

Canada - Africa
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada - Afrique

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the Bilateral Mission to the
Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**

Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

**Rabat, Morocco and Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire
September 29 to October 5, 2013**

Report

Members of the Canadian delegation

The Canada–Africa Parliamentary Association was represented by the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, PC, MP, Co-Chair; the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Senator, Co-Chair; the Honourable Lois Brown, MP, Vice-Chair; the Honourable Jim Munson, Senator and Director; Mike Hillyer, MP; and Yvon Godin, MP. The delegation was accompanied by the Association secretary, Alexandre Roger, and the Advisor for the Association, Aïcha Coulibaly from the Library of Parliament.

Meeting objectives

The Canada–Africa Parliamentary Association (hereinafter referred to as the Association) made bilateral visits to Rabat in the Kingdom of Morocco, and to Abidjan and Yamoussoukro in the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire from 29 September to 5 October 2013. This was the Association's first visit to Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire.

In the Kingdom of Morocco (hereinafter referred to as Morocco), the meetings had the following specific objectives:

- to strengthen bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation between Canada and Morocco;
- to update parliamentarians on Canada's activities in the region via contacts with parliamentarians and with representatives from government, civil society groups and businesses;
- to obtain information about the reforms undertaken as a result of the adoption of the new constitution in July 2011;
- to obtain information about Morocco's economic development strategies, as well as about the actions taken to fight corruption and poverty and to improve good governance and infrastructure;
- to obtain information about actions taken to promote regional integration and address issues related to national and international security.

In the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire (hereinafter referred to as Côte d'Ivoire), discussions had the following objectives:

- to strengthen bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation between Canada and Côte d'Ivoire;
- to update parliamentarians on Canada's activities in the region via contacts with parliamentarians and with representatives from government, civil society groups and businesses;
- to obtain information about the process for disarmament and the reintegration of ex-combatants;

- to obtain information about the results of the 2009–2013 Poverty Reduction Strategy and the implementation of the 2012–2015 National Development Plan;
- to obtain information about the actions taken to promote regional integration and address issues related to national and international security.

Kingdom of Morocco

A. Issues and Relations with Canada

Morocco occupies the far northwestern corner of the African continent and is bordered by the North Atlantic Ocean to the west, Algeria to the east, the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Western Sahara¹ to the south. Covering 446,300 km², roughly half the size of British Columbia, Morocco lies only 19 km away from Spain, across the Strait of Gibraltar, which is why it is often described as “a footbridge between two continents” or “the gateway to Africa.” Its population of nearly 32.5 million is made up mostly of Arabs, Berbers or a mix of both. Morocco is also home to the descendants of Spanish refugees who fled the 15th century Christian Reconquest, Jews, and Africans from Sub-Saharan Africa. Morocco’s demographic distribution resembles a pyramid, with close to 45% of the population under the age of 24. The official languages are Arabic and Berber (Amazigh), although French and Spanish are also spoken. The dominant religion is Islam, which is practised by 99% of the population.

The capital of Morocco is Rabat, which has a population of roughly 1.7 million. However, the port city of Casablanca, located approximately 100 km southeast of the capital, is Morocco’s main centre for economic activity and has a population of nearly 3.3 million. Morocco is divided into administrative regions led by governors appointed by the king.

Diversification of the Moroccan economy, traditionally dependent on agriculture, is well underway. In 2010, the primary sector made up 12% of GDP (16% in 2008), the secondary sector 27% (25% in 2008) and the tertiary sector 50% (46% in 2008). While Morocco’s economy experienced average growth of 4.9% between 2004 and 2011, instability in international financial markets, rising oil prices and economic hardship for Morocco’s key trading partners have had an impact on the Kingdom’s exports, tourism industry and direct foreign investment.

Morocco was not immune to the effects of the wave of democratization that washed over North Africa and the Middle East in 2011. However, reforms that the government had already begun instituting as early as 1999, the adoption of a new constitution in July 2011, and government oil and food subsidies helped minimize the risk of social unrest seen in countries such as Tunisia and Egypt.

Despite administrative and financial reforms – particularly with respect to decentralizing budgets, controlling government spending and strengthening the public procurement

¹ The Western Sahara was initially under Spanish protectorate. However, when Morocco became independent, it claimed ownership of that area. After the Spanish troops left, Morocco faced a guerrilla resistance movement called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro (Polisario Front), which was supported by Algeria and Libya.

system – corruption remains endemic and poverty rates continue to be high, especially among young people. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, corruption in Morocco has worsened, rising from 80 in 2011 to 88 in 2012. Between 2009 and 2011, the index had dropped from 89 to 80. In 2007, the Kingdom established the Central Authority for Corruption Prevention (CACP) to coordinate, supervise and monitor corruption prevention policies. The government has also begun to reform the justice system. With respect to poverty, the National Human Development Initiative, combined with initiatives carried out between 2005 and 2010, improved living conditions for people in precarious situations and helped the Kingdom make progress on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Between 2001 and 2008, the poverty rate declined from 15% to 9% and the economic insecurity rate dropped from 22% to 17%.

The 2012 Doing Business Report shows there has been some improvement to the business climate. Morocco moved up from 115th to 94th position. This is the result of measures taken during reforms that began in 2011 on building permits, protection of investors and the ease of paying taxes. The African Development Bank (ADB) report, 2012-2016-Morocco – Country Strategy paper, indicates that work remains to be done on making it easier for SMEs to access loans and improving labour market flexibility.

As for human rights, the new constitution prohibits torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, and arbitrary detention, while enshrining the presumption of innocence and fostering women's equality.

Bilateral relations between Canada and Morocco rest upon frequent visits between the two countries. In January 2013, John Baird, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, participated in the Friends of Syria conference, which was held in Marrakech. In June 2012, Saad-Die El Otmani, Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, paid an official visit to Canada, during which he met with his counterpart, Minister John Baird. Canada exported nearly \$368 million worth of goods to Morocco in 2012 and imported nearly \$154 million worth. The countries have started negotiations on a free trade agreement. Three phases of negotiations are already complete. Negotiators are planning next steps.

B. Meetings

1. Meeting with the President of the House of Councillors

The members of the delegation met with Mohammed Cheikh Biadillah, the President of the House of Councillors. At this meeting, Mr. Biadillah spoke about economic, political and social issues that Morocco is facing.

Mr. Biadillah said that he would like to see Canada and Morocco sign a free trade agreement to strengthen trade between the two countries. He highlighted the good relations that Morocco has with sub-Saharan African countries in the areas of banking, communications, insurance, research and education. He also mentioned that Morocco has signed many agreements with the European Union, the United States, Japan and Turkey. He spoke about the primary events that have defined Moroccan politics in recent years, such as the demonstrations on 20 February and the need for constitutional reforms to focus on the power sharing, the importance of women and children and the independence of the legislative branch. He also described the structure of the House of Councillors and

its method of representation. He explained that the 2012 legislative election, which was to renew one-third of the councillors in the House, did not happen because the Loi organique sur les régions [Law on the Regions], which was to be established as part of the new 2011 constitution, had not yet been passed. He also raised the issue of illegal immigration and the effects this has on human, drug and arms trafficking. Morocco is working with France and Spain to address this problem.

In response to questions from members of the delegation, Mr. Biadillah said that the new 2011 constitution focuses on getting women involved in politics and sets a quota for 30 women to be represented in government. The quota within public institutions is 25%. There is also an incentive fund to support positive discrimination, to ensure that women are included on lists for party candidates.

Mr. Biadillah said that they are working on getting young people involved in politics and the economy through the youth parliament; free education funded by the government, which represents 25% of the government's budget; and the construction of boarding schools so that rural youth can more easily access education. However, he acknowledged that educating young people remains a challenge, especially for youth in rural areas.

This meeting followed a visit to the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives.

2. Meeting with Parliamentarians from the Morocco–Canada Friendship Group

At this meeting, the members of the delegation spoke with Said Blili, a member of the House of Representatives and the chair of the friendship group, from RNI² party.

Also attending:

- Mohamed Hanine, member of the House of representatives, RNI;
- Mohcine Chaabi, member of the House of Representatives, Parti vert³;
- Bouazza Rouzbi, member of the House of Representatives, PPS⁴;
- Oum El Banine Lahlou, member of the House of Representatives, UC⁵;
- Aziza El Kandoussi, member of the House of Representatives, PJD⁶.

The Canadian delegation was interested in the work of the parliamentary commissions, their functioning and structure. They asked questions about the participation of women and young people in the democratic process and about economic development in Morocco. The topic of coexistence of religions came up. The King is the leader of the believers. Although Morocco is primarily a Muslim country, there is a religious coexistence

² National Rally of Independents

³ Green Party

⁴ Progress and Socialism Party

⁵ Constitutional Union

⁶ Justice and Development Party

between Islam and other religions such as Christianity and Judaism. They also discussed the topic of Morocco's judicial reform as part of the new 2011 constitution.

The Moroccan delegation asked questions about how parliamentary committees work during times of both minority and majority governments, the power of the committees, and their impact on bills and on government control. The topic of political party funding was also raised.

3. Meeting with the Central Authority for Corruption Prevention

During this meeting, the members of the delegation met with Abdeslam Abouddrar, the President of the Instance centrale de prevention de la corruption (ICPC) and the co-founder of Transparency Maroc. He was joined by My Abdellatif Mouatadid, the director of support services, and Fatima-Zahra Guedira, the head of the Entité Coopération Internationale.

Mr. Abouddrar spoke about the structure of the ICPC, which was created on 13 March 2007. He explained that the Arab Spring and the 2011 constitution entailed changes to the functioning of the ICPC and of other legislative and government bodies. There is better access to and dissemination of information, and legislation is in the works to make even more improvements. The ICPC has used sectorial studies to develop action plans to combat corruption in areas such as education, transport, border services and justice. The ICPC participated in the judicial reform plan. The ICPC is helping with territorial delineation as well as election monitoring and the funding of political parties. The ICPC promotes international cooperation to repatriate or track Moroccan funds that have been sent abroad illegally.

Mr. Abouddrar and his colleagues explained that the ICPC takes a systemic approach to prevention. They are able to assess how successful their actions are thanks to a sectorial approach which enables the development of indicators to measure success. To promote public awareness of corruption, they work with stakeholders in various sectors. They acknowledge that without any anti-corruption legislation, their public awareness is based on guidelines. The ICPC's reports are sent to the King and are published. In accordance with the reforms in the 2011 Constitution, these reports could be debated in the Chambers. The ICPC would also be able to conduct investigations

Mr. Abouddrar and his colleagues were also interested in issues related to the enforcement of a code of ethics within the Canadian government and the mechanisms that exist to oversee the government's actions.

4. Meeting with the Economic, Social and Environmental Council

The delegation met with Nizar Baraka, the president of the Economic, Social and Environmental Council (CESE in French), and Driss Guerraoui, the secretary general.

Mr. Baraka explained that the CESE makes recommendations to the government further to economic and social studies. These consultations are made with government departments, representatives of civil society and industry stakeholders. The president is appointed by the King.

In response to questions, Mr. Baraka and Mr. Guerraoui replied that the CESE plays an advisory role only. However, with the 2011 Constitution, the CESE could be called upon by the government or Parliament to examine bills before Parliament debates. The CESE's work also includes helping to resolve social conflicts brought to its attention by unions as well as analyzing the economic, social and environmental impacts of trade agreements that Morocco wants to sign with other countries. The CESE ensures that those agreements are in line with Morocco's policies. The CESE's work also includes promoting the economic participation of women by making it easier for them to access credit. The CESE recognizes the contributions of cooperatives to Morocco's economic development. The creation of an appropriate legislative framework has helped cooperatives gain access to credit and to government contracts.

Mr. Baraka and Mr. Guerraoui were also interested in learning about the opinion of the delegation with regard to economic development strategies of Morocco.

5. Meeting with Representatives of Civil Society

During the meeting, the delegation spoke with the following representatives:

- Mr. Ahmed El Haij, president of the Moroccan Human Rights Association;
- Ms. Amina Lotfi, president of the Democratic Association of Moroccan women;
- Ms. Ghislaine Benachir, president of the Jossour Forum for Moroccan Women;
- Mr. Abdessamad Saddouq, president of Transparency Maroc;
- Mr. Fettah Bennani, secretary general of the Bayt Al Hikma Association;
- Mr. Ali Zoubaidi, president of Humanisme Sans Frontière.

Representatives from various non-governmental organizations explained that the 20 February movement was initiated by young people concerned about dignity, liberty and social justice. That movement prompted a speech given by the King on 9 March 2011, and the new 2011 Constitution.

The representatives added that the involvement of youth and women in the political realm was important. The 2011 Constitution includes several provisions recognizing women's rights, but there are no specific orders to implement those rights. The representatives reminded that it is necessary that Morocco preserves the progress it has made in terms of women's integration and to harmonize its political commitments with its international agreements. They criticized the problem of judicial independence. They also highlighted how important it is for the kingdom to overcome problems related to education, health and poverty, corruption and good governance.

6. Meeting with Mr. Omar Azziman, Royal Advisor

Mr. Azziman focused on the evolution of political power and the education system in Morocco.

Morocco has gone from being a centralized to a decentralized state in order to respond to a growing demand for social, economic and cultural change. Dividing the kingdom into 12 regions based on viability and unity was proposed. The Loi organique sur la régionalisation avancée et les nouvelles collectivités territoriales (Act on regionalisation and new territorial districts) resulted in changes to the relationship between the state and territorial communities.

Regarding education, Mr. Azziman explained that making education more universal has followed the Kingdom access to independence. In order to enhance the quality of education, a commission for education reform was created. The commission drew up a national education charter that sets out a roadmap aiming at enhancing the quality of the education system.

In response to questions, Mr. Azziman said that the education system is not completely decentralized. School curriculums do take the region's history, culture and economic needs into account. Young people have also access to professional training. This training has helped reduce the youth unemployment rate. M. Azziman also discussed the duality of the education system, issues related to religious teaching, language choices in the education system and girls' access to education.

Mr. Azziman was curious about the integration of official languages in Canadian education and public services. He also wanted to know more about the status of aboriginal languages within the education system.

7. Meeting with Private Enterprises

The delegation met with:

- Mr. Mouhsine Berrada, Executive Director, Institut polytechnique privé de Casablanca;
- Ms. Souad Elmallem, Africa representative, Bombardier Aerospace;
- Mr. Maxence Mirabeau, Executive Director, SNC-Lavalin International;
- Mr. Mohamed Tazi, Executive Director, Collège Lasalle-Casablanca.

Representatives from private companies explained that negotiations for a Canada–Morocco Free Trade Agreement were timely, especially if it could be signed at the right time. With regard to infrastructure development, funding modalities of the African Development Bank and the World Bank was not always clear, which can add some degree of uncertainty for the development of their operations. Regarding education, some representatives pointed out the difficulties associated with the application process for Canadian visas. Questions related to export assistance and its implication on Canadian company competitiveness were also addressed.

It should be noted that the delegation's visit to Morocco coincided with the 1 October 2013, inauguration of the Bombardier Aerospace plant in Nouaceur, near the Casablanca airport.

8. Meeting with the Royal Institute of the Amazigh Culture

The delegation spoke with the Secretary General of the Royal Institute of the Amazigh Culture, Mr. El Houssaïn El Moujahid.

Mr. El Moujahid and his colleagues explained the importance of the Amazigh culture (Berber culture) in Morocco. The Berber population comprises 33% of Morocco's population. The 2011 Constitution recognizes Amazigh as an official language, along with Arab and French. The Institute works to promote this language politically as well as within the country's various public organizations.

9. Meeting with Journalists

During this meeting, members of the delegation discussed freedom of the press, the acknowledgement of access to information in the 2011 Constitution and the training of journalists. Note that the two journalists that the delegation met wanted to remain anonymous.

Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

A. Issues and Relations with Canada

The Republic of Côte d'Ivoire is located on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa. It is bordered by Liberia and Guinea to the west, Mali and Burkina Faso to the north, and Ghana to the east. With an area of 322,460 km², it is roughly half the size of Manitoba. The population of almost 23 million is grouped into five major groups: Akan, Krou, Mande, Senoufo and Lobi. Like most African countries, its demographic distribution resembles a pyramid, with about 60% of the population aged 24 and under. In terms of religion, 40% of the population is Muslim, 33% is Christian, and 12% practices animist beliefs. Although the official language is French, 60 dialects are commonly spoken. The capital is Yamoussoukro, but the seat of government is located at Abidjan.

Once known for its political stability and regional economic clout, Côte d'Ivoire is gradually recovering from over 10 years of socio-political turmoil marked by violent conflict and insecurity. This resulted in economic slowdown, a breakdown of social services and a weakened social fabric.

Despite the crisis that spanned from 1999 to 2011, Côte d'Ivoire has managed to hold on to its position as West Africa's third-largest economy, after Nigeria and Ghana. Its economic potential is heavily dependent on agriculture – as the world's leading producer of cocoa – and more recently on oil and gas, with an average production of 50,000 barrels of crude oil per day. The recovery of cocoa exports (temporarily interrupted by the European Union embargo in response to the 2010–2011 election crisis) and the manufacturing industry, increased gold production, and budgetary support from France, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the International Monetary Fund have all helped the country achieve an estimated 8%–9% growth in GDP in 2012.

In terms of the ease of doing business, in 2010, the country ranked 40th on the ABD index, behind other countries such as Ghana (6), Cape Verde (18), Nigeria (21) and Sierra Leone (24). Factors behind this include excessive red tape, lack of a legislative framework for small and medium-sized business development, a disconnect between skills training and business requirements, and widespread fraud, corruption and illegal road tolls, all of which negatively affect the competitiveness of Côte d'Ivoire's developing companies.

As for social indicators, the poverty rate worsened during the socio-economic crisis, climbing from 38% in 2002 to nearly 49% in 2008. Rural areas were hit especially hard. There is also wide income disparity. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index was 168 out of 187 in 2012, placing the country below the regional average.

Aware of these challenges, the government is working on updating the 2009–2013 Poverty Reduction Strategy paper. The government also launched its 2012–2015 National Development Plan, which focuses on agriculture, cooperation, employment, health, industry, education, the rule of law and reconciliation. Through this plan, the government hopes to:

- achieve a constant GDP growth rate of about 10% over the period,
- cut poverty in half,
- lead the group of leading countries with the highest performance in the UNDP Human Development Index,
- achieve the Millennium Development Goals for 2015,
- build a better business climate, and
- improve good governance and the fight against corruption.

Diplomatic relations between Canada and Côte d'Ivoire are close and cordial. The two countries often collaborate within the United Nations and La Francophonie. Since Alassane Dramane Ouattara was returned to his position as President of the Republic, several visits have taken place. Senator Raynell Andreychuk attended the inauguration ceremony of President Ouattara as a representative of the Government of Canada. The Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of State for Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, visited Abidjan in June 2012. The Prime Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Jeannot Ahoussou Kouadio, and the Minister of State, Minister of Industry, His Excellency Moussa Dosso, participated in the Forum of the Americas in June 2012. In addition, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Guillaume Soro, participated in the General Assembly of the Interparliamentary Union in October 2012.

B. Meetings

1. Meeting with His Excellency Guillaume Soro, Speaker of the National Assembly

Also present at the meeting:

- Ms. Sarra Fadika, Senior Vice-president, RDR⁷;
- Ms. Émilienne Assa Ahou, President, Foreign Relations Commission, PDCI-RDA⁸;
- Mr. Oulatta Gaho Dit Pierre, President, Defence and Security Commission, RDR;
- Mr. Yves Brahim Koné, President, Economic and Financial Affairs Commission, RDR;
- Mr. N'Guetta Kamanan, Member of the National Assembly, PDCI-RDA;
- Mr. Zambi, Member of the National Assembly, PDCI-RDA;
- Mr. Latté N. Ahouanzi, Assistant Secretary General;
- Mr. Touré Sanga, Technical Advisor.

The Speaker of the National Assembly recounted what happened during the post-election crisis and talked about the impact those events had on the functioning of public institutions. He said that the most recent legislative elections, which were in 2012, were recognized for their transparency and credibility. He explained the political and functional structure of the National Assembly. Women make up 10% of elected members. The Speaker said he hoped that Canada would maintain its relationship with Côte d'Ivoire, particularly in terms of rebuilding its institutions and democracy. It is also important that the country overcome challenges related to health, education, rebuilding road infrastructure, combating instability and poverty.

In response to the Canadian delegation, the Côte d'Ivoire delegation answered questions related to opposition party representation in the National Assembly, the functioning of the Côte d'Ivoire Parliament and the relationship between the legislative and executive powers.

The Côte d'Ivoire delegation was interested in the political structure of the Parliament of Canada, the functioning of parliamentary committees and parliamentary associations, as well as the importance of the Senate in legislative power.

The Canada–Africa Parliamentary Association was then invited to take part in the opening ceremonies of the second session of the National Assembly. The Honourable Mauril Bélanger, PC, MP, and Co-Chair, was invited to speak on behalf of the members of the delegation (see attached speaking notes). This session also marked the beginning of the National Assembly's consideration of the budget bill.

⁷ Rally of Republicans

⁸ Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire

2. Meeting with Canadian Natural Resources

The delegation met with Emmanuel Koffi, Director General of Canadian Natural Resources (CNR).

Mr. Koffi explained that the company's headquarters is located in Calgary, Alberta. CNR activities in Côte d'Ivoire include oil and gas exploration, production, refining, transportation and distribution. The Côte d'Ivoire government owns shares in CNR's Côte d'Ivoire subsidiary, which has operated in the country since 2000.

Mr. Koffi explained that the country's objective is to have 10% of its energy demand met by renewable energy sources in the next five years. He also spoke about the Côte d'Ivoire tax system, government royalties, the impact of international competition on the company's activities and the company's compliance with the Ivory Coast Petroleum Code and international standards. He added that corruption is a problem, but that the branch office was actively working on compliance with international best practices.

CNR funds community development activities such as the purchase of sanitary equipment, construction of schools and distribution of drinking water.

3. Meeting with Aïcha Mindaoudou, United Nations' Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire

Ms. Mindaoudou told that Côte d'Ivoire heads up the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and accounts for 40% of the sub-region's economy. The security situation has changed and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) is implementing the Security Council mandate, which focuses on protecting civilians, addressing violence against women and assisting with the disarmament and reintegration into society of ex-combatants. UNOCI supports the reform of the Independent Electoral Commission and the judicial system. UNOCI also plays a role in the integration of all parties into the political life of the country. With an annual operating budget of US\$574 million, UNOCI has 11,000 soldiers in Côte d'Ivoire, but plans to reduce this force to 7,000 by 2015. The organization has 1,600 employees, including five officers from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Canadian municipal police.

Ms. Mindaoudou mentioned that the political and social situation has stabilized in the northern part of the country, and that security along the Mali border is not at risk. In order to facilitate the political integration of parties, including the opposition parties, the Ivorian government established the Permanent Framework for Dialogue. However, the main opposition party (the Front populaire ivoirien) would like this framework to be revised. Ms. Mindaoudou added that Canada can play a role in re-establishing political cohesion in Côte d'Ivoire.

4. Meeting with Her Excellency Anne Désirée Ouloto, Minister of Solidarity, Family, Women and Children

Her Excellency Ms. Ouloto highlighted that female genital mutilation and violence against women are issues that her ministry is actively working on. These practices are wrongly associated with traditional and religious beliefs. The ministry is conducting awareness

campaigns among women with respect to the risks to women's health. The minister also said that female genital mutilation is a crime under the Ivorian Criminal Code.

Her Excellency Ms. Ouloto has been working on the implementation of an interdepartmental strategy with approximately twenty ministries, which is a first for Côte d'Ivoire. This strategy has been endorsed by the government, and is part of its 2012–2015 National Development Plan. It should be implemented after the government's budget is passed.

5. Meeting with Mr. Kalou Emmanuel, Chief of Staff of the Foreign Affairs Ministry

Mr. Emmanuel Kalou was accompanied by:

- Ms. Sara Amani Affoué, Director, North and Central America;
- Mr. Hubert Guède Vouzoh, Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Kalou spoke about how important it is for the Ivorian government to restore security in Côte d'Ivoire and to disarm and reintegrate ex-combatants. The country must also address national reconciliation and economic reconstruction, issues important for Côte d'Ivoire and also for the political and economic stability of countries in the sub-region. Mr. Kalou invited Côte d'Ivoire's international partners to continue investing in the country. He added that Canada can play an important role in education, telecommunications and the mining sector.

In response to the delegation's questions, Mr. Kalou explained that Côte d'Ivoire is heavily dependent on agriculture. However, the government is attempting to diversify the economy by exploiting its oil and mining resources. The government is transparent in terms of the distribution of revenue generated by resource development and loans between the Central Bank of West African States and the International Monetary Fund, and the Côte d'Ivoire treasury. Côte d'Ivoire supports free trade and is a member of the Western African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA in French), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union. He pointed out that the Ministry of the Economy and Finances is responsible for signing economic agreements.

Mr. Kalou reiterated the importance for the country of improving social cohesion, which has led to judicial inquiries and the establishment of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Once these initiatives have completed their work, the government hopes to put in place a reparation policy. The country also hopes to play a leadership role in resolving conflicts on the continent.

6. Meeting with Cote d'Ivoire Parliamentarians

On the Ivoirian side, the meeting was chaired by Yves Koné Brahima, RDR, president of the economic and financial affairs commission.

The following were also present:

- Mr. Yaya Coulibaly, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Yéo Fozié, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;

- Mr. Oulatta Gaho Dit Pierre; Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Soumahoro Issiaka, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Mamadou Kangouté, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Lassina Koné, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Diomandé Lassina, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Abbas Imbassou Ouattara, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Yacouba Sangaré, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Abdoulaye Sidibé, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Sekouba Soumahoro, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Mr. Ferdinand Zan-Bi Goï, Member of the National Assembly, RDR;
- Ms. Aimée Trabi, unit head.

Ivoirian parliamentarians spoke about such topics as security, national reconciliation, economic recovery, the structure and functioning of the Côte d'Ivoire National Assembly, and facilities and equipment made available to members of Parliament.

With respect to social reconciliation, Côte d'Ivoire members of Parliament explained that the various political parties represented in the National Assembly are also represented on commissions. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission also has an important role to play in restoring social cohesion. The commission has the support of traditional chiefs. The members of the National Assembly also mentioned that the country's economic difficulties have a negative impact on members' access to facilities and equipment that can properly support members in fulfilling their roles. This situation should improve thanks to the collaboration between the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire. This collaboration entailed the development of the Strategic Development Plan (2012–2016), which will modernize the work of members of the National Assembly and their representation of the people. The parliamentarians also discussed the relationship between the legislature and the executive.

7. Visit to the Authority for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre

The members of the delegation visited the Authority for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Centre and observed the disarmament process for ex-combatants. This process includes verification of the safety of weapons, identification of combatants, surrendering uniforms, and participation in the program for reintegration into civil society. Under this program, ex-combatants can choose an occupation after undergoing a psychological assessment and identifying their skills. Participants also undergo a medical examination.

The social reintegration program is carried out by both public and private agencies on a voluntary basis.

8. Meeting with Mr. Augustin Thiam, Governor of Yamoussoukro

The delegation travelled by bus to Yamoussoukro, the political capital of Côte d'Ivoire located 245 km northwest of Abidjan, where they met Mr. Augustin Thiam, Governor of Yamoussoukro. Mr. Thiam also invited traditional chiefs from surrounding villages to join him in welcoming members of the Canadian delegation.

Mr. Thiam explained that the District of Yamoussoukro is the second largest after Abidjan. The president of the Republic wants to create 14 districts. The role of the governor of a district is to promote social and economic development of the population. The governor is appointed by decree.

In response to questions from the Canadian delegation, Mr. Thiam and the traditional chiefs explained that the role of a traditional chief in society is to manage social conflicts and contribute to the social integration of his villagers. They serve as a link between government and the people. They are consulted by the governor with respect to political and economic decisions. Traditional chiefs are currently involved in the work of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the local and national levels.

There were also discussions concerning the integration of women into economic and social development, education of children, issues pertaining to professional development and health challenges. Although polio has been eradicated in Côte d'Ivoire, malaria, HIV/AIDS, Buruli ulcer and typhoid pose a major problem for the country and the District of Yamoussoukro. A clinic is under construction and the district plans to build pediatric and cancer clinics over the next three years.

The meeting concluded with a visit to the Notre-Dame de la Paix basilica. The construction of the basilica was completed in September 1989 and the consecration, by Pope John Paul II, was on 10 September 1990.

Conclusions

A. Kingdom of Morocco

During the visits, the delegation noted that the new 2011 Constitution will ensure that reforms in the areas of justice, the fight against corruption, distribution of powers, social and cultural integration and independence of the legislature will be carried out. However, legislation to implement these changes has yet to be passed, which could slow down the implementation of the new constitutional provisions. Nevertheless, the delegation noted that Morocco is taking action to improve its economic, social and cultural development. The delegation noted that universal access to good quality education remains a serious challenge for Morocco.

In terms of regional integration, Morocco is taking action in the Maghreb and the sub-Saharan region. The country has signed a number of agreements with regions or countries such as the United States, the European Union, Japan and Turkey. Thus, the members hope that the Canada–Morocco free trade agreement will be concluded within a reasonable period of time, notwithstanding the study by the Economic, Social and Environmental Council, which will make recommendations regarding the real benefits of this agreement for Morocco and the sub-region.

B. Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

Delegation members were pleased to have been recognized by the President and members of the National Assembly during the opening ceremony of the National Assembly's second session. The country is emerging from a post-election crisis that is affecting economic development, social cohesion and political integration. The structure and functioning of the National Assembly have also been negatively affected, which could be detrimental to the effective representation of the people. However, the 2012–2015 National Development Plan and the Strategic Development Plan for the National Assembly (2012–2016) may help Côte d'Ivoire undertake the economic and social development it would like to reach.

Côte d'Ivoire is also working on re-establishing its social and political fabric through the efforts of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the development of a Permanent Framework for Dialogue by the government. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants seem to be on track. However, the involvement of all opposition parties could enhance the political stability of the country.

While travelling to Yamoussoukro, members of the delegation also noted the lack of maintenance and capacity of the country's road network, which is critical to economic and social development. The delegation hopes that this problem will be solved with the implementation of the 2012–2015 National Development Plan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The delegation would like to thank the Ambassador of Canada to Morocco, H.E. Sandra McCardell, and the members of her team, including Ms. Hayat Benkhadra and Ms. Isabelle Valois, for organizing these meetings and looking after the logistics.

The delegation would also like to thank the Ambassador of Canada to Côte d'Ivoire, H.E. Chantal de Varennes, and the members of her team, including Mr. Fred Jacques, Ms. Zoulfia Chougapova, Ms. Fanta Ouattara and Ms. Marion Braid for organizing these meetings and visits and overseeing the logistics. The delegation is also grateful to the protocol unit of the National Assembly for their logistical support in Abidjan.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Raynell Andreychuk,
Senator, Co-Chair
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

The Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P.
Co-Chair
Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

Appendix: Speech of the Honourable Mauril Bélanger during the opening ceremonies of the second session of the National Assembly

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are honoured to be here today to introduce ourselves and tell you about the purpose of our visit.

My name is Mauril Bélanger, and I am the Member of Parliament for the riding of Ottawa–Vanier in the capital of Canada. I am a member of the Liberal Party, the third-largest party in the House of Commons.

With me is the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, a senator from the government side of the Upper House who represents the province of Saskatchewan. Let me add that Senator Andreychuk is the only Canadian parliamentarian to have been in all three branches of the government. She was a judge and ambassador for Canada (to Kenya and Somalia) before becoming a legislator.

We are the co-chairs of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association.

We are honoured to be part of a delegation of six Canadian parliamentarians visiting your country. The others are Lois Brown, an MP from the government side who represents an Ontario riding and is also Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of International Development; Yvon Godin, a member of the Official Opposition who represents a New Brunswick riding; Jim Hillyer, a government MP who represents a riding in Alberta; and Senator Jim Munson, a member of the Official Opposition in the Senate. As you can see, our delegation has representatives from both houses of the Parliament of Canada and from all the recognized political parties in Parliament.

I would be remiss if I did not also mention our ambassador, Her Excellency Chantal de Varennes.

The objectives of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association are to:

- encourage dialogue and cooperation between African and Canadian parliamentarians on issues such as democracy, good governance, human rights, security and economic development;
- enhance Canadian parliamentarians' understanding of the issues and challenges facing African countries; and
- propose initiatives to improve understanding of bilateral and multilateral issues.

This is the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association's first visit to Côte d'Ivoire. However, some of us have been here before: Senator Andreychuk for the inauguration of President Ouattara and me on a trip with former Canadian minister Denis Paradis and for the 25th annual meeting of the Assemblée internationale des parlementaires de langue française (AIPLF).

Our goal is to better understand where Côte d'Ivoire stands today, two years after the legislative elections held in December 2011.

Free and fair elections are prerequisites for democracy, but elections alone cannot guarantee a deep and functioning democracy.

As you know, democracy is built on several institutions: the rule of law, an independent judiciary and an effective legislature.

Legislatures are the drivers of democracy. They ensure that the views of citizens are duly represented between elections, that the executive is held accountable for its decisions and that legislation is properly drafted, reviewed and enacted.

Democracy is affirmed through elections.

However, it thrives on effective and influential legislatures.

The role of parliamentarians is even more critical in the context of emerging or consolidating democracies.

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association is one mechanism through which we, as Canadian parliamentarians, reach out to you and other parliamentarians across Africa.

Finally, we are certain that our meetings and discussions during this visit will be very fruitful for us.

We hope they will be equally helpful for you as you continue building a multi-party democracy in which the people of Côte d'Ivoire can move toward prosperity in a safe and peaceful setting.

Thank you.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Africa Parliamentary Associations
ACTIVITY	Bilateral Mission to the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
DESTINATION	Rabat, Morocco and Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire
DATES	September 29 to October 5, 2013
DELEGATION	
SENATE	The Hon. Raynell Andreuchuk, Senator, Co-Chair The Hon. Jim Munson, Senator, Director
HOUSE OF COMMONS	The Hon. Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair Ms. Lois Brown, M.P., Vice-Chair Mr. Yvon Godin, M.P., Member Mr. Jim Hillyer, M.P., Member
STAFF	Mr. Alexandre Roger, Secretary of the Delegation Ms. Aïcha Coulibaly, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 82,480.73
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 13,596.36
HOSPITALITY	\$ 1,158.14
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,199.22
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 822.05
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 704.74
TOTAL	\$ 101,961.24