



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Bureau Meeting of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la
Francophonie* (APF)**

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

**New York, United States of America
January 21-22, 2009**

Report

The parliamentary delegation from the Canadian Branch that attended the Bureau meeting of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) in New York, United States, on January 21 and 22, 2009, has the honour of presenting its report.

The delegation comprised the Honourable Pierre De Bané, Senator and President of the APF Parliamentary Affairs Commission, and the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator and Chair of the APF Women Parliamentarians Network. The two senators were accompanied by Jean Michel Roy, Executive Secretary of the Branch; Christine Lafrance, Designated Advisor of the Canadian Branch to the APF General Secretariat; and Monique Levesque, Administrative Assistant in the International and Interparliamentary Affairs Directorate.

The following branches were represented: Belgium/French Community /Wallonia-Brussels, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Egypt, France, Gabon, Jura, Laos, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, Switzerland, Val D'Aoste and Vietnam.

Wednesday, January 21, 2009

The President of the APF, Guy Nzouba-Ndama (Gabon), began by thanking the Canadian, French and Quebec branches for their assistance in organizing the Bureau meeting since there was no American host branch. He then highlighted the importance of the meeting at the United Nations as a sign of support for the APF regarding linguistic diversity, multilingualism and the promotion of French within international institutions. The General Assembly declared 2008 the International Year of Languages; the year officially ends on February 21, 2009.

The permanent representative of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) to the United Nations, Moussa Makan Camara, read a message from the Secretary General of the OIF, Abdou Diouf, to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon.

Signing of a framework cooperation agreement

The President of the APF and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Kemal Dervis, signed a cooperation agreement adopted at the APF session held in Quebec City in July 2008.

Presentation

UNDP Administrator Kermal Dervis gave a presentation on the global economic crisis and its impact on international cooperation and development. Mr. Dervis noted that the primary source of the crisis is a fundamentalist ideological view of the market economy. To address the crisis, governments must give priority to budget renewal, a strong monetary policy and increased public spending. It is important to restore confidence and dispel uncertainty. Moreover, given the depth and scope of economic interdependence, international coordination of renewal plans is essential.

On the subject of Public Development Aid (PDA), Mr. Dervis takes the view that PDA is a key component of many countries' policy on renewal. In addition, democratic governance is an absolute imperative in the midst of this serious crisis. Hence, the UNDP is very much involved as the world's largest provider of democratic governance aid and as a supporter of one in three parliaments around the world. That support primarily takes the form of measures to strengthen democratic participation by women parliamentarians, opposition and the electoral process.

In response to a question from **Senator De Bané**, Mr. Dervis said that in addition to providing direct support to developing countries, the UNDP coordinates the work of 28 of the 38 United Nations organizations involved in development. He added that the UNDP focuses on four areas: democratic governance; alleviation of poverty; energy development from a sustainable development and environmental protection perspective; and crisis prevention and recovery.

APF membership

The National Assembly of Armenia has been granted associate member status. The decision will be submitted for approval by the APF at the next session in Paris in July 2009.

Commission proceedings

Senator Pierre De Bané, President of the Parliamentary Affairs Commission, presented the Commission's report. Senator De Bané noted that at its last meeting in Quebec City in July 2008, the Commission adopted the draft resolution from the President of the APF urging all Francophone parliaments to seize every opportunity to follow the lead of the French parliament and incorporate La Francophonie into their constitution.

The Commission also approved the report on follow-up of the 10-year strategic framework and adopted the notice submitted at the Quebec City summit of heads of state and the version of the resolution on migration policies in Francophone countries submitted by the Bureau. It adopted the report on access to information for all citizens. Michèle André (France) presented the Commission with a progress report on chapters 5 and 6 of the guide to parliamentary procedures and practices in Francophone countries.

Alain Berset (Switzerland) presented an outline of his report on globalization and La Francophonie entitled *Les phénomènes de mondialisation et l'aire francophone : une clé de lecture*. He began by endeavouring to define the various terms, then reviewed the historical events that have shaped relations between states and identified some of the working hypotheses that will guide him in his work. An inventory of cooperation programs was then produced.

When the report of the Political Commission was presented, it was reiterated that at the Commission's next meeting, the Canadian Branch will be presenting a report on an update of APF by-laws. The reports of the Cooperation and Development Commission and the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Commission were also presented.

Presentation

Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, and Alain Le Roy, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations for peacekeeping, addressed the Bureau members. Dr. Migiro noted that the UN and the APF share common values based on the principles of diversity, dialogue and multilingualism. The two organizations have common goals, namely the prevention and resolution of conflict and the promotion of democracy and development. She called on the APF to strengthen its cooperation with the UN.

As an example of cooperation, the United Nations and La Francophonie jointly hosted a symposium in Bamako, Mali, in December 2008 on democracy and peaceful political change in Africa. Dr. Migiro expressed the view that La Francophonie is an excellent partner for the UN in attaining the Millennium Objectives for Development.

Reports from regional chargés de mission

The chargé de mission (America), Michel Samson (Nova Scotia), presented a regional activity report. Mr. Samson gave an account of the last regional meeting held in Quebec City in July 2008. The subjects discussed at the meeting were heritage conservation, the Ontario Youth Parliament and linguistic duality at the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Vancouver, a topic presented by the Canadian Branch. A resolution was passed reminding the organization committee for the Vancouver Games and all public authorities involved in planning the Games of their duty to ensure French-language broadcasting.

The next conference of the section presidents of the Region will be held February 18 to 20, 2009, in Newfoundland and Labrador, the only Canadian province that is still not a member of the APF, and the next regional meeting will be held in Halifax in September 2009.

Report on the activities of the Women Parliamentarians Network

Senator Rose-Marie-Losier-Cool, President of the Network, presented a report on the Network's activities. She made reference to the Network's last meeting in Quebec City in July 2008. During that meeting, the Network adopted three reports: *Les droits de l'Enfant : suivi de la Convention internationale des droits de l'Enfant* [children's rights: monitoring the International Convention on the Rights of the Child]; *La traite des personnes* [human trafficking]; and *Le suivi de la mise en œuvre de la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes* [follow-up of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women].

The delegates also reviewed the Network's proposed contribution to the APF notice on the OIF's ten-year strategic framework and prepared the hearing of the OIF Secretary General referring to his statement on violence against civilians in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Finally, the Network adopted a declaration in which the delegates praised the release of Franco-Colombian senator Ingrid Bétancourt, and voiced their support for the hostages still being held by the FARC in Colombia, as well as all hostages around the world, in particular women and children.

The Network took part in the international meeting on equality between Francophone women and men (“Du dire au faire : égalité entre les femmes et les hommes dans l’espace francophone”) held in Quebec City in September 2008. The gathering was organized by the OIF in partnership with the Claire-Bonenfant Chair on the status of women at Laval University. Senator Losier-Cool was invited by the OIF to attend the session on the costs of legislation affirming women’s rights from conception to implementation and to address the participants on this issue.

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Presentation

Kiyotaka Akasaka, Under Secretary-General of the UN and coordinator for multilingualism, and Paul Badji, Senegal’s permanent United Nations representative in charge of multilingualism within the Francophone ambassadors’ group, addressed the Bureau members.

Mr. Akasaka spoke to the Bureau members about the essential role of linguistic diversity and multilingualism and reiterated that the linguistic diversity is related to cultural diversity and that communication and information are the keys to development.

Mr. Akasaka quoted the May 16, 2007, resolution in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General “to ensure that all language services are given equal treatment and are provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources, with a view to achieving maximum quality of those services”. The resolution also emphasized the importance of “making appropriate use of all the official languages in all the activities of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat”; “reaffirms the need to achieve full parity among the six official languages on United Nations websites” and “encourages United Nations information centres to continue their multilingual activities in the interactive and proactive aspects of their work”.

Review of the situation in various countries

The Bureau adopted declarations on the political situations in various Francophone countries, namely Haiti, Guinea, Mauritania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast and Lebanon. The Bureau also adopted a declaration on the Middle East situation and a declaration on the economic situation in certain Francophone countries and its impact on the teaching of French.

Other business

The 35th Session of the APF will be held in Paris, France, from July 2 to 6, 2009.

Following a suggestion by **Senator De Bané**, it was agreed to incorporate the seminar on the criteria for evaluating the democracy of Parliaments (*La réalité démocratique des Parlements : Quels critères d’évaluation ?*) organized jointly by the APF and the UNPD into the next meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Commission. A seminar on the same theme will also precede the next meeting of the Political Commission.

Frédéric Fortin, Director General of Information and Institutional Affairs with the Quebec National Assembly, presented a report on the activities of the *Association des secrétaires généraux des Parlements francophones*.

In closing, the Canadian delegation would like to thank Canada's permanent representative to the United Nations, Ambassador John McNee, the deputy permanent representative, Ambassador Henri-Paul Normandin, and the entire staff of Canada's permanent mission for their contribution to the success of the Bureau's work.

Respectfully submitted,

Pierre De Bané, Senator
Member of the Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Travel Cost

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
ACTIVITY	Bureau Meeting
DESTINATION	New York, United States of America
DATES	January 21 and 22, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool; Hon. Pierre De Bané
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Jean Michel Roy; Christine Lafrance; Monique Levesque
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 4,604.58
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 4,249.58
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,517.24
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 7.42
TOTAL	\$ 10,378.82