



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the at the International
Conference on Benchmarking and Self-Assessment for
Democratic Parliaments of the *Assemblée parlementaire de
la Francophonie (APF)*
Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la
Francophonie (APF)*
Clermont-Ferrand, France
March 3-4, 2010**

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the APF that attended the International Conference on Benchmarking and Self-Assessment for Democratic Parliaments in Paris, France, on March 3 and 4, 2010, has the honour to present its report.

The delegation was made up of Senator **Pierre De Bané**.

The Conference was organized by the World Bank Institute (WBI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the *Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

The Conference brought together around 80 participants, including parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, parliamentary development specialists and donor agencies such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Parliamentary Centre, the *Association des secrétaires généraux des parlements francophones*, the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Senator **De Bané**, as the Chair of the APF's Parliamentary Affairs Committee, presented the work carried out by the APF over the last few years regarding democratic parliaments.

He discussed the APF and La Francophonie in general, emphasizing that "the functioning of our [APF's] member parliaments is clearly at the heart of our purpose and concerns. It therefore follows that the APF does not welcome representatives from countries where democracy has been overthrown."

The Parliamentary Affairs Committee implements various parliamentary co-operation programs to improve the functioning and work methods of the assemblies. One of these programs includes a comprehensive project aiming to survey member parliaments about parliamentary practices and procedures. This compendium should be finalized at the APF's next session, in July 2010. Some contributions have already been posted on the APF website.

Developing benchmarks to evaluate the democratic reality of parliaments dovetails with the APF's mission.

Senator **De Bané** continued by saying that the APF intends to play an active role in the global reflection on developing and strengthening democracy. To this end, the APF has undertaken to develop what it calls "benchmarks for evaluating the democratic reality of parliaments" for the Francophone world.

The APF brings together parliaments from countries at various stages of development with a variety of parliamentary traditions. The challenge of this exercise was to combine all these differences into a single document in which countries could recognize themselves.

By identifying the benchmarks against which parliamentary democracy can be gauged, the APF was able to take action and reflect on the best ways to ensure the functioning and legitimacy of the parliamentary institutions. The exercise enabled members of the APF to share experiences and look objectively at how democracy is best served.

Senator **De Bané** concluded by saying that the document the APF produced is more than just a collection of prescriptive criteria. Rather, it gives its member parliaments objectives to strive for. Above all, it aims to be a constructive document that takes a specific, targeted and progressive approach. It finds its meaning in the desire of parliamentarians to constantly improve the functioning of their parliaments, as they have sought to do over the past 30 years and as they will continue to do for 30 more.

Conference participants adopted a final declaration, available at www.agora-parl.org/node/2783.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Pierre De Bané, P.C., 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	International Conference on Benchmarking and Self-Assessment for Democratic Parliaments of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Clermont-Ferrand, France
DATES	March 3-4, 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Pierre De Bané
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 3,910.89
ACCOMMODATION	\$
HOSPITALITY	\$
PER DIEMS	\$ 621.98
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$
TOTAL	\$ 4,532.87

