



DEBATES OF THE SENATE

1st SESSION



44th PARLIAMENT



VOLUME 153



NUMBER 85

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

Statement by:
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

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Hon. Patricia Bovey: Honourable senators, I am one very proud Canadian, and that pride swelled in me in Sharm el-Sheikh during COP 27.

For the first time at a COP, Canada had a pavilion — due to a request for one having been made a number of times. Our pavilion was a huge success — and, I might add, when all was said and done, it came in under budget.

Its design, programming, staff, energy and humanism contributed to it being a COP hub — not only for Canadians, but for those from other countries as well. The featured Canadian images around the outside became photo op spots — the logo on its wall was a feature point, and the wooden Canada pins made here in Ottawa were coveted.

More importantly, during the two weeks, the staff organized and presented 86 panel discussions with speakers from across Canada of all ages and many disciplines. Topics included each of the issues the Egyptian presidency designated for special days, and other topics of particular relevance to Canada: our climate concerns, research and actions. The presentations were excellent.

I was particularly proud of the contributions made by Canada's Indigenous representatives. From the pavilion's opening — featuring Inuit, First Nations and Métis leaders, and a song by the

internationally acclaimed drummer, dancer and politician Peter Irniq — to its closing, Canada's role at COP was strong and recognized.

The honesty and hope expressed articulately by so many speakers was inspiring, and the challenges put out were key. I was particularly encouraged and excited by the Indigenous youth who took part. Colleagues, with their understanding of the precariousness of the world around us, their knowledge of nature and centuries-old Indigenous partnering with nature, their commitment to sustainability and their constructive ways to turn the tide of climate devastation, I have hope. I do have hope for the future.

My concern is how we get to that future. How do we come together here at home, and globally, to renew the land, water and air? Can we really come together as partners from our various fields of endeavour and livelihoods to make that change soon enough? The youth thought so, and they have ideas that are not only worth listening to, but also worth acting upon.

In the midst of the pride I felt for our pavilion, the presentations and the voices of all our presenters, there were other aspects of COP, and its debates and deliberations, which I will speak about at another time.

For now, I start with big congratulations to everyone who planned, participated in and had any hand in the delivery of its programming, and those who spoke on the panels; they all moved the needle. Thank you.
