

**Media Release
For Immediate Release**

FCFA Presents its Position on the Modernization of the *Official Languages Act*

Ottawa, March 26, 2018 – The organization representing Canada’s Francophone minority communities told the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages tonight that only a thorough modernization can fix half a century of endemic structural issues with the *Official Languages Act* and guarantee its full implementation.

The Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada made public, today, an in-depth brief offering an honest assessment of the *Official Languages Act’s* flaws. The document also introduces concrete avenues for a modern, efficient, coherent and visionary *Act*.

“For decades, in report upon report, successive official languages commissioners have come to the same conclusions, and year after year community organizations have highlighted the same issues of erosion and stagnation. At some point, we have to face the facts – the *Official Languages Act*, in its current form, is the main impediment to its own implementation,” says FCFA President Jean Johnson.

The FCFA is recommending four major amendments to the *Act*:

- Assign responsibility for the implementation of the *Act* to the President of the Treasury Board, with an increased political leadership role for the Privy Council Office on official languages;
- Include a right for official language minority communities to participate in the implementation of the *Act*, namely by creating a formal advisory council;
- Develop more stringent monitoring and accountability mechanisms, including an administrative tribunal responsible for hearing complaints regarding the implementation of the *Act*;

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- Reshape the rights conferred, the obligations imposed and the principles that inspire the *Act* – namely, with the inclusion of provisions to enshrine the requirement for Supreme Court judges to be bilingual.

“The brief we are presenting today is our contribution to a conversation that is gaining momentum as the 50th anniversary of the 1969 Official Languages Act draws nearer. More and more people are realizing that bold and visionary gestures are needed to give new impetus to Canada’s linguistic duality. The time is ripe,” explains Mr. Johnson.

The FCFA is a national organization whose mandate is to defend and promote the interests and rights of Francophones living outside Quebec. It brings together twelve provincial and territorial Francophone organizations, as well as six national sector-based groups.

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