

DiscoursCPPF

Public Policy Forum

29th Annual Testimony Dinner and Awards

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Toronto

Remarks by Françoise Bertrand

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Fédération des Chambres de commerce du Québec

Monsieur le premier ministre MacLauchlan, Merci, pour votre aimable présentation (AD LIB).

Mesdames et Messieurs, distingués invités, bonsoir.  
Permettez-moi tout d'abord de saluer mes collègues lauréats.

I want to commend the initiative of PPF to recognize the contributions of young leaders like Taylor Owen. If public policy wants to embrace change, imagine the future away from the rearview mirror, the possibilities of our society can only be attained by counting on the potential of all generations.

Our fast changing world has to find coherence in diversity. In our modern world, public policy making is not, and cannot be, the sole preserve of politicians and public servants. Public policy has to be forged with a diversity of stakeholders in a process that creates a convergence of interests. There will be conflicting views but public policy makers have to take on the challenge of not only reflecting the responses and opinions collected but, in giving meaning to that diversity.

Only a courageous undertaking can foster evolution. It might be confusing at first, even disruptive. Public policy process must continue to move away from a one dimensional process in order to embrace a convergent process that will reveal and include the richness of diversity.

In the fragmented world in which we live, beliefs and knowledge constantly come into conflict. In 2016, following the Paris climate conference COP 21, we all believe that yes, we ought to be more concerned with climate change and the impact of human activity on our planet. But, how will public policy reconcile this tremendous challenge with sustainable growth. This represents a titanic task and a challenge for the future of public policy. Indeed reconciling protection of the environment, social acceptability and economic growth will require not only the best intelligence but the input of a wide variety of stakeholders.

Stakeholders are more educated and knowledgeable than ever before, they belong to different communities of interest and some are adamant about their point of view. Public policy has always been a balancing act but the more open it becomes, the less it can rely on the views of the “wise few” and the more it has to rely on research, proven facts and data, information that ought to be shared in order to nourish public debate while diminishing the grasp of prejudice.

In the digital world, stakeholders can easily access public forum and give strength to their positions through social media. The public process must take into account this new expression of diversity. The difficulty lies in making a difference between sheer noise and valuable ideas.

I have always believed that in order to serve public interest, policy makers and policy contributors, such as many of us in this room, have to remember that adaptation makes for better change because evolution will always win over revolution. Only this vision of inclusiveness can provide the perspective required for the "vivre ensemble"

We all have a role to play in the public policy process. Each of us, has a responsibility to bring his contribution, his knowledge, his individuality to the debate.

In the Past my contribution came as a Dean, as a broadcaster, as a regulator ; I was a public servant.

For the last 13 years I have been an advocate. I have worked with her fabulous team devoted to economic development and defending business and entrepreneurs with a strong network of 140 local chambers of commerce.

In today's debate we make a difference by promoting economic development in the perspective of sustainable growth striving to influence public policy.

I thank you for the honour I receive tonight, I share this honour with the network of chambers of commerce first in Québec but across Canada, because working together : we make a difference !

(En Français) je vous remercie et je vous souhaite une excellence soirée