

Canada - Africa
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
to the Sixth Ordinary Session
of the Pan-African Parliament**

Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

**Midrand, South Africa
November 13 and 14, 2006**

The delegation of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association that visited South Africa on November 13 and 14, 2006, on the occasion of the sixth session of the Pan-African Parliament, in Midrand, South Africa, has the honour to present its report.

Report

The Association was represented by the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, PC, MP, and Association Co-Chair, and Mr. David Christopherson, MP. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Rémi Bourgault, Executive Secretary.

Objective

The Pan-African Parliament Bureau extended an invitation to the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, PC, MP, in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, to take part in the opening ceremony for the Sixth Ordinary Session and to address Parliament. During the ceremony, His Excellency Nelson Mandela, former President of the Republic of South Africa, also gave a speech. This occasion marked the official launch of the Trust Fund. In addition, the visit aimed at strengthening ties between the Pan-African Parliament and the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association.

While in South Africa, the delegation met with the following Pan-African Parliament officials:

- The Honourable Mostepha Boudina of Algeria, Chairperson of the Committee on Transport, Industry, Communications, Energy, Science and Technology;
- The Honourable Abdelahad Gamaleldin of Egypt, Chairperson of the Committee on Justice and Human Rights;
- The Honourable Wycliffe Oparanya of Kenya, Chairperson of the Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs;
- The Honourable Bachir Chara of Algeria, Chairperson of the Committee on Rural Economy Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment.

Sixth session of the Pan-African Parliament

The sixth ordinary session of the Pan-African Parliament took place from November 13 to 24, 2006.

The agenda for the sixth session of the Pan-African Parliament included the following items:

- Dynamics and ramifications of migration (returning nationals, internally displaced people, refugees, human trafficking, brain drain, etc.) and its repercussions on the economic and socio-political situation in Africa;
- NEPAD progress report on the implementation of sectoral activities and outlook;
- Review of national reports on the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and debate;
- Peace and security in Africa;

- the Great Lakes area
 - Darfur, Sudan
 - Côte d'Ivoire
 - Democratic Republic of Congo
 - Chad
 - Somalia
 - Western Sahara – Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
- PAP budget for 2007 and audit reports for 2004 and 2005.

During its visit, the Canadian delegation had an opportunity to attend the opening ceremony, which was attended by a number of ambassadors and high commissioners. The Sixth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament opened with the swearing-in of 14 new members. During the visit, the delegation attended a presentation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) in Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya.

Opening ceremony for the sixth session

In her speech, the President of the Pan-African Parliament, the Honourable Gertrude Mongella of the United Republic of Tanzania, spoke of the challenges to be met during the Sixth Ordinary Session.

President Mongella said the ceremony would be remembered as a landmark in the history of the Pan-African Parliament.

She told the House that the items on the agenda included the 2006 PAP budget of US\$11.9 million, which was proposed by the House during the Fifth Ordinary Session of the PAP in May 2006 and adopted by the African Union. She added that a series of remittances from the African Union Commission totaling approximately US\$7.8 million have been paid into the Pan-African Parliament account.

President Mongella also told the House that the process of recruiting PAP staff would continue, in order to boost the Secretariat's ability to support the activities of the Parliament and its committees.

She added that, since the Fifth Ordinary Session of PAP, 39 of the 94 budgeted permanent staff members had been recruited and that more would be hired before the end of the year. However, she noted that recruitment was dependent on the remittance of funds from the African Union Commission.

President Mongella noted that the 2007 budget was aimed primarily at building the PAP's capacity in terms of technical and human resources, giving parliamentarians the

tools they need to carry out their mandate, and laying the foundation for the PAP's legislative role.

As part of the opening ceremony, a number of individuals then gave speeches, including the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., who addressed the Assembly as follows:

Madam President, Honourable Members of Parliament, Excellencies, Ambassadors, High Commissioners: as the Co-Chair of the Canada Africa Parliamentary Association, I am truly honoured to address the Sixth Session of your Parliament.

This is the second time that a Canadian representative has had the opportunity to speak to this august body. At your Fifth Session last spring, my colleague the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk -- my Co-Chair and a senator -- spoke of our Association's commitment to Africa's parliamentarians.

With your indulgence, I would like to take a few moments to sketch the broad outlines, the major missions, of our Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association.

One of the primary objectives of the Association -- which was created in November 2003 -- is to give a parliamentary dimension to the Government of Canada's assistance to the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

The Association works hard to promote democracy and good government in Africa, to tighten links between Canadian and African parliamentarians, to study a wide range of issues of significance to Africa, to enhance Canadian parliamentarians' understanding of the significant problems and serious difficulties with which Africans are dealing, to ensure that dialogue is established with African legislatures on major strategic issues, and to contribute to Canada's efforts in Africa by bringing a parliamentary dimension to them.

At the present time, 74 Canadian senators and Members of Parliament belong to our Association. It is directed by an executive committee of 15 parliamentarians from all the political parties represented in the two Houses of the Parliament of Canada, and as I said it is co-chaired by Senator Andreychuk and myself.

In the months since your Fifth Session, we have had several occasions to get involved in trying to develop some common ground with a number of African parliamentarians. For instance, on two different occasions we have welcomed a couple of people from the Pan-African Parliament, or four in total, for a training session with our own parliamentary officers in Ottawa. As a matter of fact, I believe that your Sergeant-at-Arms was with us just last week.

In September, our Speaker, the Honourable Peter Milliken, visited your Parliament with four whips of the parties represented in our House of Commons, as a way of engaging in dialogue with your parliamentarians.

We also sent an observer mission to the first round of elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo last July, under the auspices of La Francophonie. The Right Honourable Joe Clark, former Prime Minister of Canada, was personally involved

in this international effort to ensure a peaceful transition to democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Last week the Canadian Parliamentary Centre, which is an independent non-government organisation in our country, hosted a dozen parliamentarians from various African countries to explore together with Members of our Parliament the role of a parliamentarian, dealing with the media, and so forth, throughout the week.

As an association, we quite often meet with visiting officials as they come to visit our own government officials. We try to make sure that the parliamentary dimension is not forgotten either by Canadians or by visiting African officials.

This afternoon you will hear from another Canadian citizen, His Excellency Nelson Mandela, one of our three honorary Canadian citizens. I regret very much that I am not in a position to make an announcement. I am now in the opposition in my country. That is a rather recent development. So I cannot speak for the government, but I can assure you of one thing: as the Co-Chairs of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, my Co-Chair and I will certainly encourage our government to consider its contribution to the Trust Fund of the Pan-African Parliament, because we believe it is an important institution.

We want to accompany the Pan-African Parliament as it develops its expertise, authority and reputation as a guiding light for democracy, peace and good governance in Africa. It is the third time we have had a Canadian delegation attending the PAP Session. So on behalf of my fellow Canadian delegates here, the Canadian High Commissioner and all Canadian parliamentarians, I wish this Session much success and assure you of our continued interest and support as you develop your expertise and Strategic Plan.

We are delighted to be with you today. I want to conclude by assuring you that Canada will continue the kind of support it gave as an active participant in the G8 involvement in establishing the new plan for Africa's development.

Our Prime Minister at the time, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, toured many countries in Africa in preparation for the G8 Meeting in Kananaskis, in our country, at the turn of the millennium. I had the opportunity to accompany him. He reflected Canada's will and to a great extent the will of the international community, with respect to helping Africa and the implementation of NEPAD. While parliamentarians and leaders of countries change, parliaments endure. I conclude by saying that we in the Canadian Parliament -- whether in government or in the opposition, it does not matter -- will continue supporting the Pan-African Parliament in its endeavours.

Thank you.

His Excellency Nelson Mandela, the former South African President, then addressed the Assembly, and asked the African governments to create transparent and accountable systems in order to advance the course of development in Africa. Mandela said poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, the lack of shelter and clean water, and HIV/AIDS, remain some of the biggest challenges facing the continent.

Mandela asked the Pan-African Parliament to be the voice of the African poor and to let their voices be heard loudly and clearly in the corridors of power.

In launching the Pan-African Parliament Trust Fund, Mandela said the PAP would stand as a clear example of how accountability is crucial in enabling Africa to get out of the current situation. Mandela added that the Trust Fund would enable the PAP to obtain funding from the business sector in support of its programs. The fund would complement the efforts of member states to entrench good governance on the continent.

The former President also asked the African states that have not ratified the protocol establishing the Pan-African Parliament to do so, in order to allow the PAP to achieve the objectives underlying its creation.

Other information

The delegation hosted an informal dinner for a number of PAP committee chairpersons. The Co-Chair reiterated the Association's desire to establish long-lasting ties with the PAP. The members of the delegation had an opportunity to find out more about the challenges facing the Pan-African Parliament generally and the African continent specifically.

Conclusion

Overall, the visit to South Africa was successful: it served to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Association and the Pan-African Parliament and the opportunity to strengthen democratic and parliamentary practices. The Delegation wishes to thank the Pan-African Parliament for the warm welcome it received during its visit and the Canadian High Commission in South Africa for its support during the delegation's stay in South Africa.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Mauril Bélanger, M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Sixth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament
DESTINATION	Midrand, South Africa
DATES	November 13 and 14, 2006
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P. Mr. David Christopherson, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Rémi Bourgault, Executive Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$30 146.89
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1 960.36
HOSPITALITY	\$ 342.31
PER DIEMS	\$ 949.38
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 5.10
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 23.67
TOTAL	\$33 427.71