



**Report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation regarding its  
participation in the meeting of the Cooperation  
and Development Committee of the  
*Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)***

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

**Quebec City, Canada  
March 18 to 20, 2013**

# Report

The parliamentary delegation from the Canadian Branch that participated in the APF Cooperation and Development Committee held in Quebec City, Canada, from March 18 to 20, 2013, has the honour to present its report. The delegation was comprised of Mr. **Pierre Dionne Labelle**, MP and Committee rapporteur, and Mr. Jean-Luc Bourdages, Analyst and Branch Advisor.

Representatives from the following branches also attended the meeting: Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, France, Gabon, Hungary, Jura, Quebec, Senegal, Chad, Togo and Valle d'Aosta.

## Opening ceremony

After welcoming and introducing the participants, the Committee Chair, Mr. **Moussa Abdoul Thiam**, member of parliament from Senegal, gave the opening remarks.

## Committee Business

The Chair outlined the meeting agenda, which was adopted by the members. In addition, Mr. **Patrick Dupriez** (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels) proposed examining the Committee's ties with the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), regarding the questions addressed to Secretary General Abdou Diouf in particular. Mr. **Jean-Luc Lala**, the Administrative Secretary General of the APF, outlined the new procedure, explaining that questions would no longer be asked in advance, but rather would be asked immediately after the presentation given before the Assembly. Technical questions can still be submitted in writing, and the OIF will provide a written response.

## A message from the Committee Chair

The Committee Chair, Mr. **Moussa Abdoul Thiam** (Senegal), welcomed new Committee members and gave an update on Committee business conducted since the session in Brussels in July 2012. The minutes and the record of decisions from the Brussels meeting were adopted by the parliamentarians in attendance. The Chair also shared the new topics that would be addressed in the coming years, such as the green economy, youth employment in La Francophonie and biofuels.

## Presentation and review of draft reports and resolutions

Ms. **Mila-Bellè Telou**, member of parliament and rapporteur (Togo), reminded the group that her report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) had been adopted at the Plenary Session in Brussels in July 2012. She presented a draft resolution on this matter for consideration by the Committee. Her resolution proposed that the Committee reaffirm the relevance of the MDGs and the need to accelerate their implementation; express the urgent need to prioritize the fight against poverty; emphasize the importance of creating new job opportunities, especially for young people; and invite the decision-makers to

establish a global development partnership beyond 2015, with an emphasis on the south-south partnership.

The representative for Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels suggested adding a component on nutrition, while the representative from Burkina Faso reminded the group that program funding was an ongoing challenge and that this matter should be considered carefully. The resolution was adopted with the suggested amendments.

Mr. **Stéphane Demilly**, MP and rapporteur (France), outlined his draft report on biofuels. As it was a new theme, he gave an overview of the main topics that would be examined in greater detail in the year ahead, including the advantages of turning to biofuels, the various types of biofuels, and the issue of land grabbing to produce fuel crops. A questionnaire was distributed to the branches so they could provide additional information to include in the report.

The biofuels theme sparked an interesting discussion among the participants. They discussed the possible definitions of biofuels, the energy profile of biofuels in terms of greenhouse gas emissions when biofuels are produced from food crops, and the advantage of biofuels over other sources of renewable energy. Mr. **Dionne Labelle** (Canada) addressed the land-grab issue and suggested to the French rapporteur that special emphasis should be given to this issue, and that a status report should be prepared about the countries most affected by or threatened by land grabbing. This proposal was welcomed by the Committee Chair, who invited the Institute for Sustainable Development of La Francophonie (IFDD) to consider preparing a summary table on land grabbing for biofuel production.

## **Presentation and discussion**

### **Follow-up on international trade negotiations within the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO)**

Co-rapporteurs Mr. **Alain Bedouma Yoda** (Burkina Faso) and Mr. **Jacques Marcotte** (Quebec) presented their follow-up report on international trade negotiations, a study that has been conducted for the past eight years within the Cooperation and Development Committee. The two parliamentarians gave an overview of three main points: the Doha negotiations, the Committee's role in the negotiations, and fair trade, a new component of the report.

The representatives from Chad and Burkina Faso expressed their frustration with the stalled Doha Round negotiations and the protectionism and subsidies for agriculture in developed countries. The member from Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels added that the approach remained too ideological, aiming to liberalize and privatize everything, when even developed countries are struggling to ensure the long-term prospects of their farmers and farm labourers. He expressed the belief that environmental standards must ultimately be integrated with fair trade standards, a position supported by rapporteur **Bedouma Yoda**. The representative from Cambodia gave an example of the current situation in his country, highlighting how difficult it was to access international markets to export rice. The Administrative Secretary General of the APF, Mr. **Jean-Luc Lala**, concluded the discussion by reminding the group of the APF's role in collaborating with the WTO as part of these negotiations, especially its role in holding regional seminars

to ensure participants are engaged in the work of the WTO steering committee, which is overseen by the European parliament. He emphasized that the Cooperation and Development Committee's work and support remained crucial in this context.

Ms. **Geneviève Parent**, Professor at the University of Laval's Faculty of Law (Quebec), was invited by the Committee to share her expertise on fair trade, the new component of the follow-up report. She approached this issue from the angle of WTO law. While agriculture was originally not included in the GATT negotiations, it played a key role in the Doha negotiations, as did the need to give developing countries better access to the agricultural markets of developed countries.

According to Ms. **Parent**, the introduction of the concept of food security led to a new definition of food sovereignty and the eventual inclusion of the concept of fair trade. The preamble of the new Agreement mentions these new concerns but the text itself does not refer to them directly, which means that there are no specific restrictions regarding these issues. However, Ms. **Parent** shared her belief that the fair trade system was probably more effective outside of the framework of the Agreement. Including fair trade in the Agreement would likely cause it to lose its characteristic focus on people and become a more trade-based or internationally based agricultural system. That said, she was still in favour of standardizing fair-trade certification labels. She concluded that the main problems were the lack of legal recognition of fair trade and the consequences in terms of loss of agricultural diversity. At this time, international law has nothing to counterbalance trade agreements, so the discussion is taking place outside of the WTO framework, or at least concurrent to the ongoing negotiations.

During the discussion, Prof. **Parent** confirmed that there was currently no agreement on fair trade, and for there to be a parallel agreement that would be respected as part of the WTO framework, international law would first have to address agriculture more comprehensively. The representative from Belgium suggested approaching it from another angle, by studying the social impact of agricultural and food policies before involving the WTO. Prof. **Parent** cautioned that fair trade would not be able to solve all the current problems in agricultural trade.

Mr. **Dionne Labelle**, MP and rapporteur for Canada, questioned the number of bilateral agreements, which tend to exclude developing countries. Regional agreements would probably be more beneficial for these countries, and Prof. **Parent** reiterated the importance of not excluding them for various reasons, including land grabbing, environmental standards, product diversity, etc. The MP from France cautioned the group against marginalizing countries that were not able to be as environmentally conscious, while the Committee Chair, Mr. **Moussa Abdoul Thiam**, expressed his belief that it was more important to ensure that countries could achieve food sovereignty and avoid inequalities as much as possible, and that the rest would follow. To close, Prof. **Parent** reminded the group that the WTO is not responsible for the legal recognition of these issues; it is a choice that must be made by the participating states whose goal is to negotiate the liberalization of trade.

To close this topic of discussion, the co-rapporteur from Quebec, Mr. **Jacques Marcotte**, asked about what stage the negotiations were at. With regard to promoting the diversity of food products, he drew a parallel to the measures that had been implemented to promote

cultural diversity in other cases. In his opinion, parliamentarians must bring these concerns to the appropriate decision-making authorities to determine how best to address this issue. The co-rapporteur from Burkina Faso, Mr. **Alain Bedouma Yoda**, believed that the Committee must continue to explore various avenues and consult with various specialists. Ms. **Parent** suggested bringing local and regional stakeholders into the decision-making process, as they are aware of the agricultural trade difficulties firsthand.

The representative from Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels asked whether it was really necessary to have a legal framework in place that might suppress the growth of agricultural trade and fair trade. It was suggested that the UN rapporteur on the right to food be invited to discuss this matter, which led Prof. **Parent** to caution against using fundamental rights as key elements in trade agreements, as it is difficult to incorporate them into international law. She said that they were most useful when considered as a counterbalance to the trade agreements themselves.

### **Contribution of La Francophonie to adopting national sustainable development strategies and drafting national policies on ecosystem and natural resource management**

The rapporteur, Mr. **Pierre Dionne Labelle**, Member of Parliament (Canada), presented the update of this recurring report to the Committee, reminding the group that the first such report was introduced nearly 10 years ago, in the wake of the Ouagadougou Summit. In the report presented at the last Committee meeting in Brussels in July 2012, the Canadian rapporteur emphasized the OIF's programming and its key operating agency, the Institute of Energy and the Environment of La Francophonie (IEPF—now IFDD, the Institute for Sustainable Development of La Francophonie), and emphasized the need to obtain an overview of the situation as regards the drafting of National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS) in La Francophonie. Given that the meeting would take place in Quebec City, Mr. **Dionne Labelle** wished to take advantage of the location to invite representatives from the IFDD to discuss with Committee members the priorities to assign to the upcoming 10-year strategic framework for La Francophonie, likely to be in 2014 or 2015, regarding national sustainable development strategies being adopted in francophone countries. To that end, the Canadian rapporteur proposed a series of questions to discuss with the IFDD representatives.

It was in this context that the Committee heard from Ms. **Fatimata Dia Touré**, Director of the Institute for Sustainable Development of La Francophonie (IFDD). She added to Mr. **Dionne Labelle**'s report, presenting a document that gave an overview of national sustainable development strategies, as the Committee had requested previously. It presented IFDD achievements since the Institute was established as the IEPF in 1988. Ms. **Dia Touré** addressed a number of points in her presentation, including the following:

- the evolution of the Institute's role since it was established in 1988;
- an overview of the major conferences and summits on the environment and sustainable development (Stockholm 1972, Rio 1992, Johannesburg 2002 and Rio +20 2012);

- the link between the La Francophonie Summit in Ouagadougou in 2004 and the Johannesburg World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) in 2002 as regards the objective of ensuring that all countries have a NSDS, a key objective of Mission D of the OIF's strategic framework;
- the initial goal of having 15 francophone countries draft an NSDS by the end of the strategic framework and the fact that, to date, 20 francophone countries have at least begun the process;
- reorienting the initiatives already underway in light of certain specific objectives targeted to specific national situations;
- training between 100 and 120 people in the areas of energy, environmental assessment, green economy, corporate social responsibility and the ISO26000 standard;
- holding regional training meetings with parliaments to encourage them to follow sustainable practices;
- the expiration and evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 50 countries, of which 15 are francophone;
- analyzing documents and initiatives prepared for Rio+20 in order to determine five key areas of interest to operationalize IFDD involvement.

To conclude, Ms. **Dia Touré** mentioned IFDD's financial need and the importance of having experts on loan from developed countries in order to meet the objectives. She emphasized the role of legislative authorities and major international agreements as regards environmental matters and sustainable development. She also expressed her desire to see francophone parliaments reinforce their capacity for reflection and action on these issues, especially in the context of the recommendations from the last La Francophonie Summit in Kinshasa.

The presentation given by the IFDD Director sparked interest and discussion among the participants. Togo and Burkina Faso were put forward as examples to illustrate the population's wider participation in preparatory initiatives within sustainable development committees, thereby reducing the control of the government departments responsible for these issues. In response to a question from the Quebec Branch, the Director confirmed that the IFDD does not have the means to be involved at the last stage of implementing the NSDS, particularly since it is up to the countries in question to make the right decisions and choose the appropriate directions. She also mentioned, in response to a question from the French Branch, that the IFDD is a small organization with only 18 employees, of whom 7 are specialists, and that it does not have any economists or agri-forestry experts on staff, which is why it collaborates so closely with universities.

As the rapporteur for NSDS, Mr. **Dionne Labelle** asked the IFDD Director about the more long-term objectives in terms of including the NSDS in the upcoming OIF strategic framework (2015–22) and the four-year program (2015–18). Director **Dia Touré** said she believed that it was too early to reorient the operational approach established in 2002, and that she believed that the current development models and conventional development indicators still needed to be adapted to the specific local and regional realities. The

Administrative Secretary General, Mr. **Jean-Luc Lala**, reminded the group that the APF and the IFDD accomplish a great deal with very few resources and that, in that sense, the training sessions are a very useful avenue to pursue. As regards the implementation of the resolution on sustainable development education that was adopted by the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee, Ms. **Dia Touré** said she believed that it was more a matter for CONFEMEN (Conference of Ministers of Education for States and Governments of La Francophonie), as the IFDD did not really have any expertise in the field of education.

### **Future Committee work: themes and rapporteur assignments**

The Committee Chair presented the new themes that would be addressed at the next Committee meeting:

- **The green economy:** the representative from Jura expressed interest in being a co-rapporteur, while acknowledging the principle of alternation within their parliamentary group.
- **Youth employment in La Francophonie: the decision on this topic was pushed back because the representatives from Niger were absent.**
- **Simplified Secure Title (Titre Sécurisé Simplifié – TSS), solution to the land-use regulatory problem in Africa:** under the responsibility of the representative from Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels.

### **Other business**

The Committee Chair indicated that he would like to discuss a new approach that the Committee could take in conducting its business. The Burkina Faso Branch suggested a more in-depth discussion on this matter and also suggested limiting the speaking time for rapporteurs so that more time is available to discuss other matters. The Quebec Branch believed it was necessary to establish a steering committee that would provide specific suggestions, while the Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels Branch proposed maximizing the sharing of experiences between branches, meeting with OIF spokespeople more often and taking advantage of the experience of the branches that host the meetings. He gave the example of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, which invites external participants to present their projects or efforts at its meetings.

### **Date and location of the next Committee meeting**

The Committee Chair informed the participating branches that the date and location of the next inter-sessional meeting were yet to be determined. He informed the Committee that the Côte d'Ivoire would like to receive financial assistance so it could participate in the meetings. He closed by thanking the Quebec Branch, on behalf of all the participants, for hosting the Committee meeting.

By participating in this Committee meeting, the Canadian Branch achieved its objectives of meeting its international obligations, presenting a report that promoted information sharing, maintaining international connections and defending its interests.

In addition to hosting the Committee meeting, the President of the National Assembly of Quebec hosted a medal ceremony for the Order of the Pleiades, awarding the Order of La Francophonie and dialogue between cultures. Senators Pierre-Hugues Boisvenu and Jacques Demers were made Knights of the Order of the Pleiades, as were six other people from Quebec. Ms. Aïda Kamar, Mr. François Côté, Mr. André C. Côté, Mr. Gabriel Filteau, Mr. Jean-Bernard

Hébert, Mr. Guy Laforest, Mr. Robert Lamontagne, Mr. Jean-François Lisée and Mr. Pierre Karl Péladeau were also honoured at the ceremony.

Respectfully submitted,

The Hon. Andrée Champagne, PC, Senator  
President of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF)



## Travel Cost

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Meeting of the Cooperation and Development Committee of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Quebec, Canada
<b>DATES</b>	March 18 to 20, 2013
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Pierre Dionne Labelle
STAFF	Jean-Luc Bourdages
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 1,115.46
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 1,728.07
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 868.87
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 95.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,807.40</b>