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Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada - Afrique

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Ninth Ordinary Session
of the Pan African Parliament
and the fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association
Midrand, South Africa and Harare, Zimbabwe
May 5–9, 2008**

Report

The Association was represented by the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P. and Co-Chair of the Association, and Luc Harvey, M.P.. The delegation was assisted by Rémi Bourgault, Executive Secretary.

OBJECTIVE

The Bureau of the Pan African Parliament had invited the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, to take part in the opening ceremony of the Ninth Session and to speak before the Parliament. This visit also aimed to strengthen ties between the Pan African Parliament and the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association and toward a better understanding of the situation in Zimbabwe.

At the Pan African Parliament, the delegates attended the regional caucuses of Southern and Western Africa, as well as a plenary session.

In Zimbabwe, the delegates met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Information, both of whom are from the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). They also met with Members of Parliament from the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-Tsvangirai), officials from the Movement for Democratic Change-Mutambara (MDC-Mutambara), and an independent MP. The delegates also met with victims of violence, representatives of civil society organizations, United Nations Development Programme officials, journalists, academics and diplomats.

NINTH SESSION OF THE PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT

The Ninth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament was held from May 5 to 16, 2008.

The agenda for the Ninth Session of the Pan African Parliament included the following items:

1. Peace and security in Africa;
 - The Great Lakes Region
 - Darfur, Sudan
 - Côte d'Ivoire
 - Democratic Republic of Congo
 - Chad
 - Somalia
 - West Sahara – Saharawi Arab Republic.
2. Reports by the election observation missions to Kenya and Zimbabwe;

3. The food crisis in Africa;
4. Report by the High Level Panel on the PAP audit;
5. Reports by the standing commissions;
6. Celebration of the Ethiopian Millennium, in accordance with the declaration adopted by the Heads of State and Governments of the African Union.

The Canadian delegation attended the opening ceremony along with several ambassadors and high commissioners. The Ninth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament (PAP) began with the swearing in of several new members.

OPENING CEREMONY OF THE NINTH SESSION

In her speech, Dr. Gertrude Mongella, President of the PAP, congratulated the new members and thanked all the guests. Their presence was a testament of support for the PAP. She underscored the presence of the following dignitaries:

- Amos MASONGO, Mayor of the City of Johannesburg;
- Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, Sue van der Merwe;
- The Honourable Patrick BALOPI, Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana and Chair of the SADC Parliamentary Forum;
- The Honourable Mahamane Ousmane, Speaker of the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
- The Honourable Abdirahin ABDI, Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly;
- Prince GUDUZA, House Speaker, Parliament of the Kingdom of Swaziland;
- The Honourable Mauril BELANGER, Co-Chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association;
- Judge Akua KUENYEHIA, First Vice-President of the International Criminal Court; and
- The Honourable Dimeji BANKOLE, New Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, former Representative to the Pan African Parliament.

She also thanked all the development partners for their support.

The President recapped the Parliament's recent activities, which included: a meeting in Lisbon where the Lisbon Declaration was submitted to the Summit by the President of the European Parliament and the President of PAP; a meeting of COREP and the Executive Council, at which the PAP delegation presented two items, the 2008 PAP budget and an amendment proposal to be explained during the presentation by the Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs. With respect to the audit report of the African Union (UA), she emphasized that the Bureau had prepared its observations and recommendations, to be presented at Arusha, Tanzania by the PAP delegation. The PAP had also carried out two observation missions in Kenya and Zimbabwe to ensure good governance, transparency and respect for properly run elections. She also spoke

about the work of the Standing Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline on transforming PAP from an advisory body to a body of the African Union with full legislative powers.

She took the opportunity to inform the elected representatives that the Netherlands had provided 100,000 Euros in funding to the PAP.

Finally, in view of the fact that the Ninth Session marks the beginning of the fiftieth year of the Parliament, she announced that the States Party to the Protocol would try to verify that their objectives have been achieved and that they are in the best interest of the Parliament.

Later in the ceremony, the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Association, addressed the Assembly with the following speech:

Please check against delivery

Madam President of the Pan African Parliament,
Members of the diplomatic corps,
Distinguished representatives and guests,
Members of the media,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As Co-Chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, I am truly honoured to speak at the Ninth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament.

This is the third time that a Canadian representative has had the opportunity to speak before this eminent audience. This honour was conferred on me at the Sixth Ordinary Session in 2006, while my fellow Co-Chair, Senator Raynell Andreychuk, spoke at the Fifth Session. Canadian parliamentarians also took part in the Third Session, and our House Speaker, the Honourable Peter Milliken, met with representatives of the Pan African Parliament when he went to South Africa in 2006.

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association is composed of senators and representatives of the House of Commons from all political parties, and it fosters exchanges between African and Canadian parliamentarians. More particularly, it aims to promote democracy and good government in Africa and to better inform Canadian parliamentarians of the magnitude of the challenges that the African continent faces.

This is why the Association has made a number of bilateral trips to African countries in addition to attending the sessions of the Pan African Parliament. In Tanzania last September, we met President Mongella to discuss the Pan African Parliament. The Association is also organizing meetings with African parliamentary delegates who are visiting Canada.

Although our legislative calendar and the distance that separates us prevent Canadian parliamentarians from attending all the Pan African Parliamentary sessions, we follow its undertakings with great interest.

We pay particular attention to efforts toward stability. The Pan African Parliament has played a key role in this respect, by sending election observation missions to

Kenya and Zimbabwe. Canadian parliamentarians have closely followed the events pursuant to the elections in these two countries, and they are aware that the Pan African Parliament has worked to maintain an atmosphere of calm. Because, without peace and stability, democracy cannot grow. If we, as parliamentarians, do not care about respect for democracy and human rights, who else will do it?

In the upcoming session, you will study the reports of these two election observation missions. You will also address the current situation in troubled regions such as Darfur, the Great Lakes Region, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Somalia and the Saharawi Arab Republic, or West Sahara. The Canadian parliamentarians hope that, by debating these vitally important issues, you will contribute to peace in Africa.

The food crisis is another source of concern for all of us. Certainly, no country has been spared by the rising food prices, but the impact in Africa is particularly disquieting. Canadian legislators of all parties, including the governing party, lobbied the Canadian government on this matter. As a result, an additional 50 million dollars was added to this year's budget, thus bringing the amount of food aid from 180 million to 230 million. This is a 28% increase, which is slightly more than the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations had called for. Furthermore, all of this aid is untied, which means money will be used more effectively to buy products at the best prices where it is most needed.

One of the reasons for my presence here is the evolution of the Pan African Parliament into a legislative body of the African Union. You are a young institution, and I know that there are many challenges ahead.

Canadians are interested in Africa. For a long time, we have been in contact with many African countries through our membership in the Commonwealth and the Francophonie. More recently, we have energetically supported the New Partnership for Africa's Development, or NEPAD, and its African Peer Review Mechanism. As you know, at the 2007 G8 Summit, the Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper and the other G8 leaders recommitted to the G8-Africa partnership.

Also, in 2007, the report of the High Level Panel of the African Development Bank was published. This panel was co-chaired by past President of Mozambique Joachim Chissano and the Right Honourable Paul Martin, Past Prime Minister of Canada, in whose Cabinet I served.

Last week I informed Mr. Martin that I would be speaking here today and asked him: if he had one message for the PAP, what would it be? He immediately replied, talk to them about an "African Common Market", the need for strong regional economies to make it happen and a Solidarity fund.

I encourage all MPs of the PAP to read the High Level Panel Report and to work towards such a common market. In particular we commend the work of the East

African Legislative Assembly, which has undertaken the work to harmonize tariffs in their areas of jurisdiction.

Finally the notion of a Solidarity Fund could be considered to help countries which would lose revenues by reducing or eliminating tariffs, much as the European Common Market did in setting itself up.

Many Canadians are overwhelmed by the diversity of Africa and the many challenges it faces. Well, I believe that learning about Africa and its resourceful and vibrant people can help dispel the images many people have.

By observing your debates, by discussing with you, and by taking what I learn here back home to Canada, I intend to foster a better understanding of Africa, its hopes and its potential.

In conclusion, please accept my wholehearted thanks for inviting me to speak at your inaugural session. I am pleased to have this opportunity to strengthen the ties between the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association and the Pan African Parliament. On behalf of all the members of our Association, I wish you every possible success in your discussions.

Several other people delivered speeches at the ceremony. The Mayor of Johannesburg presented his city's policies for international cooperation, migrant integration, and the battle against xenophobia and all manner of social indifferences, in order to offer all people in Johannesburg equal opportunities. He thanked the Parliamentarians for their support for the development of his city.

For her part, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa Sue van der Merwe expressed her pride in her country for hosting the Pan African Parliament's headquarters. She informed the parliamentarians that construction had begun on the future headquarters site in Midrand. Finally, she wished the Ninth Session every success in its endeavours.

The Chair of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana was pleased with the PAP program to facilitate cooperation among regional economic communities. He felt that the regional parliaments should be determinant actors for the benefit of African people. He also called for the support of all Africa for the African candidate at the 119th Session of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be held in Geneva, because it is Africa's turn.

For his part, the Speaker of the Parliament of Niger and President of ECOWAS felt that the PAP integrates all African people and that its actions are supported by the African political class. He urged the PAP to retain its status as a member of the African Union. The PAP and ECOWAS should collaborate closely. He encouraged the PAP initiative to develop cooperative relations with the regional parliaments.

The Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly supported all the PAP initiatives. In his view, Africa needs to implement innovative policies, and the future of the continent depends on meeting criteria such as good governance and the battle against corruption and poverty. He said that the transformation of PAP to a legislative body should be accelerated. Finally, the East African parliament is ready to offer its experience to the PAP.

The House Speaker for the Parliament of the Kingdom of Swaziland thanked the Heads of State for creating the Pan African Parliament. The longevity of the PAP would depend on how Africans handle themselves. To overcome the challenges, Africa must count on itself, using its top people, and it must not let itself be lectured to by others. Finally, Swaziland offered to host a meeting of the Standing Commission of PAP.

According to the First Vice-President of the International Criminal Court, the creation of this Court was a milestone in the battle against crime. The African States played an important role in its establishment. African countries initiated the battle against unpunished crimes on the continent. This penal institution aims to complement the national criminal courts. The PAP is part of a cooperative framework that is vital in the battle against unpunished crimes, through the actions of the parliamentarians. They could use their mandates to put an end to crime, genocide and other impunities. Finally, she called for cooperation between the PAP and the International Criminal Court.

Lastly, the Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, a former member of the PAP, addressed the attendees at the ceremony. He felt that Africa must work to achieve the PAP objectives. However, he urged the Parliament to respect the principles of the African Union Commission, and to find ways to cope with the problems that are undermining the continent. He felt that the regional parliaments had an important role to play in Africa's development.

THE REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE: MAIN ISSUES

A country surrounded by southern Africa, the Republic of Zimbabwe, former Southern Rhodesia, is bordered on the east by Mozambique, on the northeast by Zambia, on the southeast by Botswana and on the south by South Africa. It contains almost 12 million inhabitants. The budgetary deficit is important and inflation is galloping, at over 100,000 percent annually. About 80 percent of workers are unemployed, and the devastation of the formerly flourishing agricultural sector has made the country a net importer of food. In addition, the country is ravaged by AIDS.

The presidential and legislative elections in March 2008 ran peacefully, but the results have been delayed. The legislative election results published in April show that the ZANU-PF party lost its majority in favour of the MDC. Before the results of the presidential election could be published, Mr. Mugabe demanded a recount, and Mr. Tsvangirai thought it best to stay outside the country and meet with potential allies.

ZIMBABWE

The delegation visited Zimbabwe in the aim of better understanding the situation in the country following the elections in March 2008 and the delay in releasing the results.

A. Meetings in Harare on May 7

Meeting with the Honourable Willas Madzimore, M.P., and the Honourable Henry Dzinotyiweyi, M.P., MDC-Tsvangirai

Mr. Madzimore has been the Member of Parliament for Kambuzuma constituency, in Harare Province, since 2000 and a founding member of the party in 1999. He is also the

MDC-Tsvangirai Spokesperson for Harare Province and on Foreign Affairs. Mr. Madzimore is also Chairperson of Zimbabwe's Association of Parliamentarians Network Against Corruption (APNAC). Mr. Henry Dzinotyiweyi is a newly elected Member of Parliament for Budiriro constituency in Harare Province.

The two parliamentarians gave a brief summary of the running of the two elections in March 2008. They mentioned that three people were killed on the day of this meeting, and that, according to them, it was impossible to hold the second visit in these circumstances. It was difficult for these representatives of the MDC-Tsvangirai to say whether the party would participate in the second runoff. They would be surprised if the government asked for international observers. During the last election, the SADC had representatives on the ground, but not in sufficient numbers. In any case, there would never be enough observers to cover all the polling stations. To the request whether the Canadian parliamentarians could help at the parliamentary level, they responded they were open to the possibility of participating in a seminar on best practices, because there are a majority of new representatives, or about 85 compared to 25 with experience. In their opinion, this new Parliament is facing enormous challenges.

B. Meetings in Harare on May 8

Meeting with representatives from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - Parliamentary Reform Program

The objectives of the UNDP-managed program are to enhance the quality of the national governance system and strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of Parliament in fulfilling its triple mandate of lawmaking, representing the people of Zimbabwe and overseeing the Executive branch of Government.

In the context of an increasingly powerful Executive, the establishment of a portfolio committee system was an essential element of the Parliamentary Reform Program's strategy to strengthen its oversight role of the Executive, both in terms of scrutiny and accountability. Since its inception, the portfolio committee system has proven to be an invaluable tool in educating MPs on their legislative role, in creating a collegial working atmosphere amongst MPs, and in bringing issues of national interest to the attention of the public.

The UNDP program has yielded results. Despite the political situation, the Parliament has become an important actor in the country. The group was favourable to the idea that Canadian parliamentarians could meet with their counterparts in Zimbabwe to share their experiences. This initiative should address the challenges that the Parliament will have to overcome due to its many new representatives. It was mentioned that the proportion of women has decreased in the latest elections. The UNDP will perform analyses to determine why this decrease occurred. Possible factors were cultural aspects and election campaign costs. To improve its program, the UNDP is looking at the possibility of hiring a parliamentary expert, but the required funds are lacking.

Meeting with the Honourable Reuben Marumahoko, Senator, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs – ZANU-PF

At this meeting with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Co-Chair Bélanger wanted to reaffirm Canada's commitment to Africa, and he stressed the interest of Canadian parliamentarians, particularly toward Zimbabwe. This visit reflects the desire of Canadian parliamentarians to learn about and understand the work of parliamentarians in Zimbabwe. The Canadian delegates were happy to have had the opportunity to visit Zimbabwe and to have obtained a visa. The Deputy Minister admitted that several countries were concerned by the events in Zimbabwe and said that President Mugabe has been the democratically elected leader since 1980. He pointed out that the March 2008 elections were probably the most peaceful in the country so far, and they were conducted very smoothly. The results have taken some time to be released, but he had full confidence in the independence of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Once the results are known, a second runoff would be arranged. The opposition says that it will not participate, but it is already on the ground. According to the Deputy Minister, the President lost the first round, and should his party lose the second round, they would have to accept defeat. In the past, the government lost a referendum and accepted the result.

The Canadians asked whether the government would accept international observers for the second runoff. He recalled that the Canadian Ambassador had been invited to the elections along with other members of the diplomatic corps and journalists. The delegates took the opportunity to tell the Deputy Minister that Canadians should be able to participate more actively in order to observe and act as witnesses, so that they could effectively report problems on both sides. They reminded everyone that Canada has observed many elections around the world, and that, as a member of the Association, Mr. Bélanger had personally taken part in an observation mission for the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In reply, the Deputy Minister pointed out that Africans are not invited to observe European or Canadian elections. The delegates informed the Deputy Minister that foreign delegations indeed visit Canada during elections.

Following the delegation's questions, the Deputy Minister stated that his government discourages violence. According to him, there is no violence in his country, and his country accepts the multi-party system. He pointed out that the most serious events have occurred in other countries. He invited the Canadian Ambassador to visit his country. The Deputy Minister concluded by saying that the elections were very expensive, and therefore it was difficult to bring in international observers. The delegates assured the Deputy Minister that, if Canadians were invited to the second runoff, they would pay their own way, and that this would enable them to perform their own assessment.

Meeting with officials of MDC-Mutambara

Representatives from the MDC-Mutambara emphasized to the delegates that the next Parliament would be a very shared one. This party has adopted a resolution that the party support the MDC-Tsvangirai. Nonetheless, they were not convinced that all the conditions would be in place for the second runoff. These conditions would include the end of the violence and intimidations, freedom of movement and access to the media. Negotiations would be held to determine the course of events after the second runoff vote.

They stressed the need to strengthen parliamentary skills, because many representatives would be new, and they would have a more important role to play in the current situation.

Meeting with the Honourable Bright Matonga, M.P., Information Minister – ZANU-PF and Mr. Chris Mutsvangwa, representative of the ZANU-PF and former Ambassador of Zimbabwe to China

According to the Deputy Minister for Information, land reform is a priority for his government. The Government of Zimbabwe perceives Canada as a country that relays messages to others, given that it is an ally of Great Britain and the United States. Nevertheless, the Canadian delegates reminded him that Canada worked to abolish apartheid in South Africa, which had nothing to do with Great Britain position, and that Canadian parliamentarians must be accountable for CIDA investments in the country. The Deputy Minister spoke of the potential opportunities for Canada-Zimbabwe enterprises, particularly in mining, because Zimbabwe has very abundant mineral resources and Canada is a major player in this field.

As for the participation of international observers during the second election runoff, which, under the constitution, should be held in a few weeks, it was difficult for the Deputy Minister to imagine foreigners in Zimbabwe, judging and acting as arbitrators, seeing that they have imposed sanctions. The Canadian Ambassador, who attended the meeting, pointed out that the position of the Government of Canada was to increase the number of SADC observers, and to include Canadians or United Nations representatives. She also presented some recent Press Releases from the Canadian government concerning Zimbabwe. After reading them, they responded that they were paternalistic and reflected the Western mentality. The ZANU-PF representatives stated that the opposition parties had received international funding to run their campaigns in the first runoff.

C. Meetings in Harare on May 9

Meeting with Michael Mataure, Executive Director, Public Affairs and Parliamentary Support Trust (PAPST)

Michael Mataure is a former ZANU-PF Member of Parliament. PAPST is a non-governmental organization that was established with the main objective of building the capacity of newly elected, re-elected and appointed Members of Parliament as well as other leaders in public office in Africa.

The organization has a Bureau consisting of 8 officers and 12 employees. It hires post-graduate students for 6-month internships to enable them to put their university education into practice. It is a non-partisan organization. He also described the advantages of having a Member of Parliament in Zimbabwe and the services that are offered so that the Member of Parliament can carry out his or her work. He felt that the committee services have evolved in recent years and that it is working very well.

Meeting with the Honourable Jonathan Moyo, independent M.P.

Jonathan Moyo is an independent MP and political analyst. He was the spokesperson for the committee charged with putting the final draft constitution together before it was tabled for referendum in February, 2000. Mugabe appointed the political science lecturer to his cabinet following the 2000 parliamentary election, making him the spokesperson of the government and Minister of Information in the President's office.

Mr. Moyo was re-elected to the House of Assembly in the March 2008 parliamentary election. He was the first independent candidate in Zimbabwe to ever win re-election.

Mr. Moyo told the Canadian delegates that they were in Zimbabwe at a critical time. Given the ties with Canada and the Commonwealth, he felt it was important for parliamentarians to speak out, because there was violence throughout the country, and this was unacceptable. The country has gone through a war and does not want to relive the experience. Depending on the results of the second runoff, the situation would be different. The violence could either decrease or increase. He stated that the crisis in Zimbabwe has been misunderstood, and he thought that the elections were not a conflict-resolution tool.

He said that Zimbabwe is a one-party state. Many institutions are party-based, and the elections were not being held to change the one-party state, but to confirm it. The challenge today was also constitutional. He mentioned that the conditions were not in place for a second runoff, and that Zimbabwe needed a transition process. In conclusion, Mr. Moyo criticized the attitude of the Government of Canada. He said that the Canadian government already had a middle voice, but did not use it.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Canadian Ambassador provided a working dinner with representatives of the embassies of United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United States. The delegates had an opportunity to hear their partners' views on the situation in Zimbabwe.

During this visit, the delegates met with victims of violence. These victims stated that they were beaten by partisans of ZANU-PF because they supported the MDC-Tsvangirai. These people had sustained serious forearm fractures and lacerations when trying to defend themselves.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the visit to South Africa was a success because friendships were strengthened between the Association and the Pan African Parliament, and it helped reinforce the use of democratic and parliamentary practices.

The visit to Zimbabwe enabled the delegation to better understand the challenges faced by this country, which is attempting to deal with past conflicts and settle current ones, with a view to greater political and economic stability and respect for the democratic choices of the population. In general, the discussions held by the delegates in Zimbabwe were frank and instructive. The Zimbabweans appreciated these exchanges of views on the delicate situation, and they said they appreciated the delegation's visit.

For its part, the delegation was concerned about the prevailing conditions in Zimbabwe and the impact on a potential second presidential runoff election.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The delegation wanted to thank the Pan African Parliament for its warm welcome. The delegation wanted to thank the Canadian Ambassador to Zimbabwe Roxanne Dubé and her staff, Glenn Sheppy, and particularly Julie Crowley for her collaboration and dedication in organizing this instructive visit, as well as during our stay in Zimbabwe. She also wanted to thank the staff of the Canadian High Commission in South Africa, and particularly Ruth Archibald, High Commissioner, as well as Marc Labrom and Lisa Armstrong.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Raynell
Andreychuk, Senator
Co-Chair
Canada-Africa Parliamentary
Association

The Honourable Mauril Bélanger,
M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-Africa Parliamentary
Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Ninth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament and fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe
DESTINATION	Midrand, South Africa, and Harare, Zimbabwe
DATES	May 5 to 9, 2008
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair Luc Harvey, M.P.
STAFF	Rémi Bourgault, Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$35,343.10
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 3,232.80
HOSPITALITY	\$ 397.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,272.73
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 376.65
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$
TOTAL	\$40,622.28