



CANADA

# Debates of the Senate

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3rd SESSION

•

40th PARLIAMENT

•

VOLUME 147

•

NUMBER 96

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## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

**Statement by:**

**The Honourable Claudette Tardif**

**Tuesday, March 22, 2011**

## THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 22, 2011

[*Translation*]

### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LA FRANCOPHONIE

**Hon. Claudette Tardif (Deputy Leader of the Opposition):** Honourable senators, I rise today to recognize the International Day of La Francophonie and the end of the festivities surrounding the 2011 Rendez-vous de la Francophonie.

On March 20 of each year, francophones on every continent celebrate this day dedicated to the French language, which unites 220 million French-speaking people throughout the world and is a rallying point for 890 million people represented by the 75 states and governments of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

This day is an opportunity for francophones throughout the world to reaffirm their solidarity and their desire to live together while embracing their differences and their diversity here in Canada.

This celebration of the French fact is clear evidence of the vitality of over 9.5 million Canadians who, in their everyday lives, help to keep the French language alive and flourishing.

Celebrations were held across Canada from March 4 to 20, 2011 to mark the 2011 Rendez-vous de la Francophonie.

The Rendez-vous de la Francophonie reflects the modern and dynamic francophone presence that is firmly established in our Canadian communities. This francophone reality is a unique strength that provides added value to our country.

[*English*]

The theme of this year's Rendez-vous de la Francophonie, "Interagir pour s'enrichir," which, translated into English is "Interaction leads to understanding," serves as a reflection of the actions taken by francophone communities from coast to coast to coast to establish relationships and partnerships in a variety of areas. These areas include those related to the economy, culture, tourism, education, health and immigration.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Abdou Diouf, Secretary General of La Francophonie, dedicated this International Day of La Francophonie to francophone youth. He said:

I would like to dedicate this International Day of La Francophonie to our youth: to young people in every country and on every continent; to young people in the Arab world who had the courage and dedication to peacefully seek political freedom and economic and social equality; and to young people who are no longer condemned to oscillate between hopelessness and revolt, but who can now, in dignity and trust, go forward with a very real hope for a future bright with liberty, stability and prosperity.

The International Day of La Francophonie allows us to celebrate the shared values, the traditions and the heritage that characterize the francophone identity, and the feeling of solidarity that is proudly developing throughout the world. It reminds us that the French language is a treasure that must be celebrated.