



**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)
Liège, Belgium
May 1-5, 2011**

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 Liège, Belgium, on May 1–5, 2011, has the honour of submitting its report.

Consisting of Senator Michel Rivard, who was replacing 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, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Gabon, Jura, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Quebec, Senegal, Switzerland and Togo.

The official ceremony began with welcoming remarks by Mr. **Michel de Lamotte**, President of the Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels Branch

By way of introduction, the Committee Chair, Mr. **André Schneider** (France), thanked the Belgian Branch and its President for the warm welcome given to the Committee delegates. He welcomed the new Committee Vice-Chair, Mr. **Joseph Ndong** (Senegal), and Senator **Rivard**.

Commencement of proceedings

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

Ms. **Zakia Khattabi**, Mr. **Jean-Paul Wahl** and Mr. **Christian Dupont** (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels) described the political situation in Belgium. A discussion followed.

How to face the demographic challenges of the 21st century

Ms. **Françoise Fassieux-Looten** (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels) presented her draft report on the theme introduced in Yaoundé in 2010.

Ms. **Ester Lucia Rizzi**, Professor at the Centre de recherche en démographie et sociétés, Université catholique de Louvain, gave a presentation entitled “Adapting our societies to aging.”

A number of comments were made in response to the report. Senator **Michel Rivard** talked about the situation in Canada and the possibility of raising the retirement age.

Natural resources and conflicts

On behalf of Mr. Bernard Patry (Canada), Senator **Michel Rivard** presented a draft report on the theme introduced in Yaoundé in 2010.

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 people, many of them in the countries of La Francophonie. It includes situations where the rights of

individuals living near or working at 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 a given country or in border areas.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, 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 establishing and adhering to the appropriate governance mechanisms.

Mr. **Hervé Cronel**, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) on Economic Policy and Sustainable Development, spoke about a specific aspect of the issue, namely, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).

The role of ombudsmen, mediators and public advocates in La Francophonie

Mr. **Henri-François Gautrin** (Quebec) presented his report on the Committee's new theme. The report provided an overview of the role of the ombudsman in La Francophonie, based on a sample comprising 11 national ombudsmen and mediators.

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

Political situations in La Francophonie

Ms. **Denise Mekam'Ne** (Gabon) presented the report. She said that this report traditionally focuses on crisis situations making recent political news in La Francophonie and, in particular, on the review of the latest developments in countries belonging to the APF whose parliament has been suspended.

The Committee adopted positions on political situations within La Francophonie. These statements concerned the following countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, Niger, Egypt, Haiti, Syria and Tunisia.

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

The Committee then heard from Mr. **Hugo Sada**, the Peace, Democracy and Human Rights Representative for the OIF.

The Committee subsequently heard Mr. **Cristian Dan Preda**, Member of the European Parliament, Member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Chair of the Francophone Forum, who spoke about the Francophone Forum of the European Parliament.

Ms. **Anne Seydoux-Christe** (Switzerland) addressed the issue of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the host of the upcoming annual APF meeting in 2011 and the Francophone Summit in 2012. A discussion followed, during which Senator **Michel Rivard** stated that the Canadian Branch supported Switzerland's basic premise that a debate on the issue was needed. Canada encouraged the DRC government to pursue its efforts to hold international human rights violators accountable for their actions. Nonetheless, Canada remains concerned about the ongoing, serious

human rights violations in eastern DRC, including sexual violence and alleged crimes against humanity.

Preparation for the statement by the Secretary General of the OIF

Senator **Michel Rivard** presented a draft question on natural resources and conflicts. The draft question was unanimously adopted and will be addressed to the Secretary General of the OIF at the next annual meeting of the APF in Kinshasa.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Michel Rivard, 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	Meeting of the Political Committee of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Liège, Belgium
DATES	May 1-5, 2011
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Michel Rivard
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	François Michaud
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 9,165.25
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,125.10
PER DIEMS	\$ 775.49
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 34.50
TOTAL	\$ 11,100.34