

Report of the Haitian Senatorial Delegation to Ottawa and Montreal

October 28-November 1, 2007



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*Cover picture taken at CIDIHCA meeting, Oct. 31, 2007

**Picture on p. 9 taken at the Parliamentary restaurant, Oct. 29, 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From October 28 to November 1, 2007, a delegation of six Haitian senators visited Ottawa and Montreal on a fact-finding mission to exchange views with Canadian decision-makers and increase understanding of key issues in present Canada-Haiti relations. The delegation was led by senate vice-president Madame Edmonde Supplice Beauzile and its members came from six different provinces and represented four political parties.

At the request of the senate delegation, the visit was organized and coordinated by the Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL), an Ottawa-based thinktank that works with government, civil society, academics and the private sector to produce alternatives and innovative solutions to the political, social, economic and security challenges that underlie Canadian engagement in the Western hemisphere.

The senators were united in promoting Haiti's recent gains in security and stability as well as the parliament's growing strength. But they also cautioned against issues that could impede Haiti's continued progress such as the lack of trained human resources, the country's incapacity to absorb funds and the need to hold elections to renew one third of the senate.

Over the three-day visit, the delegation met with 20 Members of Parliament, including two ministers, as well as 12 officials from the executive's Steering Committee on Haiti, two representatives of the Quebec Ministry of International Relations, the CEO of the Parliamentary Centre, 15 Latin American ambassadors and the leaders of two prominent diaspora groups.

MEETINGS

Legislative Branch

In all their meetings with parliamentarians, the senators conveyed appreciation for Canadian support and development assistance to Haiti. The delegation also noted that this aid has begun to show results as seen in recent gains made in Haiti, notably on the security and political stability fronts. In this regard, the senators noted the plurality of government and the success of consensus politics. While expressing their thanks for Canada's engagement in Haiti and the critical role this country has played in Haiti's success, the senators cautioned that recent gains are fragile and there is still a great need for Canada's assistance.

For their part, Canadian parliamentarians pledged Canada's continued support for Haiti and were very interested in hearing the senators' views on Canadian aid. Three main issues were discussed in the senators' meetings with parliamentarians:

- De-centralizing government and empowering local administrations
- Haiti's low capacity to absorb funds
- Poor human resources

Conservative MPs

Rahim Jaffer and the Hon. Helena Guergis

After an initial exchange of views and information on the current situation in Haiti, the senators stressed the need to promote investment in Haiti by Canadian firms. They cited the American HOPE act as a possible example to emulate in this regard. Two other points were mentioned, that of the difficulty of certain Haitian citizens to obtain visas for Canada (including one member of the delegation who was unable to make the trip for this reason) as well as including sports in curriculum and taking charge of youths' free time.

The members of parliament present expressed great interest in helping the senators spread their message and furthering the dialogue between Haitian and Canadian parliamentarians. In return, they asked for a list of the delegation's main priorities for Haiti in order to assist in securing support for, among other things, continued fact-finding visits to foreign countries.

Bloc Québécois MPs

Vivian Barbot, André Bellavance, Robert Carrier, Johanne Deschamps, Carole Freeman, Serge Ménard, and Caroline St-Hilaire

This meeting was an opportunity for the senators to paint an accurate picture of the situation in Haiti because, as one MP stated, the little news about the country that does make its way to Canada is always pessimistic. The same MP also wanted the senators to identify the most immediate priorities needing attention. The issue of absorption capacity was named as a major impediment to sustainable development in Haiti. Tied to this are questions of human resources and infrastructure. One senator stated that there is a need to concentrate on promoting Haiti's image instead of dwelling on negative events.

Given the size of the Haitian diaspora population in Quebec, it was important for the senators to meet with members of parliament from that province. The issue of empowering local governments was high on the agenda. Once again, the idea of “twin city” programmes between Canadian and Haitian municipalities was put forward. Ms Barbot explained that a Haiti friendship group was already being formed within Parliament and that several MPs from different parties had expressed interest in joining it.

Liberal MPs

The Hon. Dr. Keith Martin, the Hon. Bryon Wilfert, the Hon. Denis Coderre, Massimo Pacetti, and Bernard Patry

The MPs were curious about the present situation in Haiti. The senators talked about the consensus government, improved security, low inflation and the fight against drug trafficking and corruption. The parliamentarians also wanted to know in what capacity they could support the delegation and the Haitian parliament in general. The senators’ objectives in this regard were three-fold:

- Promote a continuous dialogue between the governments of Canada and Haiti to ensure that bilateral and multilateral funds be used judiciously;
- Receive Canadian assistance and/or expertise on constitutional matters, particularly the issue of Haiti’s too frequent and costly elections;
- Foster support among MPs for a twin city programme to empower local administrations, train personnel and offer technical support in rural Haiti.

Question Period

The senators were invited by MP Vivian Barbot to attend Question Period in the House of Commons. They were introduced to an element of Canadian parliamentary tradition. They were keen to identify speakers and learn about current issues that Canadians take to heart, yet were quite surprised by the way members of parliament addressed one another and interacted during this session.

Executive Branch

Parliamentary Centre

Robert Miller, Christine Ivory, and Bunleng Men

This meeting focused on how to direct the Centre’s current support programme to the Haitian parliament. The senators consider the two biggest obstacles facing the Haitian government to be those of poor human resources and the lack of physical space in which to hold commissions and generally carry out governmental responsibilities. The Centre assured that staff training is a key objective of the current programme and that the lack of infrastructure will be addressed.

Mr. Miller explained the difference between friendship groups and inter-parliamentary associations which are both forms of exchange groups within Parliament that could provide assistance with promoting Haiti in Canada.

The senators also stressed the need for more trips of this nature to take place for Haitian politicians to learn about governing in different countries, but also to educate foreign governments about Haiti and forge channels of communication between parliamentarians. They explained the necessity of fostering relationships with key Latin American countries which now form the bulk of the security contingent in Haiti and could play a seminal role in the country's transition from peace keeping to development. The delegation feels that supporting such state visits is pertinent to the Parliamentary Centre's mandate in Haiti.

Steering Committee on Haiti

Representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian International Development Agency, the RCMP, the Ministry of Finance, and Justice Canada

The Steering Committee on Haiti is an inter-ministerial working group that coordinates the position on Haiti of all the branches of the Canadian government. The senators briefed the committee on recent gains in Haiti. They expressed the necessity to hold senatorial elections as per the constitution in order to maintain the population's faith in government institutions; however they agreed that changes must be made to the constitution and the CEP (Conseil Electoral Provisoire) must be replaced.

One Canadian government official asked the delegation's opinion on the mandate of the UN mission to Haiti (MINUSTAH). The senators noted that UN forces will not remain in the country for ever and there must be a plan to prepare for an eventual future disengagement. In the meantime, now that the security situation is under control, MINUSTAH's forces are needed to patrol borders and ports, provide technical assistance and alleviate the burden on the penal system.

In terms of the Interim Cooperation Framework, the delegation was asked which sectors should be prioritized for investment. The senators responded with three main areas: 1) Haiti needs to become agriculturally self-sufficient; 2) primary to tertiary and technical education must be heavily funded; and 3) the judiciary needs to be further developed. They added that aid funds should go towards the national agenda and not the priorities of the donors.

Elections Canada

Miriam Lapp, Alexandre Michaud, and Marcel Vautour

In view of the upcoming senatorial elections in Haiti, the senators were curious about what type of support, if any, Elections Canada was in a position to give. The senators were interested to learn how the "elections machine" is set in motion in Canada and what the body does outside electoral periods. Ms Lapp briefed the senators on what Elections Canada has done in the way of electoral observation in Haiti and what the organization's objectives are for the country. The main point of discussion was the CEP, its weak mandate and the need to create a permanent committee. To this end, exchanges and technical support were suggested.

Ministry of International Relations (MRI)

Jean Saintonge and Frédéric Tremblay

The delegation also met with representatives of the Quebec provincial government. Officials from the Ministry of International Relations convened with the senators to discuss how development aid from Quebec is being and ought to be used. It was a familiarization session for both parties as they learned about one another's objectives.

Rights and Democracy

France-Isabelle Langlois, Nicholas Galletti, and Caroline Brodeur

Much of this meeting for the senators was dedicated to learning about Rights and Democracy's work in Haiti. The organization has been in Haiti since 1992 and opened a permanent office in the capital in 2006. Work there involves training Haitian organizations on how to articulate their demands and suggestions to the government as well as support to the citizen's protection office. A discussion on the rights of prisoners and state-civil society relations also took place.

International Community

Grula luncheon

Nathalie Menos-Gissel, chargée d'affaires of Haiti; Arturo Bothamley, Amb. of Argentina; Edgar Mosqueira, Amb. of Bolivia; Valdemar Leao, Amb. of Brazil; Jaime Duarte, Amb. of Colombia; Emilia Alvarez, Amb. of Costa Rica; Ernesto Senti Darias, Amb. of Cuba; Eugenio Ortega Riquelme, Amb. of Chile; Mauricio Rivera, Amb. of El Salvador; Fernando Ribadeneira, Amb. of Ecuador; Manuel Barillas, Amb. of Guatemala; Beatriz Marichal, Amb. of Honduras; Romy Vazquez de Gonzalez, Amb. of Panama; Luis Arias Núñez, Amb. of the Dominican Republic; Alvaro Moerzinger Pagani, Amb. of Uruguay

The delegation was invited to join the Latin American and Caribbean ambassadors to Canada for their monthly luncheon. While the senators thanked the representatives of certain countries for their particular involvement in Haiti, the diplomats were eager to show support for Haitian development and contribute to the transition from peace keeping to development.

Dinner at the Ambassador of Chile's residence

The delegation, an official from Foreign Affairs and FOCAL were invited to an official dinner at Ambassador Ortega Riquelme's home. The senators expressed their thanks for Chilean involvement in Haiti and exchanged views on the current situation there. The ambassador stated Chile's commitment to continue working for development in Haiti and suggested that an official visit to Santiago could be arranged.

Diaspora Groups

International Centre for Haitian Documentation and Information (CIDIHCA)

Franz Voltaire and Jean-Bernard Dejean

Discussions with the chairman revolved mainly around facilitating the return to Haiti on both professional and personal grounds of members of the diaspora residing in Canada. The issue of certain problematic Haitian laws such as the impossibility of double-ownership were said to impede investment and prevent Haiti from fully benefiting from the diaspora. Similarly, it was suggested that the government of Haiti should consider how to encourage those members of the diaspora reaching retirement who may want to split their time between Canada and Haiti.

He also stated that it is time to move from aid to investment in Haiti. More emphasis needs to be placed on training upper management staff and public-private initiatives must be promoted.

Association of Canadian-Haitian Organizations for Development (ROCAHD)

Board

The delegation was very interested in learning about the projects ROCAHD is running in Haiti. The director gave a detailed description of the organization's micro-development projects which deal mostly in agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries and reforestation.

CONCLUSION

The senate delegation's visit to Ottawa was timely. With Canada's heavy involvement in Afghanistan and the Harper government's new outlook on the Americas, it was necessary to give an accurate picture of the current situation in Haiti and of the country's needs in order to give proper direction to Canadian aid funds.

The senators sought to strengthen ties with Canadian parliamentarians in an effort to further political stability and reinforce Haiti's democratic institutions. They were able to convey some of the major issues facing Haiti in the future and to develop a personal rapport with key Canadian decision makers. Pledges were made to create friendship groups, implement twin city programmes and increase technical and training support.

The senators now look to expand channels of dialogue with those Latin American countries with troops in the MINUSTAH forces to urge their continued support as Haiti transitions from peace keeping to development. The delegation will be visiting Mexico City at the end of November and has also received an invitation to Brazil.



APPENDIX I Delegation Biographies

Sen. Edmonde Supplice Beauzile, vice-president of the Senate

Senator Beauzile was elected in 2006 from the Département du Centre for a six-year term under the party Fusion des socio-démocrates. She is a member of the following committees: Education, Finance, and Foreign Affairs. She was previously elected and served as a member of the Chambre des Députés from 1990 to 1994. Born on October 14, 1961, Senator Beauzile, a former teacher, has been very active in the field of education. She is married with three children.

Sen. Jean Hector Anacassis, president of the Committee on Public Works and Transportation

Senator Anacassis was elected in 2006 from the Département de l'Ouest for a six-year term under the party Lespwa which has the largest number of senators and is the coalition under which President Préval was elected. He is an engineer by training and has spent a great deal of his younger years working for grassroots organizations. He received the second largest amount of votes in the country after President Préval.

Sen. Evallière Beauplan, president of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Senator Beauplan was elected in 2006 from the Département du Nord-Ouest for a six-year term under the party PONT (Lavalas). He is serving his second term in the senate, having been previously elected in 2000. Born on June 23, 1968, Senator Beauplan is a medical doctor. He is married with one child.

Sen. Rudolph Boulos, member of the Committees on Agriculture, Education, and Commerce and Tourism

Senator Boulos was elected in 2006 from the Département du Nord-Est for a six-year term under the party Fusion des Socio-démocrates. He is a member of the following committees: Agriculture, Commerce and Tourism, and Education. Born on April 28, 1951, he is pharmacist and studied at the Harvard Business School. He is a very successful businessman and industrialist and a founding member of Centres pour le Développement et la Santé, Haiti's oldest and most important health organization, with locations in Cité Soleil, in the Nord-Est, and in many other departments in Haiti. Senator Boulos is married with two children.

Sen. Michel Clérié, president of the Committee on Commerce and Tourism

Senator Clérié was elected in 2006 from the Grand'Anse Department for a six-year term under the party Fusion des Socio-démocrates. He is a member of the following committees: Justice and Public Works, Transportation and Communication. Senator Clérié has run for a senate seat from his department on two previous elections. Born on September 28, 1947, he studied business and is among Haiti's leading businessmen. He is married with children.

Sen. Jean Joseph Pierre-Louis, treasurer of the Senate

Senator Pierre-Louis was elected in 2006 for a four-year term under the party OPL from the smallest and newest of Haiti's departments, le Département des Nippes. As treasurer of the Senate, he is a member of the Senate leadership. An accountant by profession, Senator Pierre-Louis was born on May 13, 1965. He is married with children.

Mr. Lionel Delatour, consultant and visit coordinator

Mr. Delatour is a consultant on Haitian public policy and politics. Since 1993, he has led 28 delegations of over 150 business leaders from Haiti on fact-finding visits to Washington. He organized and participated in various other Washington visits, such as a Haitian senate delegation in 1998, Prime Minister Gérard Latortue's visit in the spring of 2004, and President Préval's visits in March 2006 and May 2007.

He is a founder and presently secretary-general of the Centre pour la Libre Entreprise et la Démocratie (CLEDE). Mr. Delatour received his undergraduate degree from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and holds a master's degree in public administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Born on September 25, 1950, he is married with three children.

APPENDIX II
Programme of the visit

Delegation

Madame Sen. Edmonde S. Beauzile, Département du Centre, vice-president of the Senate of the Republic of Haiti

Sen. Jean Hector Anacassis, Département de l'Ouest

Sen. Evallière Beauplan, Département du Nord-Ouest

Sen. Rudolphe Boulos, Département du Nord-Est

Sen. Michel Clérié, Département de la Grand'Anse

Sen. Jean Joseph Pierre-Louis, Département des Nippes

Lionel Delatour, delegation coordinator

Sunday, October 28

Delegation arrival Lord Elgin

Program officers Carlo Dade
Executive Director, Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)
Leslie Fillion-Wilkinson
Haiti Project coordinator, FOCAL

Monday, October 29

8:30 a.m. Briefing
John W. Graham, Chairman of the board, FOCAL
Lord Elgin

10:00 a.m. Parliamentary Centre
Robert Miller, President and CEO
Also attending: Christine Ivory, Coordinator, Learning Programs; Bunleng Men, Project Field Manager

11:00 a.m. Rahim Jaffer, Conservative MP Edmonton—Strathcona & the Hon. Helena Guergis, Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and Sport
House of Commons
Also attending: Patrick Glémaud, Senior Counsel, Justice Canada

12:30 p.m. Parliamentary Restaurant
House of Commons
Also attending: Patrick Glémaud, Senior Counsel, Justice Canada

- 2:00 p.m. Question Period**
House of Commons
- 3:00 p.m. The Hon. Maxime Bernier, Minister of Foreign Affairs**
House of Commons
- 3:15 p.m. Vivian Barbot, Bloc Québécois MP Papineau; Critic, Intergovernmental Affairs, Francophonie; Associate Critic, Foreign Affairs**
House of Commons
Also attending: André Bellavance, Critic, Agriculture; Robert Carrier, Critic, Transportation, and Infrastructure; Johanne Deschamps, Critic, Latin America-Africa, and Status of Women; Carole Freeman, Critic, Justice and Attorney General; Serge Ménard, Critic, Public Security; Caroline St-Hilaire, Critic, International Cooperation.
- 4:30 p.m. Steering Committee on Haiti**
Pearson Building
Attending: *Foreign Affairs Canada*: Brandt Blimkie, Analyst START; Sara Cohen, Senior Desk Officer –Haiti; Louis-Robert Daigle, Senior Policy Advisor – Haiti Division; Robert Derouin, Director General START; James Lambert, Director General Latin America and the Caribbean; Ginette Martin, Director Haiti Division; *Canadian International Development Agency*: Antoine Chevrier, Director Policy, Planning and Communications; Luc Fréchette, Director General Haiti, Dominican Republic and Cuba; Gilles Rivard, Vice-president Americas; Francois-Philippe Dubé, International Policy, Ministry of Finance; Serge Lortie, International Relations, Justice Canada; Luc Proulx, RCMP.
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner**
Restaurant Le Tartuffe
Joining for this meal: Nathalie Menos-Gissel and Jean-Robert Menos
Sponsored by: FOCAL

Tuesday, October 30

- 8:30 a.m. Media Breakfast**
Lord Elgin
Joining for this meeting: Lee Berthiaume, journalist *Embassy*; Rachel Schmidt, Director of Communications, FOCAL
- 12:30 p.m. Grula Luncheon**
Château Laurier
Attending: N. Menos-Gissel, chargée d'affaires of Haiti; A. Bothamley, Amb. of Argentina; E. Mosqueira, Amb. of Bolivia; V. Leao, Amb. of Brazil J. Duarte, Amb. of Colombia; E. Alvarez, Amb. of Costa Rica; E. Senti Darias, Amb. of Cuba; E. Ortega Riquelme, Amb. of Chile; M. Rivera, Amb. of El Salvador; F. Ribadeneira, Amb. of Ecuador; M. Barillas, Amb. of Guatemala; B. Marichal,

Amb. of Honduras; R. Vazquez de Gonzalez, Amb. of Panama; L. Arias Núñez, Amb. of the Dominican Republic; A. Moerzinger Pagani, Amb. of Uruguay

- 2:30 p.m. Elections Canada**
Elections Canada Offices
Miriam Lapp, Interim Director, International Research and Cooperation
Also attending: Alexandre Michaud and Marcel Vautour, analysts International Relations Division
- 4:00 p.m. The Hon. Dr. Keith Martin, Liberal MP Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca; Critic, CIDA & the Hon. Bryon Wilfert, Liberal MP Richmond Hill; Associate Critic, Foreign Affairs**
House of Commons
Also attending: the Hon. Denis Coderre, Critic, National Defence; Massimo Pacetti, MP Saint-Léonard--Saint-Michel; Bernard Patry, MP Pierrefonds-Dollard
- 7:00 p.m. Dinner**
Residence of His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of Chile
Hosted by: Eugenio Ortega Riquelme, Ambassador, and Mrs. Carmen Frei Ruiz-Tagle
Also attending: Louis-Robert Daigle, Foreign Affairs Canada; Eduardo Tapia Riepel, Minister-Counsellor, Embassy of Chile; Nathalie Menos-Gissel, Chargée d'affaires, Embassy of Haiti

Wednesday, October 31

- 9:00 a.m. Delegation arrival in Montreal**
Delta Centre-ville
- 10:30 a.m. Centre international de documentation et d'information haïtienne, caribbéenne et afro-canadienne (CIDIHCA)**
Franz Voltaire, Chairman of the board
Also attending: Jean-Bernard Dejean; Alain Berranger, FOCAL board member
- 12:45 p.m. Quebec Ministry of International Relations**
Jean Saintonge, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Caribbean Division
Frédéric Tremblay, Desk Officer, Haiti, Central America and the Caribbean
L'Entrecôte St-Jean
Also attending: Pierre-Richard Casimir, Consul General, Consulate General of the Republic of Haiti in Montreal
- 2:45 p.m. Rights and Democracy**
Rights and Democracy offices
Nicholas Galletti, Americas Regional Officer

Also attending: France-Isabelle Langlois, Assistant Director, Policy, Programmes and Planning; Caroline Brodeur, Programme Agent, Economic and Social Rights; Michael Wodzicki, Coordinator, Democratic Development

4:00 p.m **Raymond Laurent**
Journalist
Delta Centre-ville

5:30 p.m. **Regroupement des organismes canado-haïtiens pour le développement (ROCAHD)**

Eric Faustin, Director General

Also attending: Alain Berranger; Michel Jean-Baptiste, president (Association de solidarité internationale de développement multiple (ASIDM)); Vernick Barthélys, vice-president (Action communautaire de la Basse-Vallée de l'Artibonite (ACBVA)); Marie-Antoine Alabré, treasurer (Association des Amis de Port-Salut); Wanex L. Zéphyr, secretary (Regroupement des gens de Ouanaminthe (REGO)); Édith Duterville (Ralliement des infirmières et infirmières auxiliaires haïtiennes de Montréal (RIIAH)); Denise Gagnon (Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec (FTTQ)); Maud Pierre-Pierre (Bureau de la communauté haïtienne de Montréal (BCHM)); Marlène Valcin (Fonds de développement Haïti-Canada (FDHC)); Pierre-Richard Casimir, Consul General

7:30 p.m. **Nancy Roc**
Journalist
Delta Centre-ville