

Section canadienne de
l'Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie



Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie

Report of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Working Group on Reforming the Constitution of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Geneva, Switzerland

From November 23 and 24, 2023

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF) consisted of the Honourable **Éric Forest**, senator and Member of Parliament **Joël Godin**. The delegation attended the meeting of the Working Group on Reforming the APF Constitution in Geneva, Switzerland, from 23–24 November 2023.

The delegation was accompanied by Julie Pelletier, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Branch.

Member parliamentarians from over eight APF branches attended this meeting. All four APF regions were represented: Africa, the Americas, Asia–Pacific and Europe.

WORKING GROUP ON REFORMING THE APF CONSTITUTION

Chaired by Senator Christophe-André Frassa (France), Chair of the APF Political Committee, this group is mandated to review the workings, structure and democratic oversight mechanisms of the APF and to examine its financial and budgetary rules. Formed almost three years ago, the Working Group falls under the APF Political Committee and was established following the 45th Annual Session of the APF in Abidjan from 6–9 July 2019. This was the Working Group's fourth in-person meeting, the first being in Quebec City, Canada, on 12–13 May 2022.

The goal of this meeting was to finish examining the financial and non-financial rules of the APF constitution and the Democratic Oversight Mechanisms. Participants got the chance to hold their meeting in the historic Alabama Room of Geneva's Town Hall, where the first Geneva Convention to improve the treatment of wounded soldiers was concluded and signed.

The first day was dedicated to examining the rules of procedure and the financial regulations. Mr. **Godin** noted that the Working Group must foreground transparency principles in its rules of procedure so as to contribute to improving the organization's credibility. He also described Canadian best practices for proactive disclosure of parliamentary expenses and put forward an amendment to include a personnel code in the rules of procedure setting out the rights, obligations and duties of APF staff. Senator **Forest** suggested that the Working Group must go a step above minimum standards in its financial regulations by including principles of good governance and accountability, such as double signatures on accounts. The senator also recommended standardizing the terminology used in the financial regulations with international standards to make them easier to understand and including fee schedules and the procedures manual in the appendix.

On the second day, the parliamentarians began studying the procedures manual, which sets out the organizational, accounting, budget and security rules of the APF. Senator **Forest** emphasized the need for the various expense claim standards to be based on established government or international standards and for the budget allowance given to the Chair of the APF to be updated to enable him to fully carry out his advocacy work and for unbudgeted or unforeseen expenses to be better managed. At the end of the day, it

was agreed to present the work done on the rules of procedure and financial regulations and the procedures manual at the winter APF Bureau meeting in January 2024 in Brussels, Belgium. It was also agreed to meet again in spring 2024 to finalize the democratic oversight mechanisms and the personnel code with the goal of submitting them at the Bureau meeting in Montreal in July 2024.

The Canadian Branch accomplished its objectives by promoting Canadian best practices and shaping amendments to the various documents submitted to the Working Group.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Drouin, MP

President, Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Chair, Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

On behalf of

Senator Éric Forest and Joël Godin, MP

Members of the Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie |
| ACTIVITY | Working Group on Reforming the APF Constitution |
| DESTINATION | Geneva, Switzerland |
| DATES | From November 23 and 24, 2023 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | Hon. Éric Forest |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Joël Godin |
| STAFF | Julie Pelletier |

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|-----------------------|--------------------|
| TRANSPORTATION | \$25,892.00 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$3,495.67 |
| HOSPITALITY | \$0.00 |
| PER DIEMS | \$1,921.48 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | \$116.98 |
| TOTAL | \$31,426.13 |