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## LES RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

**Statement by:**

**The Honourable Claudette Tardif**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2009**

## THE SENATE

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

### LES RENDEZ-VOUS DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I am pleased to tell you about an annual event of great significance to all francophones and francophiles in Canada, namely, Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. This event offers an abundance of cultural activities across the country from March 6 to 22. It is a unique and precious opportunity to promote the French language and the Francophonie from coast to coast to coast.

Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie is part of the celebrations that mark the International Day of La Francophonie, which will take place on March 20.

The theme this year, Canada's Francophonie Today — Rich in its Diversity! captures the essence of today's Francophonie as it exists in Canada. This theme reveals the invaluable contribution of francophone immigrants to our country. Each province organizes its own Rendez-vous celebrations.

Alberta's vibrant francophone culture can be traced back to a time before the province was created. In recent years, the Alberta legislature, with the support of the province's Francophone Secretariat, has celebrated the province's French-Canadian culture and heritage at a special ceremony of Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie. This ceremony was held on March 9 in the Alberta Legislature rotunda and hosted by the Honourable Ken Kowalski, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, who was

accompanied by several ministers, members, dignitaries and presidents of the Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta and representatives of several francophone associations.

This week, at the Alberta Legislative Assembly, there will be a bilingual historical exhibit on Alberta's francophone presence, family activities and tours in French. In the 17 Alberta regions where francophones live, flag-raising ceremonies will be held, featuring the Franco-Albertan flag.

Throughout the country, francophones and francophiles enjoy this period of celebration to show their love of the French language and to take part in activities that help them better understand their history, appreciate the richness of their culture and establish ties that will strengthen their feeling of belonging to this heritage, which is so precious to us.

The important contribution of francophones to the building of our country is decidedly a value to be preserved and perpetuated. Francophones and francophiles have all the tools required to encourage the engagement of youth and newcomers in the French fact.

I trust that all francophones and francophiles will bring their energy and their zest for living in French to the festivities surrounding Les Rendez-vous de la Francophonie.

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