, to correct restrictions and distortions.

The purpose of the negotiations on non-agricultural products (including fisheries) is, among other things, to reduce or eliminate customs duties, tariff peaks and non-tariff barriers.

The negotiations on services, on the other hand, concern areas such as hospital services, water and electrical power distribution, education, etc., as well as gradual liberalization in those areas.

The development aspect of multilateral trade negotiations

Mr. El Hachimi recalled that two-thirds of WTO members are developing countries and that, in that respect, they play an increasingly important and active role. Those same

countries occupy a growing place in the world economy and increasingly view trade as a fundamentally important tool in their development efforts.

These presentations were followed by a discussion. Questioned about the role of parliamentarians, Mr. Alfaro said he thought they must play an upstream (advisory) and downstream (ratification) role with regard to negotiations. He admitted that, for most countries, with the exception of the United States, Parliaments do not have the power to amend the agreements.

One parliamentarian expressed the hope that the Committee would follow up on the current negotiations and send messages at the session in Libreville in order to strike a better balance between the developed and developing countries.

One Vietnamese parliamentarian, whose country had just joined the WTO, said he hoped the Doha Round would be a success because, if the WTO failed, the weak economies would fall prey to the strong economies, and the bilateral and regional free trade agreements, which are recognized as unsatisfactory, might proliferate. He called for more humane and fairer trade and hoped that the APF would work toward trade liberalization.

In closing the proceedings, the Committee Chair expressed the wish that the format of meetings with WTO representatives would be regularly repeated by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator
Member of the Canadian Branch of the APF

Travel Cost

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Co-operation and Development Committee
DESTINATION	Hanoi, Vietnam
DATES	March 6 to 8, 2007
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Mr. Jacques Maziade
TRANSPORTATION	\$16,828.24
ACCOMMODATION	\$2,579.30
HOSPITALITY	\$0.00
PER DIEMS	\$798.57
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$130.00
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$14.81
TOTAL	\$20,350.92