



Report of the Canadian parliamentary delegation regarding its participation in the meeting of the Political Committee of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF)

Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF)

**Libreville, Gabon
April 15 and 16, 2014**

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF), which participated in the meeting of the APF Political Committee held in Libreville, Gabon, on April 15 and 16, 2014, is honoured to present its report.

The delegation was made up of **Robert Goguen**, MP, and was accompanied by François Michaud, Association Secretary.

The following branches were represented at this meeting: Aosta Valley, Belgium/Wallonia-Brussels Federation, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Chad, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Gabon, Haiti, Jura, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Republic of the Congo, Senegal and Switzerland.

Guy Nzouba-Ndama, President of the National Assembly of Gabon, delivered an opening statement at the start of the meeting of the Political Committee.

Senator **Michèle André** (France), Chair of the Political Committee, commenced the meeting.

Following the adoption of the agenda and the minutes of the July 2013 meeting in Abidjan, proceedings began with a round table during which parliamentarians gave a brief presentation on the political situation in their country. **Robert Goguen** (Canada), Committee Rapporteur, gave an overview of Canada's political situation, the government's legislative and budgetary initiatives, recent Supreme Court rulings and the results of the provincial election in Quebec.

Michel Mboumi (Gabon) presented his report on the political situation in various Francophone countries. Following discussion, the Committee adopted a statement on the political situation in Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Committee members voted in favour of lifting the suspension measures imposed on Guinea, Madagascar and Mali, in light of the progress observed in these countries in recent months.

Robert Goguen (Canada) proposed the following sentence be added to the statement on the Syrian Arab Republic:

“CALLS ON Syrian authorities to intensify efforts and immediately comply with commitments to the OPCW-UN mission to put an end to Syria's chemical weapons program.”

This amendment was unanimously approved.

The statement is available at http://www.apf.francophonie.org/docrestreint.api/6032/ad7f3951bc212d48848a9c33612a296f83f6cc04/pdf/2014_04_commpoli_declaration_situations.pdf (in French only).

Léon Walry (Belgium/ Wallonia-Brussels Federation) presented his report on the social networks and their impact on citizenship, democracy and politics.

Robert Goguen presented his report on the strategy for a digital Francophonie. The report addressed a number of issues pertaining to the existence or development of an effective legislative and regulatory framework for the digital strategy. This intervention takes place on two levels: the strategy for a digital Francophonie at the international level and digital strategies at the national level. Building on the strategy for a digital Francophonie, it is important for individual states to draft their own digital strategy and harmonize it as much as possible with those of its regional partners.

This topic comes in the wake of the decisions made by the heads of state and government who attended the 14th Summit of La Francophonie. They adopted the new strategy for a digital Francophonie and asked the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*, operators and the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* to implement it. They called for increased efforts to accelerate the integration of French-speaking countries in the global digital economy. They also agreed to participate in the international open government movement and to promote access to digital technologies for all citizens—men and women alike. Lastly, in the context of protecting human rights and the role of the Internet as a promotional tool, the heads of state and government also called for the adoption of global standards and national laws defining the principles for the effective protection of personal data.

The Committee discussed topics for the APF opinion to be presented to heads of state and government at the 15th Summit of La Francophonie to be held in Dakar, Senegal in November 2014. The Committee also discussed the APF by-laws and the Parliamentary Secretary General's proposal for a strategic framework.

By participating in these meetings, the Canadian Branch achieved its objectives of meeting its international obligations, presenting a draft report that promotes the exchange of information, maintaining international connections and defending its interests, among others by proposing valid amendments.

Respectfully submitted,

The Hon. Paul E. McIntyre, Senator
President of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF)

Travel Cost

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of <i>the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Political Committee of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Libreville, Gabon
DATES	April 15 and 16, 2014
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Robert Goguen
STAFF	François Michaud
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 2,551.00
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,584.17
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,193.08
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 421.00
TOTAL	\$ 5,749.25