



Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation on its participation in the Bureau Meeting of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF)

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

**Brussels, Belgium
January 31 to February 2, 2019**

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch that attended the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) Bureau meeting in Brussels, Belgium, from January 31 to February 2, 2019, has the honour to present its report.

The members of the Canadian delegation were Mr. Darrell Samson, M.P. and Chair of the Canadian Branch, and Mr. Robert Aubin, M.P. and Chair of the APF's Parliamentary Affairs Committee. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Jean-François Lafleur, Branch Secretary.

The following branches also participated: Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, France, Ivory Coast, Jura, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Nova Scotia, Quebec, Senegal, Switzerland, and the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF).

Bureau business

Opening remarks were made by Mr. Philippe Courard, President of the Parliament of the French Community of Belgium; Mr. Jacques Krabal, the APF Parliamentary Secretary General; and Mr. François Paradis, President of the APF and Speaker of the National Assembly of Quebec. It was also agreed that as part of the APF's digital strategy, meeting documents will no longer be printed.

Bureau membership

Several appointments to the Bureau were also approved, including that of new APF President, Mr. François Paradis.

It was also decided to submit to the Abidjan plenary: the application for membership of French Polynesia; the change of status for the Serbian Branch to associate branch; and authority for the Parliamentary Secretary General to continue negotiating with the Parliament of Catalonia and the Legislative Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Finally, tribute was paid to Mr. Pierre DeBané, former M.P. and Senator, and Honorary Chairman of the APF Parliamentary Affairs Committee.

Remarks from the OIF administrator

After adopting the agenda and the minutes of the Bureau meeting of July 6, 2018, the delegates heard from the administrator of the OIF, Mr. Adama Ouane.

In his remarks, he recalled the importance of collaboration between the APF and the OIF. He endorsed the APF's priorities, particularly with regard to its economic priorities, digital, youth and the promotion of the French language.

As he does every year, Mr. Ouane urged APF members to use the various operatives of the Francophonie as effectively as possible and to ensure that the roles and mandates of each are properly distributed. He reiterated the importance of active APF support, particularly for strengthening monitoring centres in member countries in crisis.

Finally, he described the OIF's financial support for the APF.

In conclusion, the OIF administrator reviewed the various francophone electoral missions. Mr. Robert Aubin, M.P. (Canada) actively participated in the discussions.

Parliamentary Secretary General's activity report

The Parliamentary Secretary General, Mr. Jacques Krabal, greeted the delegates and thanked the Bureau for placing its trust in him. He went over the various changes within the APF administration, including the arrival of a new Administrative Secretary General. He spoke about the 44th Annual session of the APF and the work accomplished by the various committees and networks. Mr. Krabal also touched on the meetings held by the various regional assemblies the previous summer.

The Parliamentary Secretary General spoke to Bureau members about the importance of the APF building relationships with other stakeholders in *La Francophonie* and mentioned the various international meetings in which the APF had recently participated.

Institutional activities

The programming was adopted as presented, namely:

Namely, the joint meetings of the *Réseau des femmes parlementaires et de la Commission de l'éducation, des affaires culturelles et de la communication*, from February 24 to 28 in Hanoi, Vietnam; *la Commission politique* in Djibouti, from March 3 to 5; *la Commission des affaires parlementaires*, in Ottawa, Canada from April 24 to 27, *la Commission de la coopération et du développement* in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from May 3 to 5 and; the 45th Annual Session in à Abidjan, Ivory Coast from July 4 to 9..

Interparliamentary cooperation programs

The Bureau adopted in principle the APF's parliamentary cooperation program for 2019.

In particular, it decided to award 12 scholarships for a training session organized by the French Parliament and the *École Nationale d'Administration* on behalf of the Burundi, Cambodia, Ivory Coast, Haiti, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mali, Moldova, Niger, Senegal and Togo branches. The delegates also agreed to offer an internship at the General Secretariat of the APF; to support the National Assembly's International Parliamentary Training Program; to create training programs on parliamentary diplomacy; to organize four seminars on parliamentary capacity building under the APF's digital program for the Cambodia, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast and Rwanda branches; and to conduct a series of other activities.

Finally, as part of the gender equality program, two seminars in Niger and Rwanda and a parliamentary seminar on the sidelines of the United Nations (UN) Commission on the Status of Women were also endorsed.

Treasurer's report

The Treasurer reported positive financial results for the year ending December 31, 2018. The Bureau adopted the APF budget for the year 2019, which allocates funding to support parliamentary cooperation and solidify the status of the French language, and includes an increase in allocations.

Adoption of various committee and network reports

All the reports from the committees and the Network of Women Parliamentarians were adopted unanimously. Each group also gave an overview of its upcoming activities. Mr. Robert Aubin, M.P. (Canada), the Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, gave an update on the Committee's business and emphasized the importance of the APF's various cooperation programs. Mr. Darrell Samson, M.P. (Canada) presented the activity report of the Americas region. The reports from regional *Chargés de mission* were also adopted.

Review of the political situation in francophone countries

The Syrian Arab Republic is the only section still under suspension. The Chairman of the Political Committee, Mr. Christophe-André Frassa, Senator (France), recommended that the situation in Burundi be monitored further and that an alert be issued with regard to Cambodia.

The Asia-Pacific *Chargé de mission* stressed that the situation in Cambodia is improving daily and that opposition political activities are resuming and asked the APF to call on the opposition to respect the constitution in order to ease tensions. Chairman Frassa emphasized that the Committee would continue to monitor the situation closely. The Parliamentary Secretary General added that he hopes that progress can be made with regard to the importance accorded to respect for democracy in conjunction with the development of *La Francophonie* and that there can be no concessions on this front.

The delegate from Chad asked the Committee for its opinion on the Russian presence in the Central African Republic (CAR). The Chairman expressed concern about that situation. He hopes that the Francophonie will regain its place in the CAR, and doubts the Russians' goodwill and professed role as "good Samaritan." With regard to Haiti, the Chairman mentioned that the APF is currently looking at needs in terms of a parliamentary cooperation program and the political situation.

Chairman Frassa reviewed the situation of the G5 Sahel. He indicated that there are still a number of terrorist threats in the region. The funding promised to fight terrorism is slow to materialize. In particular, he denounced the schools closed by jihadists in Burkina Faso. He instructed the APF to monitor the situation closely.

The Parliamentary Secretary General added that it was also necessary to support parliamentary colleagues imprisoned in the Ivory Coast. Two Ivorian M.P.s are the subject of legal proceedings. There is discussion of withdrawing parliamentary immunity. The Chairman of the Political Committee asked to be able to follow this situation. The Africa region *Chargé de mission* provided an explanation of the current status. It would appear that the two requests by the National Assembly of the Ivory Coast for the release of its M.P.s are being treated differently.

The Chairman discussed other situations, including events in Armenia, Cameroon, Egypt, France, Gabon, Madagascar, the Congo and Ontario.

With regard to Ontario, Mr. Samson (Canada) gave an overview of the francophone situation in Canada and expressed concern about certain situations where French is declining. He discussed the cuts to francophone services in Ontario, and proposed a draft declaration supporting Franco-Ontarians, which was unanimously adopted.

45th Annual Session of the APF (Ivory Coast)

The president of the APF reminded delegates of the dates for the 9th Francophone Youth Parliament, which will be held at the Institut national de la jeunesse et des sports from July 4 to 9, 2019.

The Ivory Coast delegate reported on progress for the preparations and the timetable for the Annual Session (July 5 to 9), which will focus on parliament and strengthening democracy.

Honours awarded by the APF

The suggestions of the various branches for the *Ordre de la Pléiade* and the *Geoffrey-Dieudonné* award were accepted as presented. Mr. Didier Berberat, Senator (Switzerland), raised the issue of the closure of an institution that was to have received the Senghor Césaire Prize. It was agreed that the prize would be awarded to the runner-up in Abidjan in 2019.

Draft calendar of events for 2018

The draft calendar was adopted.

Relations with the Association des secrétaires généraux des Parlements francophones

The report of the President of the *Association des secrétaires généraux des Parlements francophones*, Ms. Marie-Joséphine Diallo, was adopted without further comments.

Other business

The Parliamentary Secretary General reported on an email received from the Malagasy Branch concerning the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the fact that the speaker of its national assembly was calling on the APF to join the non-proliferation campaign (CTBTO) in Vienna this spring.

A motion of thanks was addressed to the Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels.

The summary of the Bureau's decisions shall be adopted.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrell Samson, M.P.
President of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*
(CAPF)

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (CAPF)
ACTIVITY	Bureau Meeting of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i> (APF)
DESTINATION	Brussels, Belgium
DATES	January 31 to February 2, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Darrell Samson, M.P. Mr. Robert Aubin, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Jean-François Lafleur, Association Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$6,890.84
ACCOMMODATION	\$4,400.37
PER DIEMS	\$1,511.52
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$296.70
MISCELLANEOUS	\$92.77
TOTAL	\$13,192.20