



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation  
to the America Region Mission**

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

**Port-au-Prince, Haiti  
November 6-7, 2007**

## Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch that participated in the APF's America Region Mission in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on November 6 and 7, 2007, has the honour to present its report. Composed of the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator, the delegation was accompanied by Mr. Jean Michel Roy, Executive Secretary of the Branch.

The following branches were part of the Mission: Canada, Nova Scotia, Quebec.

The meetings took place in the presence of members of the Offices of the two Chambers, the presidents of the parliamentary blocks, the chairs of the commissions, the members of the bicameral commission responsible for coordinating international aid to Parliament, the secretaries general and the Chiefs of Staff of the two Chambers.

The Chairman of the Senate, Mr. Joseph Lambert, and the Deputy Chairman of the House of Deputies, Mr. Jean-Marcel Lumérant, also took part in several meetings.

### **Tuesday, November 6, 2007**

At the first meeting of the day, the Haitian representatives began by saying the Mission was evidence of solidarity with the Haitian people and proof that the greatly improved internal security situation allowed Haiti to host foreign delegations.

Mr. Michel Samson (Nova Scotia), *Chargé de mission* for the APF'S America Region, then provided an overview of the Assembly's activities and objectives, with a focus on the cooperation programs available to support the Haitian parliament. The Noria program was discussed, and its objectives were summarized by Mr. Serge Pelletier, Canadian advisor to the APF's Secretariat General in Paris. The Noria program responds to the needs of certain Francophone Parliaments in the South to build their capacity to produce, manage and disseminate internal legislative information and is entirely funded by the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF). The discussion then turned to the seminars held in Port-au-Prince in 2007, including the one given by the APF's Network of Women Parliamentarians on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in May and chaired by Senator Losier-Cool.

Finally, the participants discussed the compendium of parliamentary practices and procedures entitled *La vie des assemblées dans l'espace francophone : recueil des procédures et des pratiques parlementaires* and the training programs for senior parliamentary officials.

On the subject of supporting the Haitian Parliament, and in light of the reinstatement of the Haitian Branch of the APF, Mr. Samson mentioned the importance of appointing a president for the Branch, as well as an administrative secretary.

Then, His Excellency Amado Pitroipa, Ambassador of the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) and coordinator of OIF programs for Caribbean states, made a few remarks. Mr. Pitroipa made reference to the high-level parliamentary mission of the APF that came to Port-au-Prince in September 2006, headed by the President of

the APF, Mr. Bernard Patry (Canada). Mr. Pitroipa also mentioned the efforts of the Canadian Parliamentary Centre in Haiti.

Following these various interventions, the Haitian representatives made comments and asked the Mission members questions. The following points were raised:

- The lack of offices for Haitian parliamentarians, which means no access to computer equipment.
- The lack of experience among Haitian parliamentarians because of the extremely high turnover, and the consequent absence of a parliamentary career.
- The need to reinforce the parliamentary institution and the organization of parliamentary work.
- The withdrawal of other countries' soldiers from Haiti.
- The environment, and more particularly the deforestation of the country.
- The road infrastructure, which is not sufficient to link the capital with the regions, and the resulting supply problems.

In the afternoon, the Mission members attended an extraordinary session of the two Chambers of Parliament, during which the presence of the Mission's representatives was acknowledged by the Speaker of the Senate, Mr. Joseph Lambert.

The final meeting of the day allowed the Mission members to talk with the President of the Republic of Haiti, Mr. René Garcia Préval. He raised the following points:

- Constitutional reform.
- Reform of the political system made necessary by the existence of too many political parties subject to no partisan discipline and by their weakness.
- The lack of parliamentary infrastructure.
- Public servants' low pay.

### **Wednesday, November 7, 2007**

The first speaker of the day was the OIF representative, H. E. Amado Pitroipa, who talked about the Francophonie's various activities and representatives in Haiti, i.e. the *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie*; the election observation missions; the APF high-level parliamentary mission; the APF parliamentary seminar and the Network of Women Parliamentarians' seminar. In connection with the high-level parliamentary mission, the Administrative Secretary General of the APF conducted a needs assessment for the Haitian Parliament.

Mr. Pitroipa also mentioned the justice support program in which the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is participating. This program is designed to increase access to justice and judicial independence, to support the Bar, to improve the judicial equipment, to create a judicial review, to support the publication of legal works and, finally, to create a judicial database.

The Francophonie is also working with the Canadian government to establish a sustainable development strategy and, on environmental issues, to combat deforestation and soil erosion.

Finally, the OIF established some ten *Centres de lecture et d'animation culturelle* (Clac) in Haiti.

Ms Dominique Pierre, Project Officer in the Caribbean Bureau of the *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie* (AUF), gave a presentation on her agency's involvement in the region, which supports the following institutions:

1. The *Conférence des recteurs, présidents et directeurs d'institutions universitaires de la Caraïbe*.
2. Francophone universities institutions, including the *Université d'État d'Haïti* and the *Université Quisqueya d'Haïti*.
3. The *Campus numérique francophone* in Port-au-Prince.
4. The *Institut de la Francophonie pour la gestion dans la Caraïbe*.

In addition, the AUF offers a program designed to support the establishment and development of intensive French instruction and French education in primary and secondary schools, and a remedial French program. The AUF also signed an agreement with TV5 giving five institutions in Haiti access to the program *Apprendre et Enseigner de TV5* via Internet.

A member of the Quebec section mentioned the existence of the *Fondation des parlementaires québécois (Cultures à partager)*, an organization for cooperation and solidarity whose objectives include collecting cultural and educational products (primarily books, school books and periodicals) in Quebec and shipping and distributing these cultural products in the developing countries of the Francophonie.

Then, Senator Losier-Cool, as President of the APF's Network of Women Parliamentarians, made a presentation on the Network to a group of Haitian women parliamentarians.

The Senator first explained the Network's four main objectives:

1. Promote great participation by women in the political, economic, social and cultural life of APF member countries and the Francophonie as a whole;
2. Reinforce the place and role of women in the parliament of APF member countries and within international organizations;
3. Promote exchanges of experiences and encourage solidarity among women parliamentarians;
4. Contribute to the defence of human rights and particularly to the rights of girls, young women, women and mothers.

The Senator added that the Network deliberates on any subject of common interest to its members, allows its members to express their point of view, and has as its primary objective to ensure that the APF's work reflects a "woman's" perspective through its debates, joint activities and formal proposals.

In addition to its deliberations and proposals, the Network also works in the area of international cooperation. The Network, in cooperation with the OIF, organizes a series of seminars on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, including the most recent in May 2007 in Port-au-Prince. The Network will also give serious consideration to any issues relating to children's rights.

Finally, the Network's steering committee decided to make its future cooperation with the four standing commissions as effective as possible by asking those of its members who also belong to one of the APF's four standing commissions to do two things:

1. Promote the goals of the Network in all the standing commissions' work. These women are henceforth charged with defending the interests of women and girls and guaranteeing that the standing commissions take a gender-based perspective into account;
2. Keep the Network apprised of the work under way in the four standing commissions, thus allowing the Network to better focus its own work and ensure effective support for the commissions and the APF.

It is as a result of this new *modus operandi* that the Network encourages each APF branch to ensure that a sufficient number of women parliamentarians are part of each of its delegations.

The day's program concluded with a discussion with the Prime Minister of Haiti, Mr. Jacques-Édouard Alexis, who was accompanied by the Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in Charge of Relations with Parliament, Mr. Joseph Jasmin.

The Prime Minister began by reminding the Mission members that, from the regional Francophonie's perspective, Haiti is a Francophone islet in an English and Spanish ocean, and yet his country contributes to the advancement of the Francophonie in the Caribbean.

On the subject of local parliamentarianism, the Prime Minister pointed out that the vast majority of parliamentarians were serving their first term of office, that the institution lacked adequate facilities, that there were too few employees and too little training for those employees. Given all that, the construction of a new parliament building is a major priority.

As regards social issues, the Prime Minister mentioned the improvement in internal security and the continued existence of extreme poverty that is in itself a form of violence, and thus the importance of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Ecologically, Haiti is a fragile ecosystem vulnerable to climate change.

The issues related to good governance and the fight against corruption were also discussed.

In closing, the Canadian delegation would like to thank the Canadian ambassador in Haiti, H. E. Claude Boucher, for helping make the Mission a success, as well as all the staff of the Canadian embassy.

Respectfully submitted,

Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator  
Member of the Canadian Branch of the  
*Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)*

## Travel Cost

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)</i>
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	America Region Mission
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Port-au-Prince, Haiti
<b>DATES</b>	November 6-7, 2007
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Jean Michel Roy
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	<b>\$ 5,671.50</b>
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 1,523.73</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 466.56</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 7,661.56</b>