



December 1, 2008

An Accord on a Cooperative Government to Address the Present Economic Crisis

This document outlines the key understandings between the Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party of Canada regarding a new cooperative government.

1. Role of caucuses

The Liberal and NDP caucuses will continue to meet as distinct caucuses. They will receive briefings and be consulted as appropriate. Both are entitled to offer advice to the government. The two caucuses may meet jointly as agreed from time to time to jointly address issues. The caucuses will sit next to each other on the government benches.

2. Cabinet

Nothing in this Accord is intended to diminish or alter the power and prerogatives of the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister will be the Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada.

The Minister of Finance will be appointed from the Liberal caucus.

The cabinet will be composed of 24 ministers plus the Prime Minister.

Eighteen of these ministers will be appointed from within the Liberal caucus.

Six of these ministers will be appointed from within the NDP caucus, plus six Parliamentary Secretaries, sworn in as Privy Counsellors, will also be named from the NDP caucus. In the event the Prime Minister chooses to appoint a larger cabinet, the NDP proportion will be maintained.

The specifics of these cabinet appointments will be made by the Prime Minister in appropriate consultation with the Leader of the NDP.

The rules and practices of cabinet confidentiality and solidarity will be strictly maintained. Normal processes of cabinet appointments and governance in the Canadian federal government will be respected. The cabinet is jointly and collectively accountable to Parliament for its work, including in daily question period.

3. A “no surprises” approach

Within the limits of common sense and the needs of cabinet government, the two parties agree they will work together on a “no surprises” basis.

Furthermore, upon its formation, the government will put in place a permanent consultation mechanism with the Bloc Québécois.

4. Appointments

Both parties are committed to restoring the integrity, transparency and efficiency of the appointments process in the Public Service and in federal bodies like the Supreme Court, the Senate and Commissions like the CRTC.

The Prime Minister will consult the Leader of the NDP as appropriate on appointments.

5. A standing managing committee of the Accord

A standing managing committee of the Accord, chaired by the Prime Minister, will be struck.

It will be composed of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the NDP, and such other persons as the leaders deem appropriate from time to time.

The committee will meet regularly to ensure the good order of the Accord; to deal with key issues that have arisen; to consult on key appointments; and to resolve any disputes which might arise from the Accord (for example, by referring issues

relating to the Accord to a trusted committee of experienced, distinguished Canadians).

6. Term of this Accord

This Accord will expire on June 30, 2011 unless renewed.

Agreed on December 1, 2008.

Hon. Stéphane Dion
Leader, Liberal Party of Canada

Hon. Jack Layton
Leader, New Democratic Party of Canada

