



**Report
of the
Canadian parliamentary delegation
of the
"Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie" (APF)
to the
Bureau meeting of the APF
Noumea, New Caledonia
February 2 to 4, 2006**

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch that participated in the meeting of the Bureau of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) in Noumea, New Caledonia, from February 2 to 4, 2006, has the honour to present its report.

Report

Led by the Honourable Pierre De Bané, Senator and President of the Canadian Branch of the APF, the delegation also included the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator and acting Co-Chair of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, and Bernard Patry, MP and International President of the APF, which is composed of 48 member branches, 15 associate branches and 10 observer branches. They were accompanied by Jean Michel Roy, the Branch's Executive Secretary.

The meeting of the Bureau of the APF was chaired by Bernard Patry and the following branches were represented: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, the French-Speaking Community of Belgium, France, Gabon, Jura, Lebanon, Luxemburg, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Romania, Switzerland, Val D'Aoste and Vietnam.

On Thursday, February 2, Bernard Patry attended the meeting of the Bureau's Permanent Delegation, and met with Mr. Louis Le Franc, Secretary General of the French High Commission in New Caledonia. During the meeting, Mr. Le Franc described the language situation in New Caledonia as having 28 languages and dialects and unified by a common language—French. The Anglo-Saxon environment attributable to the proximity of Australia and New Zealand also characterizes the region's linguistic landscape. Economic issues were also discussed, including the growth of the metals industry in terms of nickel development by INCO and Falconbridge, two Canadian companies.

Later in the day, the Permanent Delegation met with Mr. Jean Lèques, Mayor of Noumea, who expressed the hope that Mr. Abdou Diouf, Secretary-General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) would visit New Caledonia and send a strong signal to confirm the Francophone fact in the region. In this regard, Bernard Patry mentioned the recent creation of the Asia-Pacific region within the APF. Cultural diversity, an important APF principal, was also mentioned, and appears to be alive and well in New Caledonia. Discussions also covered the possible participation of French overseas parliamentarians, and specifically those from New Caledonia, in meetings of the APF's Asia-Pacific region.

On Friday, February 3, the Permanent Delegation met again to discuss, among other things, financial issues, including the arrears in payment or non-payment of dues by certain sections.

After the meeting of the Permanent Delegation, the Honourable Pierre De Bané and the Honourable

Rose-Marie Losier-Cool joined Bernard Patry for the start of the Bureau's work. Chaired by Bernard Patry, the Bureau first passed a motion to change its composition. Since Romania is the host of the Francophone Summit to be held in Bucharest from September 25-29, 2006, the Romanian section was admitted as a member of the Bureau.

In a different vein, it was mentioned that the activities of the Mauritanian section were still suspended following the dissolution of the Parliament of Mauritania. APF observer status was then granted to Latvia.

The Parliamentary Secretary General then presented his activities report. During the discussions, a resolution was passed on ratifying the Convention on cultural diversity. The resolution “[translation] called on the other member States and Governments of the Francophonie to follow the example set by Canada and Quebec as soon as practicable, and to ratify, accept and approve this Convention or accede to it, according to their own constitutional procedures, if possible on March 20— International Day of La Francophonie.”

When the second point, the work of committees, was raised, Senator De Bané spoke in his capacity as Chair of the APF’s Parliamentary Affairs Committee. He began by telling the members of the Bureau that the next meeting of this Committee would be held in Ottawa from March 27 to 29, 2006. The Senator then drew to the members’ attention two points on the Committee's agenda. The first involved the APF Opinion being prepared for the Bucharest Summit and the follow-up report on the 10-year strategic framework. The committee has chosen the theme of “youth.” The second point involved election observer missions.

For her part, Senator Losier-Cool, as acting Co-Chair of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, presented the Network's activities report. Senator Losier-Cool highlighted two major Network meetings: the seminar organized for Central African women parliamentarians in Libreville, Gabon on December 1 and 2, 2005, and the meeting of the steering committee in Toronto last January 18 and 19.

During the review of the situation in various countries, the Bureau passed the following resolutions on the political crises within the Francophone community:

1. A resolution dealing with the continuation of the electoral process in the Democratic Republic of Congo.
2. A resolution on restoring constitutional law within the established timeframe in Mauritania.
3. A resolution on holding elections in Côte d’Ivoire within the established timeframe.
4. A resolution to end insecurity and to complete the electoral process in Haiti.
5. A resolution on the condemnation of perpetrators of all political attacks in Lebanon.
6. A resolution condemning the violence on the border between Chad and Sudan.

The Bureau also discussed the latest developments in the political crises in the Central African Republic and in Togo, but did not, however, pass a resolution in this regard.

In preparing for the Bucharest Summit, the Bureau has drafted a list of its representatives at the Summit. The APF will be represented by its President, Bernard

Patry, its First Vice President, its Parliamentary Secretary General and its Administrative Secretary General.

On another issue, it was announced that two parliamentary seminars would be held in 2006, in Vanuatu and in the Central African Republic.

Finally, early in the evening, the Permanent Delegation met with Marie-Noëlle Thémereau, President of the Government of New Caledonia.

On Saturday, February 4, the following items were discussed: the forthcoming Parlement francophone des jeunes, the interparliamentary co-operation project (NORIA), the election observer missions and the celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Léopold Senghor. The nominations for the Ordre de la Pléiade put forward by the Canadian Branch were approved.

In addition, it was agreed that the next meeting of the Bureau would be held in Rabat, Morocco next June before the XXXIInd Session of the APF. The principal theme for the Session would be the preservation of linguistic diversity.

At the end of the activities, Bernard Patry and other members of the Bureau took part in a press conference where the proceedings were summarized. The following main points were mentioned: development, cultural diversity, human rights, the rule of law, election observer missions, parliamentary diplomacy and the progress of democracy within the Francophone community.

Finally, the Bureau issued a press release which restated the APF's attachment to linguistic and cultural diversity and that, by choosing to meet in Noumea, "[translation] the Bureau was giving evidence of its desire to promote French in the South Pacific and of its support for its new Asia-Pacific region." In order to live up to its words, the Bureau announced that its meeting would be followed by a seminar in Port Vila for Vanuatu MPs. In this regard, it must be borne in mind that a number of speakers expressed the hope that the Secretary-General of the OIF, Mr. Abdou Diouf, would make an official visit to New Caledonia.

Respectfully submitted,
The Hon. Pierre De Bané, Senator
President of the
Canadian Branch,
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Travel Cost

NAME OF ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)
ACTIVITY	Bureau Meeting of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)
DESTINATION	Noumea, New Caledonia
DATES	February 2 to 4, 2006
NAMES OF SENATORS	Hon. Pierre De Bané, Senator, Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator
NAMES OF MEMBERS	Bernard Patry, MP
NAMES OF STAFF	Mr. Jean Michel Roy
TRANSPORTATION	AIR TRANSPORTATION \$25,310.59 GROUND TRANSPORTATION \$489.13
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,835.11
HOSPITALITY	\$0
PER DIEMS	\$ 914.59
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 119.50
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$0
TOTAL	\$ 29,668.92