



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the meeting of the Political
Committee of the Assemblée parlementaire de la
Francophonie (APF)**

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

**Yaoundé, Cameroon
7 and 8 April 2010**

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF), having participated in the meeting of the Political Committee of the APF held in Yaoundé, Cameroon on 7 and 8 April 2010, has the honour of submitting its report.

Consisting of Mr. Bernard Patry, MP, the delegation was accompanied by Mr. François Michaud, administrative secretary of the Branch.

The following branches were represented at this meeting: Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, France, Gabon, Jura, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Quebec, Senegal, Switzerland and Togo.

The official ceremony began with welcoming remarks by Mr. **Hilarion Etong** (Cameroon), senior deputy speaker of the National Assembly and president of the Cameroon Branch of the APF, on behalf of the speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, Mr. Cavaye Yeguie Djibril. Mr. Etong thanked the president of the Republic of Cameroon for his attention to the organization of this meeting and for his commitment to the APF and its values of democracy, human rights and dialogue of cultures or, as Mr. Etong added, dialogue of differences.

By way of introduction, the Committee chair, Mr. **André Schneider** (France), thanked the Cameroon Section, its president and the speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon for the warm welcome given to the Committee delegates. He mentioned that the APF's attachment to Africa was aptly demonstrated by its threefold presence on that continent in 2010, i.e. in Chad (Bureau), in Cameroon (Political Committee) and in Senegal (Annual Session).

Commencement of proceedings

The agenda and the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee were adopted unanimously.

For information, chairperson Schneider summarized his activities as chair, as well as those of the Committee, since July 2009.

Ms. **Françoise Fassiaux-Looten** (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels) summarized her participation in the International Conference on Benchmarking and Self-Assessment for Democratic Parliaments, held in Paris from 2 to 4 March 2010, and answered a few questions.

Political situations in La Francophonie

Mr. **Bongnessan Arsène Yé** (Burkina Faso), replacing Ms. Paulette Oyane-Ondo (Gabon), presented the report. Mr. Yé mentioned that the APF is an attentive observer of democratic practices and of rights and freedoms in La Francophonie, and in that sense plays an active "democracy watch" role.

Mr. Yé said that this report is traditionally devoted to crisis situations making recent political news in La Francophonie, and in particular to review of the latest developments in countries whose parliament has been suspended within the APF.

The Committee adopted positions on political situations within La Francophonie. These statements concerned the following countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Mauritania, Comoros, the Sahel-Saharan region, and Guinea-Bissau. The Committee also adopted a statement on Haiti.

The statements adopted in the wake of discussions are available on the APF website at www.apf-francophonie.org (in French only).

The administrative secretary general of the APF, Mr. **Jean-Luc Lala**, gave a brief presentation on what the Secrétariat général is doing about Haiti, including with the OIF.

Mr. **Bernard Patry** returned to the situation in Haiti, in particular the resolution adopted by the Bureau in February 2010, and expressed a desire to emphasize the reconstruction of its parliamentary institutions. He wondered whether the debate on Haiti to be held in Dakar would not be more profitable and productive if a few members of the APF went to Haiti to prepare a substantive discussion. He also emphasized the importance of establishing desirable and necessary cooperation with other parliamentary associations (the Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, etc.).

Relations with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)

Committee Chairperson Schneider mentioned the presence of Ms. Christine Desouches and thanked her for her contribution.

Ms. **Christine Desouches**, political advisor to the secretary general of the OIF, described the activities of the Secrétariat général of the OIF, including the "Bamako +10" follow-up.

Ms. Desouches presented the 2010-2013 programming of the OIF, and in particular mission B (i.e., one of the four missions of the OIF's decadal strategic framework, with the following themes: Promote peace, democracy and human rights). Francophone doctrine holds that protection of democracy, human rights and development are key to peace. The programming has three key themes: democratic governance, law and justice, and building peace and human security.

Ms. Desouches then spoke of Bamako +10. Point 1 placed the Bamako +10 process in context and cited its issues; Point 2 cited its purposes and expected results; and Point 3 addressed its methodology and timetable.

Ms. Desouches added that the objective of the Bamako Declaration was for La Francophonie to move forward together. While there is no universal model, the members of La Francophonie share common values which they must strive to put into practice in accordance with the respective characteristics of each member of the organization.

Mr. **Bernard Patry** congratulated the OIF for its work and wondered what impact the budget cuts would have on mission B programming.

Protection of rights and freedoms in the context of the struggle against terrorism

Mr. **Henri-François Gautrin** (Quebec) presented his draft report.

First, the report addressed the international protection of human rights, and in particular the International Bill of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Second, the report addressed terrorism, i.e. the international treaties ratified as part of the struggle against terrorism; what constitutes a terrorist act; and the act of terrorism and human rights.

Finally, the report contained a detailed discussion of infringement of human rights in the course of enforcing anti-terrorist legislation. It discussed the right to private property, respect for privacy, immigrants' rights and the non-refoulement principle, arrest and detention, the right to a fair trial, and trespass to the person.

Mr. **Bernard Patry** intervened to speak of the Anti-Terrorism Act passed by the Parliament of Canada, thanks to a clause providing for a parliamentary review three years after royal assent.

Natural resources and conflicts

Mr. **Bernard Patry** (Canada) presented his report, which is on a new theme for the Committee.

The issue of natural resources and conflicts is one that is complex and sensitive in a number of respects. It has a direct impact on the daily lives of millions of persons, many of them in the countries of La Francophonie. It includes situations where the rights of persons living nearby or working on sites where natural resources are exploited are compromised, leading to discontent and conflicts among populations as well as violent disputes between different factions generally inside any one country or in border areas. The main resources and industries concerned are oil; diamond, gold, tin and coltan mining; but also agricultural products such as cocoa and coffee.

The Secretary-General of the UN, who is responsible for human rights and transnational corporations, is taking a close interest in this issue. Wherever they are located, natural resource extraction projects require that governments and national and transnational corporations working in the sector act responsibly by setting up and adhering to appropriate governance mechanisms.

The Canadian mining sector is very active outside Canada. There are many companies at work developing larger deposits all over the world, especially in Africa and South America. Two private members' bills on corporate social responsibility have been introduced in the House of Commons for Canadian extraction companies operating on foreign soil.

There were a number of interventions in response to the report.

How to face the demographic challenges of the 21st century

Ms. **Françoise Fassieux-Looten** (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels) presented her report, which is on a new theme for the Committee.

The report proposed to examine two issues: overpopulation and the grey revolution. There were a number of interventions in response to the report.

Preparation for the hearing of the Secretary General of the OIF

Mr. **Henri-François Gauthrin** (Quebec) presented a draft question on “Bamako +10”.

Mr. **Jean-Luc Lala**, administrative secretary general, presented on behalf of Ms. **Paulette Oyane-Ondo** (Gabon) a draft question on security in the Sahel-Saharan zone.

Information on the XIII Francophone Summit

The Summit theme will be the achievements and challenges of La Francophonie. The APF will prepare a notice to the Heads of State and Government.

Miscellaneous questions

Mr. **Henri-François Gauthrin** (Quebec) presented the Quebec Branch’s plan for an international parliamentary conference on the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, to be held in Quebec City in February 2011.

There followed a discussion concerning the next meeting of the Committee as part of the XXXVI Session in Dakar in July 2010.

The delegation also took advantage of its brief stay in Cameroon to meet with the Canadian High Commissioner to Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Jean Carol Pelletier, at a working breakfast. The delegation warmly thanks the High Commissioner and his team for his hospitality and the excellence of the presentation on Cameroon and the region.

Objectives

The objectives of the Canadian Branch for this activity were to present the report, which is the product of a Branch initiative; to defend the interests of the members of the Branch; and to maintain international ties and promote the values of the members of the Canadian Branch within La Francophonie. This report aptly demonstrates that these objectives have been achieved, all of which are long-term and have the benefit of solid pre-existing foundations.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernard Patry, MP
Member of the Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Table of expenses

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Political Committee of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Yaoundé, Cameroon
DATES	7 and 8 April 2010
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Bernard Patry
STAFF	François Michaud
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 11,362.37
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,018.01
PER DIEMS	\$ 644.71
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 67.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 318.92
TOTAL	\$ 13,411.01