

## Language Commissioners Sign Historic Agreement with 2015 Pan Am Games

**Toronto, November 26, 2014** – Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada Graham Fraser, Ontario French Language Services Commissioner François Boileau and Toronto 2015 Pan American and Parapan American Games Organizing Committee CEO Saäd Rafi signed an agreement today to ensure that both Canada's and Ontario's linguistic duality is well represented and promoted before, during and after these highly anticipated Games.

"Important national celebrations, like the Pan American and Parapan American Games, should all serve as springboards for a new leap forward, so that linguistic duality can be firmly established as a Canadian value as we head toward our nation's 150th anniversary in 2017," said Commissioner Fraser.

The Memorandum of Understanding reflects the participants' commitment to ensuring that services are provided to the public in English and in French before, during and after the Games, and to taking the needs of Ontario's Francophone community into account in both the planning and delivery of the programs and services associated with the Games.

"The year 2015 will mark the 400th anniversary of Francophone presence in Ontario, so it is important to reflect and celebrate our rich Francophone heritage. The Pan American and Parapan American Games represent a golden opportunity for the Francophone community to play an active role in delivering a world-class sporting event while showcasing the rich contributions of the Franco-Ontarian community, Canada's largest Francophone population outside of Quebec, to the world," added Commissioner Boileau.

The Pan American Games are the world's third largest international multi-sport games and will be the largest multi-sport event ever to be held in Canada, double the size of the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games. Canada has had the honour of hosting them twice before, in 1967 and 1999, both times in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"TO2015 is committed to engaging Francophone communities across the country, including Franco-Ontarians, as we work together to plan and stage, in both official languages, the best Pan Am and Parapan Am Games ever held," said CEO Rafi. "The Games are all about building a sense of connection and community, and valuing diversity. Linguistic accessibility promotes inclusion and ensures all visitors have a great experience at the Games."

The Pan Am Games will take place from July 10 to 26, 2015, and the Parapan Am Games will be held from August 7 to 15, 2015, in Toronto, Ontario.

The participants also agreed to put a complaints-processing mechanism in place, in the spirit of the November 26, 2012, memorandum of understanding signed by commissioners Fraser and Boileau, in order to resolve complaints that arise before and during the Games.

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For more information, please contact:

**Nelson Kalil**

Manager, Strategic Communications and Media Relations  
Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages

**Telephone:** 819-420-4714

**Cellular:** 613-324-0999

**Toll-free:** 1-877-996-6368

**E-mail:** [nelson.kalil@clo-ocol.gc.ca](mailto:nelson.kalil@clo-ocol.gc.ca)

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**Kim Bergeron**

Public Relations and Communications Officer  
Office of the French Language Services Commissioner

**Telephone:** 416-314-8247

**Toll-free:** 1-866-246-5262

**E-mail:** [kim.bergeron@ontario.ca](mailto:kim.bergeron@ontario.ca)

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**Teddy Katz**

Director, media relations and chief spokesperson, TO2015

**Telephone:** 416-957-2117

**E-mail:** [teddy.katz@toronto2015.org](mailto:teddy.katz@toronto2015.org)