



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Executive Committee of the
Network of Women Parliamentarians of the *Assemblée
parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF)
Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la
Francophonie* (APF)
Athens, Greece
March 14 to 16, 2012**

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF), which participated in the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians held in Athens, Greece, from March 14 to 16, 2012, is honoured to present its report.

The delegation consisted of the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator and Network rapporteur, accompanied by Mr. Andrew Lauzon, the Branch's acting executive secretary.

The following branches were represented: Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, France, Greece, Quebec and Togo.

Communication from the Chair of the Network

Ms. Françoise Bertieaux, MP (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels) and Chair of the Network, began by thanking the Greek Branch and especially Ms. Tatiana Karapanagiotis, MP, for the invitation and welcome.

The Network unanimously adopted the agenda and minutes of its last meeting, held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, in July 2011.

Ms. Bertieaux then summarized the Network's activities since July 2011.

The Network met in Kinshasa on July 5, 2011, with the Honourable Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator, presiding. The meeting's main theme was the application of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and more specifically the elimination of all forms of sexual violence, especially in armed conflicts. This was one of the major issues the Network focused on at the meeting. It was the subject of a resolution adopted unanimously in the plenary session and of the question the Network asked to the Secretary General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), Mr. Abdou Diouf. He answered by describing the attention he has paid to the suffering endured by the victims, women whose bodies and dignity have been ravaged by these crimes.

The Network's seminar was organized with the OIF's support and took place in Budapest, Hungary, at the Hungarian parliament on October 26, 2011. Like all the Network's seminars, this one followed up on the CEDAW. It also looked at a second theme chosen by the host branch: women in political, civil and family life.

A Network delegation, comprising Ms. Françoise Bertieaux (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels), Ms. Henriette Martinez (France) and Ms. Marie Mariam Gisèle Diasso-Guigma (Burkina Faso), visited the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia on December 12 and 13, 2011, on a fact-finding and networking mission. It was the first international delegation to visit the Tunisian parliament since the election of October 23, 2011. Following this mission, the Executive Committee decided to undertake others of this type where the circumstances facing women warrant it.

After the Chair finished, the Executive Committee decided that future Network reports would be more succinct to enable consideration of more subjects each year.

Women's economic independence

Ms. Stéphanie Vallée, MNA (Quebec), presented a report on women's economic independence.

Complementing Ms. Vallée's report, Senator Rose-Marie Losier-Cool presented a report on the education and training of girls and women in the countries of the Francophonie. Her report explores in more detail the close relationship between the access of girls and women to education and training, and their economic independence. In her report, Senator Losier-Cool described the status of girls and women's education around the world, focusing on the Francophonie countries where possible. She also identified the key OIF programs that promote their access to education and training.

In addition, Senator Losier-Cool observed that significant progress has been made in the education of girls and women worldwide and in the OIF's initiatives to promote education and training as a whole over the past 10 years. However, despite this progress, she noted that a lot of work remains to improve girls and women's access to education and training, and thus further promote their economic independence.

Senator Losier-Cool recommended that the Network create education and training seminars for girls and women on creating and managing micro-businesses and cooperatives. More specifically, these seminars would give participants new skills and knowledge in the fields of management, finance and accounting. Participants would thus be better able to take advantage of economic opportunities and increase their productivity and income. This would all lead to increased economic independence for girls and women.

After hearing the reports on women's economic independence, the Executive Committee decided to split the study into three parts: the legal framework; women in rural areas; and girls' education and information technology training.

Violence against women and children in the public sphere

Ms. Geneviève Colot, MNA (France), presented a report on violence against women and children in the public sphere. The Executive Committee decided to study the issue, taking into account the difference between physical and psychological violence, present a report on the legal framework of this issue in France and request voluntary contributions from branches on the legal framework in their countries.

The role of women in promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue

Ms. Katérina Stenou, UNESCO director of the intersectoral platform for a culture of peace and non-violence, made a presentation on women and intercultural dialogue.

The fight against genital mutilation in Burkina Faso and the status of maternal and infant and child health in that country

Ms. Diasso-Guigma, MNA (Burkina Faso) and Network rapporteur, presented reports on the fight against genital mutilation in Burkina Faso and the status of maternal and infant and child health there. The Executive Committee decided to append a draft resolution prepared by Ms. Diasso-Guigma for the session in Brussels in July 2012.

Implementation of the CEDAW in the countries of member, associate and observer branches of the APF

Ms. Vallée presented a follow-up report on the implementation of the CEDAW. The Executive Committee decided to study the reservations of certain countries, and Ms. Vallée will prepare a report on this topic for the July 2012 session.

The expression “human rights”

The Executive Committee considered the proposal of Ms. France Gélinas, MPP (Ontario), to remove all gendered terminology from the APF’s founding documents. It decided to wait for the political committee chair’s response to the proposal.

Question for the Secretary General of the Francophonie

The Executive Committee decided to propose that the Network ask the Secretary General of the Francophonie about women’s economic independence and raise the issues of health, education and training. Ms. Vallée will prepare the question.

APF Advice

The Network will help draft the APF Advice that will be presented at the Summit of the Francophonie in Kinshasa in October 2012. Like the question to the Secretary General of the Francophonie, the Network’s contribution will concern women’s economic independence and describe in more detail how it is inextricably linked with women’s health, education and training.

Presentation of the Network’s booklet

Ms. Bertieaux presented a draft of the Network’s booklet, and the Executive Committee decided to propose amendments to it.

By participating in this meeting of the Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the APF, the Canadian Branch achieved its objectives of meeting its international obligations, presenting a sound report that promotes the exchange of information, maintaining international connections and defending its interests.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool, Senator
Member of the Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)

Travel Cost

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
ACTIVITY	Executive Committee of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Athens, Greece
DATES	March 14 to 16, 2012
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Rose-Marie Losier-Cool
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	Andrew Lauzon
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 8,740.09
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 946.11
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,001.94
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 90.50
TOTAL	\$ 10,778.64