



Canada - China Legislative Association
Association législative Canada - Chine



Canada - Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
Groupe interparlementaire Canada - Japon

**REPORT OF THE DELEGATION
27TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY
ORGANIZATION (AIPO)**

**CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
SEPTEMBER 10-15, 2006**

Report

On participation at the 27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO)

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) held its 27th General Assembly from September 10 to 15, 2006, in Cebu City, Philippines. The Canadian Parliament, which has the status of observer nation to AIPO sent a joint delegation of the Canada-Japan Inter-parliamentary Group and the Canada-China Legislative Association. The Canada-China Legislative Association Canada was represented by the Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator, and the Canada-Japan Inter-parliamentary Group was represented by Mr. Bryon Wilfert, M.P., P.C. The Secretary to the Delegation was Mr. Paul Cardegna, Association Secretary to both the Canada-China Legislative Association Canada and the Canada-Japan Inter-parliamentary Group.

Conference activities:

The Canadian delegation participated in the First Plenary Session which began with statements by His Excellency José de Venecia, Jr., President of AIPO and the Honourable Robert G. Romula, Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee. Statements were made by the leaders of the delegations from the eight AIPO member countries (namely: Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and Republic of the Philippines) and the two AIPO Special Observer Countries (Brunei Darussalam and Union of Myanmar).

Later, during the First Plenary Session, statements were made by the leaders of the delegations from the observer nations (namely: Australia, Canada, People's Republic of China, European Parliament, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Russian Federation). The Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator, made a statement on behalf of the Canadian delegation; the text of which is attached as Appendix A.

On the second day of the conference the Canadian delegation observed the delegates of the AIPO nations as they convened meetings of the following committees: Committee on Political Matters, Committee on Economic Matters, Committee on Social Matters and the Committee on Organizational Matters.

Dialogue meetings were then convened with each observer delegation. The Canadian delegates met with their counterparts from the AIPO nations to discuss a wide range of issues. The agenda for the dialogue meeting included the following topics:

1. Regional security matters
2. Economic and trade cooperation
3. Investment opportunities
4. Environmental issues

5. Information and technology cooperation
6. Strategies to create breakthroughs in the World Trade Organization (WTO) "Doha Round"
7. Exchange of parliamentary visits as means of strengthening interparliamentary diplomacy
8. Cooperation in fighting pandemic/infectious diseases like Avian flu, HIV/AIDS

The dialogue was chaired by the Honourable Edgar M. Chatto, Member of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines. His report summarizing the discussion's main points was presented to the Second Plenary Session and is attached as Appendix B.

Finally, the Canadian delegation participated in the Second Plenary Session which took place on the final day of the conference. During this session, all of the reports of the committees and observer dialogues were presented to and adopted by the plenary.

The Canadian delegation was also able to arrange other private meetings in an effort to stimulate discussions designed to strengthen bilateral and multilateral relations.

Meeting with Honourable Jose de Venecia, Jr., President of AIPO and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines

The delegates attended a courtesy call with the Honourable Jose de Venecia, Jr., President of AIPO and Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines. Senator Day began the meeting by describing the most recent political changes at the Canadian federal level while Mr. Wilfert stated that Canadian-Philippine relations were especially important due to the over 300,000 Canadians of Philippine descent.

Speaker de Venecia identified reforestation as a critical problem currently facing the Philippines in which Canadian expertise could be effective. The government of the Philippines intends to begin a vigorous tree-planting campaign that would rejuvenate the forestry industry in that country. He suggested that a Philippine-Canadian joint venture could simultaneously benefit from Canadian forestry expertise, the long growing season and abundant available land in the Philippines. He also stated how Canada's vast knowledge of railway transportation would help rejuvenate the transportation infrastructure of the Southeast Asian nation in order to more efficiently move locally produced products for export. The Canadian delegates agreed that this provided an excellent opportunity for both countries to strengthen trade and economic links.

On the same subject, the Speaker suggested the creation of a Philippine-Canadian investment fund that could receive contributions from investors in both countries and then be used as a source of investment income for projects in the Philippines. The continuing operation of Canadian banks in the Philippines was cited as essential criteria for the success of this fund.

Finally, the subject of debt reduction for ASEAN nations was discussed, including the idea of allowing ASEAN countries to repay their debt to Canada by providing money for

investment opportunities in ASEAN nations. It was suggested that this would provide an opportunity for Canada to assist while providing welcome grants for improvements in developing nations.

Meeting with Vu Mao, Director of the Committee for External Relations of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Mr. Bryon Wilfert, M.P., P.C. met with Mr. Vu Mao, Member of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and Director of the Committee for External Relations and Ms. Nguyen Thi Bach Mai, Member of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Mr. Wilfert began the meeting by stating that Canada and Vietnam have enjoyed cordial relations over the past 30 years and mentioned that there are currently over 250,000 Canadians of Vietnamese descent. Vu Mao raised the topic of adoption due to the recent agreement reached between the Canadian and Vietnamese governments on the subject. The increased number of adoptions of Vietnamese children by Canadian couples has increased the importance of the issue of dual citizenship for the Canadian government. Mr. Wilfert reminded Mr. Mao that the issue had recently been the subject of considerable discussion in Canada after the evacuation of dual citizen Lebanese-Canadians from Lebanon during the summer of 2006. Both agreed that the issue was problematic and Mr. Wilfert noted that Canadian government policy on the issue was under review.

Ms. Mai stated that Vietnam intends to adopt a bill on gender equity in the near future and asked Mr. Wilfert what Canada's experience with gender equity issues has been. Mr. Wilfert responded that the drive for gender equality has meant more women are taking a larger role in the workplace in Canada and creating a need for a wider discussion about work/life balance and the ability of women to sustain careers while trying to raise families.

Finally, Mr. Wilfert reiterated that meetings and discussions such as these were an excellent opportunity to exchange best practices and forge stronger relationships between Canada and Vietnam.

Meeting with H.E. Ambassador Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations and leader of the Chinese delegation to the 27th AIPO Conference

The Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator met with H.E. Ambassador Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations and leader of the Chinese delegation to the 27th AIPO Conference. Discussions centered around Canada-China relations and the growing bilateral trade between the two nations as well as other matters of mutual interest such as anti-terrorism, immigration, North Korea and China's role in Asia. Also, the subject of the upcoming Canada-China Legislative Association 9th Bilateral visit to China, which is scheduled for October 2006, was raised.

Conclusion:

The delegation felt that its participation at the conference was beneficial to better understand the issues facing ASEAN nations. The time spent with their ASEAN colleagues was an excellent opportunity for Canadian parliamentarians to forge and strengthen better bilateral and multilateral relations with the nations of Southeast Asia.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Joseph Day, Senator
Co-Chair
Canada-China Legislative
Association

Hon. Bryon Wilfert, P.C., M.P.
Canada-Japan
Inter-Parliamentary Group

APPENDIX A: Speech given by Senator Day

APPENDIX B: Report on the dialogue with Canadian Delegation

APPENDIX C: Travel Costs

Appendix A

SPEECH GIVEN BY THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH A. DAY LEADER OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE 27TH ASEAN INTERPARLIAMENTARY ORGANIZATION GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES SEPTEMBER 11, 2006

My name is Senator Joseph A. Day from Canada. I am accompanied by my colleague, Mr. Bryon Wilfert, Member of the House of Commons of Canada. We are delighted to participate in the 27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) in Cebu City, Philippines. Thank you for allowing Canada to be here as an observer at this meeting of AIPO.

We are pleased to have this opportunity to again meet with our parliamentary counterparts from Southeast Asia. These annual meetings provide us with a unique forum for following events in the region and making the personal contacts that are so important to good relations between countries.

With each passing year, the Southeast Asian region is becoming more and more important to Canada. It is a growing source of immigrants. It is also an increasingly important trading partner.

This increased exchange of people, goods, and services between Canada and the countries of Southeast Asia is leading to increased cooperation in a whole range of areas. In addition to sharing concerns about the international trading system, we also have common interests in the areas of security, the environment, sustainable development, and information and technology cooperation.

Parliamentary diplomacy has a crucial role to play in encouraging this cooperation. By keeping each other informed of developments in our countries and our parliaments, we help make the exchanges between us run more smoothly. By understanding each other better, we can help reduce the distances between us.

As you probably know, Canada's relations with the region go back over half a century, to the years following the Second World War. Our earliest contact was with our partners in the Commonwealth – Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, and Singapore. Indeed, it was through the Commonwealth's aid initiative of the 1950s – the Colombo Plan – that Canadian co-operation in Southeast Asia began. As well, during the 1950s and 1960s Canada participated in the International Control and Supervision Commissions in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.

In the late 1960s, Canada identified Southeast Asia as a priority recipient of Canadian aid. Our trade with the region grew during this period, and in 1974 Canada

initiated relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 1977, Canada became an ASEAN dialogue partner.

Today, the Canadian government maintains a dialogue with ASEAN at the ministerial level through the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference and the ASEAN Regional Forum. In addition, Canada maintains two dialogue channels at the senior official level – the ASEAN-Canada Dialogue Senior Officials' Meeting and a Senior Economic Officials' meeting.

The relationship between Canada and Southeast Asian countries has evolved into a flourishing trade and economic partnership. Indeed, Canada's two-way trade with ASEAN countries now exceeds Cdn\$10 billion per year.

Meanwhile, nearly half a million immigrants from ASEAN countries now call Canada home, and the number of Southeast Asian students in Canada continues to increase rapidly.

There is no better recent example of the partnership between Canada and Southeast Asia than Canada's response to the devastating December 2004 tsunami. The Canadian government contributed Cdn\$425 million towards disaster relief, rehabilitation assistance and reconstruction efforts, in addition to Cdn\$213 million was contributed by members of the Canadian public.

I would like now to touch briefly upon the topics for dialogue with observer countries to take place tomorrow.

First of all, though, I would like to point out that, as Canadian parliamentarians, we do not set government policy. Nevertheless, we do play a role in international relations, mostly through the work of our parliamentary committees. Our committees conduct studies, during which we solicit ideas from experts and the Canadian public. The reports we issue at the conclusion of these studies can help the government define its policy, and they can also have an important role in helping the Canadian public understand the issues at play. Those reports are available on the Internet for all who are interested.

Meeting our counterparts from other countries plays an on-going part in the work of Canadian parliamentarians to understand issues and influence government policy. We look forward to discussing these issues with you during our dialogue tomorrow.

On the issue of regional security, Canadian parliamentarians recognize that in this day of global integration, security problems in one part of the world can have serious impacts in any other part of the world. Regional conflicts, people smuggling, health pandemics, arms and drug trafficking – all these activities can have an impact on Canada's security, as well as your security. Consequently, we need to work closely with one another to address situations that might lead to problems, either here or elsewhere.

As a case in point, Canada has a long history of participating in peacekeeping missions in all regions of the world. It is also a leader in the international movement to ban landmines. As I mentioned earlier, during the 1950s and 1960s Canada participated in the International Control and Supervision Commissions in the Southeast Asian region.

More recently, Canadian contributed armed forces personnel to the International Force in East Timor and the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor.

The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs looked at Asia Pacific security issues in 1998 as part of its report on the Asian financial crisis.

The issue of economic and trade cooperation is clearly a vital part of the relationship between Canada and the countries of Southeast Asia. Canada has always been a trading nation. Initially, our trade was largely with Europe. Today, the United States is our largest trading partner.

Nevertheless, Southeast Asia presents a significant opportunity for Canada. Your economic progress has been impressive: the ASEAN countries represent a market of some 560 million people. The discussions of which we have heard a lot this morning about a proposed East Asian trade bloc make the subject of trade cooperation all the more timely.

As your countries increase their cooperation among themselves and with their partners in Asia, Canada would like to increase its presence in the region. Increased trade would also help narrow the development gap in some of the ASEAN countries.

Our parliamentary committees have devoted a considerable amount of time to studying the issue of trade with Southeast Asia. In 2003, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade issued a report entitled *Reinvigorating Economic Relations between Canada and Asia-Pacific*. In 1997, the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs released a report entitled *The Importance of the Asia Pacific Region for Canada*.

The issue of investment opportunities is another important one for our economic relationship. It is also an important component of economic growth and development in the region. More than that, foreign investment creates important links to Southeast Asia for Canadian companies, consumers, and workers.

Today, Canadian foreign investment in the ASEAN region is worth more than Cdn\$11 billion. These investments represent a vote of confidence in the region by Canadian business people. Of course, in order to invest, companies need to be able to count on sound investment rules that provide stability, transparency, predictability, and protection for Canadian companies. For that reason, Canada has consistently supported a strong, rules-based system.

Environmental issues are increasingly important components of our relationship. Canadians are mindful of the impact natural disasters can have. The tsunami, the

recent cyclones in China, and Hurricane Katrina in the United States remind us how quickly disaster can strike.

By cooperating with each other, we can reduce the impact of such events. In our discussions, we hope to learn more about the measures you are taking to prepare for natural disasters and to reduce the impact that human activity is having on the environment.

The issue of information and technology cooperation is the key to solving many of the world's problems. By sharing best practices, we can help each other deal with on-going and evolving problems.

An example is the international effort to combat Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, in 2003. By sharing information, we were able to reduce the spread of this virulent disease. Likewise, the on-going effort to understand avian influenza shows that the fight against these infectious diseases has to be an international one, one that requires cooperation in sharing information.

Information and technology cooperation is relevant to many of the dialogue topics that we are discussing. When it comes to protecting the environment, for example, information and technology will be crucial in mitigating the effects of climate change. Clean energy technologies hold great promise for minimizing humans' impact on the environment. Developing alternate sources of energy and renewable sources by using technology such as small hydro power, solar thermal systems, and biofuel, such as mentioned last evening, will help developed countries and developing countries alike in their quest for energy self-sufficiency.

On the issue of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Doha Round, Canada remains committed to more liberalized trade, the rules-based multilateral trading system, and the objectives of the Doha negotiations. Like you, we were extremely disappointed when the Round was suspended. A successful outcome of the Round would have advanced the Canadian objectives of increased access to global markets for Canadian producers, manufacturers, and service providers. It would also have been good for developing countries, which stood to gain from further integration into the world trading system and from the reduction in agriculture subsidies.

Our parliamentary committees have spent considerable time studying the WTO and the international trading system. In May 2002, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade released a report entitled *Building an Effective New Round of WTO Negotiations: Key Issues for Canada*. More recently, in June 2005, the Committee released a report entitled *Elements of an Emerging Markets Strategy for Canada*, which included recommendations on the WTO negotiations.

I would like to talk a little bit about the Canadian government's development assistance in the region. The Canadian International Development Agency's Southeast Asia Regional Program addresses development challenges that affect the region. It is a small, focused program of approximately Cdn\$12 million a year. Its priorities, in terms of assistance, are: economic integration, the environment, and governance, security, and the rule of law.

The program helps countries meet the requirements of accession to, and/or membership in, the WTO and to benefit from their rights as members. It has also supported governance and legal-reform projects that have raised awareness and observance of the rights of women, children, ethnic minorities, and migrant workers throughout Southeast Asia.

In addition, Canada has bilateral development programs with Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

Finally, on the subject of the exchange of parliamentary visits as means of strengthening inter-parliamentary diplomacy, my colleagues and I feel that visits to meetings such as this go a long way to promoting understanding and mutual respect among parliamentarians.

Canadian parliamentarians participate in a number of parliamentary associations and interparliamentary groups including the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum, to which a number of ASEAN countries belong. Canadian parliamentarians also cooperate with Singapore and Malaysia through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. The Inter-Parliamentary Union provides another venue for cooperation. Finally, there is La Francophonie, which includes Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, as well as Canada.

Earlier this year parliamentarians from a number of ASEAN nations participated in the Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Conference on Environment and Development, which the Speakers of the Canadian Senate and House of Commons hosted in Whistler, British Columbia.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for welcoming us to this gathering. Through the meetings, both formal and informal, we have had and will have with you, our Southeast Asian colleagues; we develop a better understanding of the issues you are facing. We will return home with much to ponder. Please rest assured that we will continue to follow developments in Southeast Asia.

Appendix B

REPORT ON THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE AIPO AND CANADA

Mr. President,

I have the honor to submit the following Report on the AIPO-Canada Dialogue.

1. The dialogue was held in the afternoon of 12 September 2006 at Tokyo B, Marco Polo Hotel, Cebu City from 2:50pm-4:15pm.
2. The Dialogue was attended by the following delegates:

Canada

1. Hon. Joseph Day
2. Hon. Bryon Wilfert
3. Mr. Paul Cardegna

Cambodia

1. Hon. Ky Lum Ang
2. Ms. Ly Son
3. Mr. Uy Visal

Indonesia

1. Hon. Abdillah Toha
2. Hon. Bindu Marbun
3. Mr. Robert Juheng Purba

Lao People's Democratic Republic

1. Hon. Singkham Khongsavanh
2. Hon. Davone Vangvichith

Malaysia

1. Hon. Syed Razlan Jamalullail

Philippines

1. Hon. Edgar M. Chatto – Chairperson

Singapore

1. Hon. Hri Kumar
2. Hon. Ho Geok Choo

Thailand

1. Hon. Po. Lt. Col. Chachvan Bunmee

Vietnam

1. Hon. Nguyen Van Thuan
2. Hon. Nguyen Thi Bach Mai

Brunei Darussalam

1. P.D.N. Pg. Abdul Momin

3. The Chairman of the Dialogue, Hon. Edgar M. Chatto, welcomed the delegates to the dialogue with Canada. Subsequently, the members of the AIPO, observers and the representatives from Canada introduced themselves. Canada expressed its gratitude to the delegates for attending the dialogue.
4. The Dialogue was held in the spirit of friendship and mutual understanding. All delegates expressed their gratitude to Canada for its assistance to their countries. During the discussion delegates focus on the topic/s that they considered important to their countries. Following are the highlights of the discussion on the following topics:

a) Regional and Security Matters

Indonesia was concerned about travel advisories issued by foreign countries as such advisories affect Indonesia's tourism industry. Canada responded that travel advisory is just precautionary measure and may not apply to entire country. Malaysia was apprehensive about the visa restrictions where *bona fide* students and civil servants on study and official business may be denied entry due to such restrictions. Canada responded that it will bring the matter to proper department to review the issue. Thailand underscored the importance of the presence of law enforcement representative of Canada in Thailand and requested Canada for more training assistance for its law enforcement agencies.

b) Economic and Trade Cooperation

Lao People's Democratic Republic requested Canada to support the English Teaching program of Lao. Lao also requested for extension of quota for its textile export as well as assistance to Lao's small and medium enterprises. On export quota Canada replied that the local and political issue on the matter require further study. Singapore noted that it enjoys good working relations with Canada. Canada in return requested for the establishment of permanent mission in Ottawa. Canada commented on the calling off of the Canada-Singapore FTA. Singapore assured Canada that it is still on the agenda.

Canada encouraged all delegates to apply for the development assistance of Canada through CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency).

c) Investment Opportunities

Canada encourages its investors to South East Asian countries but requested for the assurance of transparency on government policies on trade and investment. It urged countries to enact legislations on the matter like the Foreign Investment Act of Vietnam.

d) Environmental Issues

Singapore looks forward to a partnership with Canada on environmental front. Canada called upon national legislators to act aggressively on environmental

protection emphasizing significant reviews of government proposals affecting environment.

e) Information and Technology Cooperation

Indonesia and the Philippines advocated for better exchange of information before travel advisories are issued. Philippines requested for a precise travel advisory which should be confined only to particular locality.

f) Strategies to Create Breakthrough in the World Trade Organization (WTO) “DOHA Round”

Canada strongly espouses bilateralism and multiculturalism. Canada mentioned about Japan-Philippines FT A, which included nursing services, as a great alternative to the WTO. Cambodia's problem on massive agricultural subsidies of developed countries can be addressed through bilateral trade agreement with other countries for the market of Cambodia's chemical free agricultural products.

g) Exchange of Parliamentary Visits as Means of Strengthening Inter-Parliamentary Diplomacy

All delegates expressed interest in extending parliamentary visits.

h) Cooperation in Fighting Pandemic/Infectious Disease like Avian flu, HIV / AIDS

Cambodia echoed the call of neighboring countries in requesting financial and technical assistance to prevent and control avian flu and other pandemic disease.

HON. EDGAR M. CHA TTO
Chairman

Appendix C

TRAVEL COSTS

ASSOCIATION	Canada-China Legislative Association and Canada-Japan Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	27th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO)
DESTINATION	Cebu City, Philippines
DATES	September 10-15, 2006
SENATORS	Hon. Joseph A. Day, Senator
MEMBERS	Mr. Bryon Wilfert, P.C. M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Paul Cardegna, Association Secretary

TRANSPORTATION	\$27,599.98
ACCOMMODATION	\$156.86
HOSPITALITY	
PER DIEMS	\$410.34
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$265.30
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$14.81
TOTAL	\$28,447.29