

Canada - Africa
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada - Afrique

**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its Bilateral visit to Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo**

Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association

**Abuja, Nigeria, Accra, Ghana and Lomé, Togo
January 16 to 22, 2011**

Report

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association was represented by the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., Co-Chair of the Association; the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Senator, Co-Chair of the Association; Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P., Vice-Chair of the Association; Mr. David Christopherson, M.P., Vice-Chair of the Association; Mrs. Lois Brown, M.P., Vice-Chair of the Association; the Honourable Jim Munson, Senator, Member of the Association; and Ms. Cheryl Gallant, M.P., Member of the Association. The delegation was assisted by Mr. Maxime Ricard, Executive Secretary of the Association, and Mr. Michael Dewing, Advisor for the Association.

OBJECTIVES

The Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association undertook bilateral visits to Abuja, Nigeria; Accra, Ghana; and Lomé, Togo from 16-22 January 2011. The visits had the following objectives:

- to strengthen bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation;
- to engage parliamentarians on democracy, governance, economic issues, and the role of the media;
- to strengthen relations with regional organizations, most particularly the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS); and
- to acquaint the delegates with the situation in each country and with Canada's activity in the region, through contacts with parliamentarians, government officials, civil society groups, and businesses.

To meet these objectives, the delegation met with Nigerian, Ghanaian and Togolese parliamentarians and government officials, representatives of political parties, Canadian representatives, business representatives, journalists, and members of non-governmental organizations. It also made site visits.

Key Issues

Nigeria is the most populous country in the region and the predominant regional power. Since the restoration of civilian rule in 1999, it has faced challenges reforming the oil-based economy and institutionalizing democracy. In addition, there are longstanding ethnic and religious tensions. Although Nigeria is the world's 11th largest oil producer, it has a large population and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is low. Internationally, Nigeria is an active participant in African and regional affairs.

In Ghana, multi-party democracy was restored in 1992. Ghana is well endowed with natural resources, but still relies heavily on international financial and technical assistance. It faces significant development challenges, especially in rural areas and the north. In the international arena, Ghana is an active participant in regional organizations and contributes to peacekeeping operations.

Togo is a country in transition. After years of autocratic rule that left it severely under-developed, credible legislative elections were held in 2007 and 2010. The country is re-joining the international community and aid flows, which had been suspended in the early 1990s, have resumed.

Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo are involved in the main pan-African and regional organizations. They are members of the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD). In addition, Togo is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). ECOWAS, which is based in Abuja, is a 15-country regional economic community whose mission is to promote economic integration. WAEMU, which is made up of the eight Francophone members of ECOWAS, promotes regional monetary and economic convergence. CEN-SAD is a 23-member regional organization that also promotes regional integration. Its headquarters are in Tripoli, Libya.

At the time of the delegation's visit, ECOWAS was dealing with the political stalemate that followed the 28 November 2010 presidential election in Côte d'Ivoire. It should be noted that in its 1991 Declaration of Political Principles, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government declared they would "strive to encourage and promote in each our countries, political pluralism and those representative institutions and guarantees for personal safety and freedom under the law that are our common heritage."¹ In addition, in its 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance ECOWAS explicitly recognized the principles that "accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections" and that there be "zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means."²

The presidential election was conducted under the auspices of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), which developed the electoral process in consultation with key Ivorian stakeholders. Election observers from the European Union, ECOWAS, the African Union, the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the Carter Center, the United States, and Japan said the election had been generally conducted in a democratic atmosphere.³ However, after Côte d'Ivoire's Independent Electoral Commission declared Mr. Alassane Ouattara the winner and the result had been certified by UNOCI, the out-going President, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, refused to yield power.

On 7 December, the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government issued a communiqué in which they recognized Mr. Ouattara as President-elect and called on Mr. Gbagbo to yield power. The Heads of State and Government issued a second communiqué on 24 December reiterating their position, expressing their support for sanctions, and saying

¹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Declaration of Political Principles of the ECOWAS (A/DCL.1/7/91) ABUJA , 4 - 6 JULY 1991 (Excerpts)," http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/compilation_democracy/ecowasdec.htm.

² Economic Community of West African States, "Protocol A/SP1/12/01 on Democracy and Good Governance," December 2001, <http://www.comm.ecowas.int/sec/en/protocoles/Protocol%20on%20good-governance-and-democracy-rev-5EN.pdf>.

³ United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, "Presidential Elections," <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unoci/elections.shtml>.

that if Mr. Gbagbo did not make a peaceful exit, “the Community would be left with no alternative but to take other measures, including the use of legitimate force, to achieve the goals of the Ivorian people.”⁴

Regarding Canada’s relations with the three countries, it has ties with Nigeria and Ghana through the Commonwealth and with Ghana and Togo through La Francophonie. In Nigeria, Canada is represented by the Canadian High Commission in Abuja. Canada also has a Deputy High Commission in Lagos and an Honorary Consul in Port Harcourt. Canadian interests in Ghana and Togo are represented by the Canadian High Commission in Accra and there is an Honorary Consul in Lomé. At the time of the delegation’s visit, however, the recently appointed Canadian High Commissioner in Ghana, H.E. Trudy Kernighan, had not received her accreditation for Togo.

Canadian development assistance to the three countries varies greatly. Regarding Nigeria, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) recognizes it as a country of regional significance for development assistance and its bilateral program focuses on health and governance. Nigeria also benefits from multilateral assistance through organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Total disbursements in 2008-2009 were \$27.5 million.

In Ghana – one of the 20 countries of focus in which CIDA allocates 80% of its bilateral resources – CIDA provides aid in the areas such as public sector reform, improved parliamentary oversight, water policy, and food security. Ghana also benefits from multilateral programs such as the World Food Programme, and disbursements in 2008-2009 were \$116.4 million.

In Togo, CIDA does not maintain a significant assistance program and is not planning any long term projects. Although CIDA does not maintain a significant assistance program in Togo, it benefits from certain regional aid programs. Disbursements in 2008-2009 were \$3.1 million. At the time of the delegation’s visit, the Parliamentary Centre of Canada was exploring the establishment of a relationship with the Togolese Assemblée nationale.

CIDA also has a large number of multilateral regional aid programs in Africa. For instance, it has provided assistance to ECOWAS through the West Africa Peace and Security Initiative.

Regarding trade relations, Nigeria is Canada’s third-largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa, and in 2009 two-way merchandise trade reached almost \$700 million. Canadian businesses are involved in oil and gas, telecommunications, energy, engineering, and education. Ghana and Canada have a growing commercial relationship. Between 2000 and 2008, two-way trade increased 193%, and in 2009 it approached \$200 million. Business opportunities are emerging in mining, education, infrastructure, and oil and gas. Canada’s commercial relations with Togo are limited. In

⁴ Economic Community of West African States, Press Release, “Extraordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on Cote d’Ivoire,” No. 192/2010, 24 December 2010, <http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=192&lang=en&annee=2010>.

2009, two-way trade amounted to less than \$25 million. There are, however, opportunities for Canadian companies in the service sector.

During its visits, the delegation was interested in discussing the changing trade dynamics as countries such as China and India aggressively pursue opportunities in the region. It was also interested in learning how the ECOWAS countries are facilitating trade between each other. One way they are doing so is through the monetary and economic cooperation by the countries of the WAEMU, which use a common currency.

The delegation was also interested in engaging parliamentarians and other participants in the political process on questions such as elections, the role of parliamentarians, freedom of the press, and health. In addition, it explored matters relating to commerce and opportunities for enhanced Canadian engagement with these three countries.

Another of the delegation's goals was to add to the Association's understanding of African regional organizations. As was the case on earlier trips to the ECOWAS region, the East African Community, North Africa, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the delegation was interested in seeing how Nigeria, Ghana and Togo are cooperating with their regional partners through organizations such as ECOWAS and the WAEMU. It was especially interested in their response to the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire.

NIGERIA

A. Background

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located on the west coast of Africa. With a population of 152 million people, it is Africa's most populous country. A former British colony, Nigeria was ruled by the military for much of the time after independence in 1960 and 1999, when democracy was restored. At that time, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo (a Christian from southern Nigeria and a former military ruler) of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was elected president, and he was re-elected in 2003. In the 2007 elections, Mr. Umaru Yar'Adua (a northern Muslim) of the PDP won the presidential vote, marking the first time since independence that power had been transferred between civilian presidents. When President Yar'Adua died in May 2010, Vice-President Goodluck Jonathan (a southerner from the Niger Delta) was sworn in as head of state. The next elections are scheduled for April 2011.

A large and ethnically diverse country, Nigeria has experienced episodes of violence. In the 1960s, there was a civil war over the eastern region known as Biafra. More recently, there was conflict in the oil-producing Niger Delta region, as well as between Muslims and Christians in several northern states. In addition, there were deadly bomb attacks in Abuja in October 2010 and in early January 2011.

Nigeria's economy is Africa's second largest. Reforms introduced earlier in the decade, assisted Nigeria to weather the 2009 global recession reasonably well. In 2009,

agriculture contributed for roughly 36% of GDP, followed by the oil and gas sector with 32%. Wholesale and retail trade accounted for 16% and services for 8%.⁵

High levels of poverty persist, particularly in rural areas, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that during the 2002-2007 period, 49.4% of the population lived on less than \$2 a day.⁶ This poverty is reflected in the statistics on the health of the population. Life expectancy at birth is only 49 years, compared with an African average of 53 years and a global average of 68 years. The under-five mortality rate is 186 per 1000 live births, compared with an African average of 142 and a global average of 65. The main causes of infant mortality are malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia.⁷ Though Nigeria's HIV/AIDS infection rate (about 3.6%) is lower than that in other African countries such as South Africa and Zambia, the large size of the population means that over three million people are living with HIV.⁸

Regarding Nigeria's international relations, Nigeria is the predominant regional power in West Africa. Within ECOWAS, Nigeria has taken the lead in conflict resolution in the region. It has sent troops to Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan Sao Tome and Côte d'Ivoire. Nigeria is the world's fourth-largest contributor to international peacekeeping operations. Nigeria enjoys generally good relations with its immediate neighbours – Benin, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. As the world's third-most important film producer, Nigeria also plays an important cultural role in Africa.

With respect to China, trade relations expanded dramatically during the administration of President Obasanjo (1999-2007). China has acquired shares in oil companies operating in Nigeria and has made direct investment in other sectors, such as manufacturing, telecommunications, power, and transport. China and Nigeria are also building a large free-trade zone in Lagos. China is Nigeria's most important source of imports, accounting in 2009 for 15%, compared with 9% for the US and 8% for the Netherlands.

Nigeria and Canada are linked through the Commonwealth and have strong bilateral relations. Canada recognizes Nigeria's leadership in African and global affairs, notably through its contribution to peacekeeping operations. Bilateral trade was worth roughly \$680 million in 2009, down from over \$1 billion the previous year.

B. Meetings

1. Visit to a Sanitation and Waste Management Project

In Durumi, an informal settlement of some 3,000 people on the outskirts of Abuja, the delegation visited a CIDA-sponsored sanitation and waste management project. The project's \$43,603 budget is funded under the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives. Under

⁵ African Economic Outlook, "Nigeria: Overview," August 2010, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/west-africa/nigeria/> (accessed 10 January 2011).

⁶ United Nations Development Programme, "Population living below \$2 a day (%)," *Human Development Report 2009*, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/103.html> (accessed 3 March 2010).

⁷ World Health Organization, "Nigeria: Health Profile," 13 August 2010, <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/nga.pdf> (accessed 27 January 2011).

⁸ Avert, "HIV and AIDS in Nigeria," <http://www.avert.org/aids-nigeria.htm> (accessed 27 January 2011).

the direction of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD), the project aims to reduce disease by encouraging the community to understand the consequences of the lack of proper sanitation and waste management on the health of the residents. The stated objective is that once the people make the link between poor sanitation and disease, they will change their behaviour and find suitable ways of disposing of their waste.

The delegation was welcomed by a delegation of women from the community and by the project leaders, Dr. Otive Igbuzor and Dr. Orji Ogbureke, who gave a presentation in which they explained that poor waste disposal and, in particular, open defecation were causing diseases such as typhoid fever and diarrhea. To help the residents understand the link between the two, they had them to calculate the amount of fecal matter they produced and then calculate the number of children under the age of five who had died.

Once they had been sensitized to the problem, the residents were then trained in various ways of dealing with the sanitation problems. Throughout the process, the project leaders did not impose solutions, but encouraged the community to make its own decisions. They were also sensitive to the local culture and ensured that the men and the traditional leaders were involved in the decision-making process.

Following the presentation, the delegation toured the settlement. Local media covered the visit.

2. Meeting on Doing Business in Nigeria

To learn about the challenges of doing business in Nigeria, the delegation met with Mr. Philip Asante, Senior Consultant with CPCS Transcom, an Ottawa-based consulting firm specializing in transportation, urban development, and public infrastructure. In Nigeria, the firm is working on the reform of the Nigerian Ports Authority and the privatization of the power utility.

Mr. Asante described some of his experiences of working in Nigeria, including issues of governance, bureaucracy, corruption, infrastructure, and lack of transparency. CPCS Transcom's strategy is based on having local representation, understanding Nigeria, and developing personal relationships, all of which it considers crucial to doing business in Nigeria.

In response to questions from the delegation, Mr. Asante discussed the challenge posed by Chinese companies. He noted that though their work may not be of the same standard as that of Canadian companies, they benefit from favourable funding arrangements and from extensive relationships with government officials. Mr. Asante also talked about the challenges of working with the Nigerian bureaucracy and the high costs of renting accommodation,

3. Meeting on Elections and Governance

At the time of the delegation's visit, Nigeria was making preparations for the April 2011 presidential, National Assembly, gubernatorial, and state House of Assembly elections. To learn about the issues related to elections and governance, the delegation held a meeting with the following representatives of non-governmental organizations: Mr. Carlo Binda, Senior Resident Director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI); Dr. Kole A.

Shettima, Director of the Africa Office for the MacArthur Foundation; and Mr. Maxwell Kadiri, Associate Legal Officer with the Open Society Justice initiative.

Mr. Binda described the work NDI is doing to provide voter education and to observe the elections. The latter involves visiting a random selection of polling stations and reporting back with coded text messages. NDI had been observing the election process since May 2010 and had recently been observing voter registration. Mr. Binda reported that there had been problems with the voter-registration equipment, but that the Independent National Electoral Commission was aware of the problems. He also noted that the election primaries had been less violent than in the past, but also said that much work needed to be done to improve the election process.

Mr. Kadiri talked about the recent conflicts between Christians and Muslims near the City of Jos. He said that much of the conflict was not so much religious, but that it arose from tensions between indigenous people (who are predominantly Christian) and newly arrived settlers (who are often Muslim). Another factor adding to the tension is the tendency for indigenous people to support the ruling party and for settlers to support the opposition. When asked what Canada could do, he said it could add its voice to the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, support peacebuilding initiatives, and send a clear message to the Nigerian Government that it needs to take the issue seriously.

Dr. Shettima talked about the need to use new technologies to address the country's 50,000 maternal deaths every year. He stressed the need for effective medication, knowledge, and access to health services. He went on to talk about elections and the use of social media by young people to monitor developments. He also talked about the efforts being made to encourage professionals to be more politically active. Finally, on the subject of education, he expressed the hope that there would be exchanges with Canadian universities.

The discussion then turned to the subject of election monitoring, the problems with the voter registration machines, and the high turnover of politicians. Despite the problems, Dr. Shettima urged Canada to continue supporting Nigerian parliamentarians and to share its experience with multiculturalism and federalism. He pointed out that in order to support democracy in Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere in the region, it is important to get things right in Nigeria.

4. Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs

The delegation met with the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Henry Odein Ajumogobia. He began with an overview of Nigerian political history and remarked that in the 50 years since independence, only 20 years have been under civilian rule. Noting there had been irregularities in the voter registration process, he said that Nigerians had nonetheless rallied around the Independent National Electoral Commission. He also talked about Nigeria's efforts to diversify its economy, which is heavily reliant on oil production.

On the subject of the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire, Minister Ajumogobia said that ECOWAS alone would not be able to resolve it, but that a broad-based international consensus would be required. On the subject of relations between Canada and Nigeria,

he said they were excellent and that Canada had always stood with the Nigerian people. He noted that Canada was addressing the issue of diplomatic visas, which will be issued from Abuja rather than Lagos.

Minister Ajumogobia went on to discuss the recent violence in the north of the country, which he said was often based on personal conflicts between indigenous people and settlers. He also talked about the need for good communications links between African countries, the need for more electric power in Nigeria, and the need to develop sectors such as agriculture, services, and manufacturing.

Lastly, the Minister said that Nigeria needs to improve its image and to address Nigeria's reputation as a source of Internet scams.

5. Visit to the National Assembly and Meeting with the Chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs

The delegation visited the National Assembly, where it met Senator Professor Jibril M. Aminu, Chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. In discussion with the delegation, he pointed out that though the Committee had not met since the political stalemate developed in Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria's response was consistent with its long-held policies, including respect for the rule of law. He also said though Nigeria supported recognizing Mr. Ouattara as the winner, there were practical difficulties in taking action.

Senator Aminu went on to discuss Nigeria's efforts in addressing maternal and child health. It budgets for reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the national government works with the state governments to try to reach them. Senator Aminu also talked about the problems of diagnosing HIV and the incidence of other diseases such as hypertension. On the subject of electric power, he said this was a serious problem, as no power plants were built between 1979 and 1999.

In closing, Senator Aminu gave an overview of some of the foreign affairs issues facing Nigeria. He said there was little interference from foreign powers, such as the United States and the European Union (EU). He noted the impact that internal problems – such as the rebellion in the Niger Delta – were having on foreign relations and Nigeria's finances.

Senator Aminu also remarked on Nigeria's cooperation with neighbouring countries. For example, it had settled a border dispute with Cameroon. He also touched on the issues of human trafficking, arms trafficking, the brain drain, Nigeria's reputation for Internet scams, and Nigeria's participation in peacekeeping missions.

The delegation then toured the National Assembly. At the time of the delegation's visit, most Nigerian parliamentarians were in their constituencies preparing for the up-coming elections.

6. Meeting with the Vice-President of the ECOWAS Commission

The delegation met the Vice-President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Jean de Dieu Somda. He began by giving an overview of the ECOWAS institutions, of which the Commission is the central body. He pointed out that ECOWAS maintains peace and democracy, fosters integration and economic cooperation, and addresses social issues.

On the issue of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Somda pointed out that ECOWAS had dealt with many situations in the past. Nevertheless, he said that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire was a major crisis. He described ECOWAS' efforts to encourage Mr. Gbagbo to step down, and said that the Heads of State and Government would be meeting again in February to discuss the situation.

In response to questions from the delegation, Mr. Somda talked about the free movement of labour between ECOWAS countries.

Mr. Somda underscored Canada's contribution to ECOWAS, but stated that additional funding would allow ECOWAS to hire more staff.

On the matter of ECOWAS's capacity to intervene militarily in the Côte d'Ivoire, he talked about some of the logistical, practical, and political problems involved. On the subject of integration, he talked about the need to improve transportation infrastructure. Finally, on the topic of empowering youth and women, Mr. Somda said that a strategic plan was in place and that progress is being made to reduce maternal mortality. He said that having healthy women and children was key to development.

7. Meeting with the Secretary-General of the ECOWAS Parliament

The delegation met Mr. Mohamed Diakite, Secretary-General of the ECOWAS Parliament, and members of his staff. Mr. Diakite gave an overview of the ECOWAS Parliament. In discussion with the delegation, he talked about the ECOWAS States' cooperation in energy production, which involves establishing institutions to deal with distribution and regulation. He went on to discuss the organizations efforts in the areas of peace and security, human resource development, and agricultural policy. He stressed the need to have transportation links between the countries of the region.

Mr. Diatike also elaborated on the budget of the ECOWAS Parliament, which is about \$15 million and which comes from a levy on import duties from non-ECOWAS countries. The Parliament meets twice a year, and its members are paid allowances for travel and living expenses. Finally, Mr. Diatike discussed the Parliament's communication strategy, the state of microfinance in Ghana, and the control of small arms and light weapons.

8. Meeting on Health, Human Rights, and Social Conditions

The delegation held a discussion with Ms. Hadiza Sani Kangiwa, Federal Commissioner for Refugees; Dr. Owens Wiwa, Country Director with the William J. Clinton Foundation; and Ms. Ifeoma Nwakama, Head of Strategy and External Organizations with the National Human Rights Commission.

Ms. Kangiwa gave a presentation on the work of the Federal Commission for Refugees. It deals with asylum seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons, and migrants, and is involved in the refugee status determination, policy creation, refugee camp management, emergency response, voluntary repatriation, and local integration. Statistics presented to the delegation showed that the number of internally displaced persons – about 1.3 million – far exceeded the number of returnees (411,000 people) or refugees (13,640 people). Ms. Kangiwa identified challenges for the Federal Commission for Refugees as the lack of resources and staff, issues of migrants, and the need for a strategic plan for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Ms. Nwakama then explained the work of the National Human Rights Commission. Its mandate is to promote and protect human rights. To this end, it investigates complaints, assists victims, carries out research, and publishes reports. The National Human Rights Commission also audits detention centres, presents recommendations to government, and conducts human rights education. Ms. Nwakama identified challenges faced by the National Human Rights Commission, including limitations with the enabling law regarding independence, powers, and the security of tenure for principal officers. She also identified poor and irregular funding, limited reach, and staff capacity. In addition, long years of military rule have had an impact on Nigeria's culture with regard to human rights. In terms of areas in which support that could help the Commission, Ms. Nwakama identified capacity building, the complaints treatment mechanism, justice sector reform, and human rights education.

Dr. Wiwa followed with a presentation on the work of the Clinton Foundation, and particularly the Clinton Health Access Initiative. It has worked in the area of providing antiretroviral medicines to sufferers of HIV/AIDS. Its approach is to set targets and once they are reached, move on to the next issue. It is also involved in the areas of maternal and child health, vaccination, malaria diagnosis and access to medicines. One of its successes has been to reorganize commodity markets to reduce the costs of medicines.

In a lively and wide-ranging discussion with the delegation, the participants elaborated on the powers and the independence of the National Human Rights Commission, which does not have the power to summon witnesses nor to compel compliance. However, it can investigate complaints against private firms, as well as against the government. They also talked about the status of informal settlements and the need for housing.

The discussion also touched on the attention paid to HIV/AIDS to the exclusion of other diseases. Dr. Wiwa said that today, increasing attention is being paid to the high levels of maternal mortality. He said that it is a matter of allocating resources efficiently, and much depends on who is doing the advocacy. For instance, the lack of basic sanitation, which is linked to diseases such as cholera, is not as much a priority.

Regarding Canadian assistance, Dr. Wiwa urged CIDA not to direct all its aid through the United Nations system.

GHANA

A. Background

Like Nigeria, Ghana is also a former British colony. It was the first sub-Saharan country to gain independence from colonialism. Its population of 24.3 million is made up of Christians, Muslims, and those who follow traditional beliefs. Ghana suffered a series of coups from independence in 1947 until 1966, when single-party rule was established. During this time, the economy suffered from mismanagement. Multi-party politics were restored in 1992, and Ghana is now considered a beacon of democracy. Mr. Jerry Rawlings – who had originally come to power in a coup – ran under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) banner and was elected president, and he was re-elected in 1996. Having reached his two-term limit, President Rawlings did not run in the 2000 election. Mr. John Kufuor of the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) won the election.

He was re-elected in 2004, but did not run in the next election. In 2008, the NDC regained the presidency when former Vice-President Mr. John Evans Atta Mills was elected. While Ghana has largely escaped civil strife, there have been tribal disputes in the north of the country.

Ghana is well endowed with natural resources, but still relies heavily on international financial and technical assistance. Agriculture accounts for one-third of GDP. Off-shore oil production began in late 2010, and it remains to be seen how Ghana deals with the new revenue. Economic growth, which had averaged 6% over the past five years, fell below 5% in 2009, but was expected to exceed 6% in 2010 and rise to over 8% in 2011.⁹

Ghana faces significant development challenges – especially in rural areas and the north – and nearly 80% of the population lives on less than \$2 a day. Life expectancy at birth is 62 years, significantly better than the African average of 53 years and approaching the global average of 68 years. The under-five mortality rate is 76 per 1000 live births, compared with an African average of 142 and a global average of 65. The main causes of infant mortality are malaria, prematurity, and birth asphyxia.¹⁰ Ghana's HIV/AIDS infection rate (1.8%) is much lower than the average of 5.0% in sub-Saharan countries. About 260,000 Ghanaians are living with the disease.¹¹

In the international arena, Ghana is an active participant in regional organizations and participates in numerous peacekeeping operations. Indeed, it is the largest African contributor to multinational peacekeeping operations, and has large contingents in Democratic Republic of Congo, the Darfur region of Sudan, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire. Ghana is also a strong supporter of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and was one of the first four countries to take part in its African Peer Review Mechanism.

Ghana has a strong relationship with Nigeria, and they have worked together in peacekeeping operations in the region. Many Nigerian companies are active in Ghana. Ghana is working to improve relations with its Francophone neighbours, and to this end in 2006 it became an associate member of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie.

Abroad, Ghana enjoys a good reputation. The US and the United Kingdom – both of which have large Ghanaian communities – are major trading partners and donors.

Recently, Ghana has developed its links with China, which is providing concessional funding for infrastructure projects. In September 2010, President Atta Mills visited China, where he signed deals totalling some US\$16 billion. China is also Ghana's number-one source of imports. In 2009, it accounted for 17% of imports, ahead of Nigeria with 12% and the US with 6.5%.

⁹ African Economic Outlook, "Ghana: Overview," August 2010, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/west-africa/ghana/>, (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹⁰ World Health Organization, "Ghana: Health Profile," 13 August 2010, <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/gha.pdf> (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹¹ Avert, "Sub-Saharan Africa HIV & AIDS Statistics," <http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm> (accessed 1 February 2011).

Bilateral relations between Canada and Ghana are good, with long-standing ties. The two countries cooperate closely to promote regional peace and security. Ghana is a core recipient of development assistance from Canada, and Ghana is Canada's third-largest market for merchandise exports in sub-Saharan Africa. Approximately 70,000 Ghanaians live in Canada.

B. Meetings

1. Visit to the Parliament of Ghana and Meeting with the Second Deputy Speaker

The delegation visited the Parliament of Ghana, where it met the Second Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Professor Aaron Michael (Mike) Oquaye, M.P. The delegation and Mr. Oquaye exchanged ideas on the role and function of the Speaker. In Ghana, the Speaker is not an elected Member of Parliament, but is an eminent person chosen from outside Parliament. The Speaker is assisted by two deputies – one from the majority side, the other from the minority.

The delegation and Professor Oquaye talked about the methods of appealing a Speaker's ruling – which in Ghana tends to rely on the political leadership coming to a compromise – and the procedure for recalling Parliament. They also discussed the voting process – especially the large number of spoiled ballots – the participation of women in Parliament and in local politics, and ways of increasing their participation.

The delegation then toured the Parliament building and visited the Chamber, where Parliament was in session. It was introduced by the Speaker and observed some of the proceedings. The delegation was impressed by the lively questioning and the vigorous debate.

2. Meeting with the President of Ghana

The Association Co-Chairs and Mr. Christopherson met President Atta Mills at Osu Castle, the President's residence. The President welcomed the delegates by talking about the year he spent at the University of British Columbia's Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues. The welcoming statements were covered by the news media.

The delegates and the President then discussed the two-way relationship between Ghana and Canada, and the importance of the many people who have experience of the two countries. They talked about the implications for Ghana of oil and gas production and the opportunities that may exist for partners in this production.

The discussion then turned to the issue of Côte d'Ivoire. President Atta Mills elaborated on the ECOWAS position and the many factors that need to be considered from Ghana's perspective. Among these, he noted that 500 Ghanaian peacekeepers were currently acting as UN peacekeepers in Côte d'Ivoire. He also discussed the implications of the crisis for the region.

The President went on to give more detail on the plans for dealing with the revenue from oil and gas production and Ghana's efforts to find the right balance between using the resources now and saving for future. He talked extensively about the need to safeguard the resources for future generations, while recognizing the need to give immediate benefit to citizens. The President also talked about the need to strengthen

agricultural production and agri-processing. He said the aim is to develop surplus production in order to feed the country and to expand exports.

President Atta Mills also discussed Ghana's evolving relationship with China. He noted the relationship had been a long-term one, and that while Ghana and China are cooperating in some areas, it was not at the exclusion of traditional benefactors.

Asked about the relationship between Ghana and Canada, the President said nothing was missing from the relationship. Nevertheless, he identified some areas where cooperation could be enhanced – such as education, the oil and gas sector, and agri-processing.

3. Meeting with Parliamentary Leadership and Members of Ghana's Delegation to the ECOWAS and Pan-African Parliament

Meanwhile, members of the delegation met with Members of Parliament from both the majority and minority sides. They included the Honourable Prof. Mike Oquaye, Second Deputy Speaker; the Honourable Cletus Avoka, Majority Leader in Parliament; the Honourable Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu, Minority Leader in Parliament; the Honourable Ambrose Derry, Deputy Minority Leader and member of the Trade and Industry Committee; the Honourable Albert Kan-Dapaah, Chair, Public Accounts Committee, and member of Defence and Interior Committee; the Honourable Gershon Gbediame, member of the Public Accounts Committee; the Honourable Dominic Azumah, member of the Public Accounts Committee; the Honourable Elizabeth Agyeman, member of the ECOWAS Parliament; the Honourable Alfred Agbesi, member of the ECOWAS Parliament; the Honourable Michael Teye-Nyanu, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and member of the ECOWAS Parliament; and the Honourable Joseph Amankwanor, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Mines and Energy Committee.

The delegation and the Ghanaian Parliamentarians shared ideas about the working of their Parliaments, the roles of Members of Parliament, the role of the Public Accounts Committee, and their relations with constituents. They also held a frank discussion about the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Ghanaian Members of Parliament from both sides expressed concerns that their government was sending mixed signals about Ghana's role in responding to the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire.

4. Visit to a Gender Equity Project at the Accra Girls Correctional Centre

The delegation visited a CIDA-funded project that provides skills training to girls incarcerated at the Accra Girls Correctional Centre – Ghana's only correctional facility for under-aged girls. Some 20 juvenile offenders between the ages of 8 and 17 – many of whom have been sentenced for serious crimes – were learning skills such as hairdressing, catering, dressmaking, upholstering, and plumbing.

The project falls under CIDA's Strategic Initiatives for Gender Equality Program (SIGEP), and is implemented in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare by the Zonta Club of Accra – a service organization of executive women. The delegation was welcomed by Ms. Stella Bentsi-Enchill, the local Zonta Club governor. The visit

was also attended by 13 other Zonta Club members, including Ms. Irene Addo, M.P. The delegation heard a presentation by some of the girls and toured the facilities.

The delegation was impressed by the coordinated approach being made by donors, the community, and government. The practical approach to treatment and the focus on rehabilitation is intended to give the young girls skills they can use in the community. Indeed, they were already using their skills by making plumbing repairs and enhancing the Centre's access to water. The delegation noticed the dedication shown by the girls to learning new skills.

The delegation appreciated that the people involved with the project were giving their time, their caring, and their ideas to make the project work. Through their efforts, the young people will be able to rejoin the community in a much better position than they otherwise would be.

5. Meeting with the Minister of Finance

The delegation met Dr. Kwabena Duffuor, Minister for Finance and Economic Planning. He gave an overview of the Ghanaian economy and the impact the world economic crisis of 2008 had on it. He said that the macro-economic situation was now good, that the currency was stable, that government borrowing was down, and that expenditures were on track.

Minister Duffuor went on to talk about the need to stimulate growth and create jobs. He pointed out that the people's quality of life depends on more than just economic figures. It also relies on reaching the millennium development goals (MDGs). In particular, he said that education – particularly of women – was key to development.

In response to questions, Minister Duffuor discussed the idea of a common currency for ECOWAS. He said the situation in Europe – where the richer countries are bailing out the poorer ones – was an example of the problems that can arise. He said Ghana was not strong enough to support the poorer countries in the region. Saying that talks will continue on the matter, the region would not rush into establishing a common currency. Rather, he said that establishing structures, strengthening governments, and improving communication were priorities.

Minister Duffuor went on to discuss a number of topics. On the subject of education, he noted that it is free and compulsory and that children are given food and uniforms. He also talked about the difficulties related to collecting taxes and enforcing laws. On the subject of the reliance on the oil industry that has caused problems in other countries, he said that Ghana is different and that it would take a cautious approach and use the new revenue to diversify the economy and to provide for future needs.

Regarding development assistance, he said that as Ghana's economy improves, within five to 10 years it should be able to stand on its own. He confirmed that the government has plans and projections in place to help Ghana adjust as it makes the transition from donor recipient to a middle-income country. This will not mean that Ghana will cease working with countries such as Canada. Instead, the relationship will shift to one of partnership. On the subject of remittances from Ghanaians abroad, he said they had increased substantially over the past dozen years. The Minister also discussed the effect the production of gas – which has not yet begun – will have on the economy. He

said that the energy supply was a problem, and that gas will provide reliable power. He concluded by saying that the transition period would be managed carefully.

6. Visit to the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre

The delegation visited the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC) in Accra. It delivers research and training programs that contribute to global peacekeeping operations. The training at the Centre focuses on the operational aspects of peacekeeping missions, and is offered to police, military, and civilian personnel. In 2010, 1,342 people attended courses at the Centre.

The delegation was welcomed by the Commandant, Air Vice Marshall Christian Edem Kobla Dovlo, and by members of his management team. They discussed the Centre's programs, its work with the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre, and its involvement with gender training.

The delegation then attended a briefing about the Center's operations including the ongoing work by the Gender, Peace and Security Programme (GPS) and the Women, Peace and Security Institute (WPSI). The GPS addresses gender and security-related issues in conflict, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction. It conducts research and provides training to help regional and continental organizations – such as ECOWAS and the AU – understand gender dynamics and provide protection against gender-based violence. For its part, the WPSI aims to support the full implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on women, peace and security. It serves as a knowledge centre and develops courses designed to build capacity for women in leadership. The delegation was also briefed about the Centre's work in relation to the training of personnel for the United Nations/AU Africa Mission in Darfur (UNAMID).

The delegation was then given a tour of the Centre.

7. Meeting with the Canadian Business Community

The delegation attended a lunch with the Canadian business community hosted by the Canadian High Commissioner. It was attended by members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce-Ghana, the Minerals Commission, the Ghana Chamber of Mines, the Canadian Commercial Corporation, the Ghana Airports Company Ltd., the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PMI Ventures, the Institute of Justice and Human Rights, Keegan Resources, Pelangio Exploration Inc., AKSA Management, and the Ministry of Justice and the Attorney General's Department. The delegation had the chance to discuss the opportunities that exist in Ghana in areas such as housing, accounting, oil and gas, and infrastructure development.

8. Visit to the World Food Programme Humanitarian Depot

The delegation visited the World Food Programme (WFP) Humanitarian Depot. It was welcomed by the Depot manager, Mr. Martin Walsh, and by country director Mr. Ismail Omer. The United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot programme (UNHRD) is supported by CIDA, for which food security is a major priority.

The delegation was briefed about the Depot, which is one of five humanitarian response depots worldwide. The first one was established in 2000 in Brindisi, Italy. The Depots hold strategic reserves of emergency relief goods, such as medical goods, shelter

items, and prefabricated office and storage units. They have responded to disasters such as the 2004 Asian tsunami, earthquakes in Pakistan, droughts in South Africa, and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

The Accra depot is a rapid-response logistics humanitarian hub for the WFP and the broader humanitarian community. It serves all of Africa, and in 2010, it shipped some US\$3.7million worth of goods. As part of the WFP's world-wide network, it also contributes to the emergency response to major international disasters. For instance, the Accra Depot sent relief items to Haiti after the 2010 earthquake.

The Depot provides services to a number of UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations. It offers some services – such as storage and handling – at no cost to users. Other services – such as procurement, repairs, and labeling – are offered at cost plus a 4.5% management fee. The Depot buys some food from local farmers to stock its shelves.

In discussion with the delegation, the Depot team discussed the impact of rising food costs. They explained that the Depot is located in Ghana because of the transportation infrastructure and the country's stability.

The delegation then toured the modern Depot, where it observed the enormous shelves full of emergency medical supplies, tents, and food.

9. Meeting with the Minister of Water Resources, Works and Housing

The delegation met with the Minister of Water Resources, Works & Housing, the Honourable Alban S. K. Bagbin. He began by talking about his portfolio, which, in addition to housing, covers areas such as drainage and coastline protection. He noted that Ghana is blessed with water, but that water quality is threatened by farming practices and silting. He said the government is taking measures, such as planting trees, to address some of these problems. The Minister also talked about the coordination with neighbouring countries in managing water resources.

On the subject of housing, Minister Bagbin said there is a deficit of 1.3 million houses. While some 150,000 new houses are needed annually, only 10,000 are being built. Financing is a problem, but with the help of a loan from South Korea, the government hopes to close the gap within five to 10 years. The Minister also explained that Ghana does not have a housing code and that there is a lack of planning at the local level.

Minister Bagbin talked about the need to provide housing for migrants from the north of the country who move south. He said that the preferred solution is to encourage development in the north so that people are less inclined to move. He also talked about the private sector's involvement in the housing sector.

Regarding relations with China, the Minister said that Ghana understands there are risks, and while it is not easy to turn down Chinese offers of assistance, Ghana is looking for a healthy mix in its relations with foreign donors and investors. He also talked about Chinese immigration to Africa and the extent to which Chinese actions could be seen as a form of economic colonialism.

Finally, on the subject of waste management and poor sanitation, the Minister said that it is a time bomb, and that the private sector needs to participate in developing solutions.

TOGO

A. Background

The Togolese Republic is located to the east of Ghana. Modern-day Togo was initially part of the German colony of Togoland. After the First World War, the Togoland was divided into British and French zones. In 1956, the British zone became part of Ghana, while French Togoland became an autonomous republic within the French Community. Togo gained full independence in 1960. Its population of six million is divided into 37 tribes, and the official language is French.

Today, Togo is a country in transition. It has been ruled for more than 40 years by the same party, the Rassemblement du peuple togolais (RPT). The death of long-time autocratic president Gnassingbé Eyadéma in 2005 brought his son Faure Gnassingbé to power, but also cleared the way for multi-party elections. The legislative elections held in 2007 and 2010 were declared by international observers to be free and fair.

President Gnassingbé was re-elected in the March 2010 Presidential election. After the election, Mr. Gilchrist Olympio, the long-time leader of the opposition Union des forces de changement (UFC), agreed to form a government of national unity in which the UFC received one-quarter of the cabinet posts. This signalled an end to nearly 50 years of confrontation between the two parties. However, the agreement also opened divisions within the UFC, which split into two factions – one led by Mr. Olympio, the other by Mr. Jean-Pierre Fabre, who lost to President Gnassingbé in the 2010 Presidential election.

Donor support was suspended in 1993 after President Eyadéma dissolved the government, leaving Togo under-developed. With the establishment of democracy, however, Togo is being re-welcomed into the international community and aid flows have resumed.

The Togolese economy is largely based on agriculture, which accounts for 39% of GDP. The main cash crops are cotton, cocoa, and coffee. In 2009, strong performance in the sector led to economic growth of 2.2%. Growth is expected to rise to 2.5% in 2010 and 3.6% in 2011. However, growth has been hampered by problems with the phosphate supply. In addition, infrastructure is in poor condition.¹²

Togo is one of the poorest countries in the world. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimates that during the 2002-2007 period, 69.3% of the population lived on less than \$2 a day.¹³ Life expectancy at birth is 59 years, slightly better than the African average of 53 years, but below the global average of 68 years.

¹² African Economic Outlook, "Togo: Overview," 3 August 2010, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/countries/west-africa/togo/> (accessed 2 February 2011).

¹³ United Nations Development Programme, "Population living below \$2 a day (%)," *Human Development Report 2009*, <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/103.html> (accessed 3 March 2010).

The under-five mortality rate is 98 per 1000 live births, compared with an African average of 142 and a global average of 65. The main causes of infant mortality are malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhea.¹⁴ Togo's HIV/AIDS infection rate (3.2%) is somewhat lower than the average of 5.0% in sub-Saharan countries. About 120,000 Togolese are living with the disease.¹⁵

Relations between Togo and its neighbours – Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Benin – are generally good. In 2007, Togo, Benin and Nigeria signed a pact aimed at promoting peace and stability between them and which established the Nigeria–Benin–Togo Co-prosperity Zone.

Togo is active in the AU and in West African regional organizations. It is a member of the ECOWAS and the CEN-SAD. It also cooperates with the Francophone members of ECOWAS through the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).¹⁶ Togo has participated in peacekeeping operations in the region, including in Côte d'Ivoire.

With the political reform that has taken place since the death of President Gnassingbé Eyadéma in 2005, Togo's relations with the EU have improved. In 2008, the EU resumed its financial support after a 15-year hiatus. Togo maintains particularly close relations with France and Germany, the former colonial powers. Relations with the United States are good. Togo is also cultivating good relations with Iran, Libya, Morocco, and China. With regard to the latter, China is Togo's most important source of imports, accounting for 37%, compared with France (9%), Netherlands (7%), India (5%), and the United States (4%). China recently provided Togo with some US\$12 million in grants and loans for agriculture and infrastructure.

Bilateral relations between Canada and Togo are limited, and Canada has no bilateral program for development assistance there. However, Togo does benefit from regional aid programs supported by CIDA. Canada supported the efforts of the AU and ECOWAS to encourage a democratic transition in Togo. Canada also denounced the human rights violations that marked the 2005 elections. Canada is encouraging Togo to pursue its democratic reform process.

B. Meetings

1. Visit to the Assemblée nationale and Meeting with the Speaker

The delegation visited the Assemblée nationale, where it was welcomed by the President of the Assemblée nationale, the Honourable Abbas Bonfoh. He gave a presentation on the Assemblée nationale, in which he explained the party balance and the role of committees.

In discussion with the delegation, President Bonfoh said he looked forward to building good relations between the Parliaments of Togo and Canada. He went on to talk about how committee chairs are chosen – four are from the majority side and three from the

¹⁴ World Health Organization, "Togo: Health Profile," 13 August 2010, <http://www.who.int/gho/countries/tgo.pdf> (accessed 2 February 2011).

¹⁵ Avert, "Sub-Saharan Africa HIV & AIDS Statistics," <http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm> (accessed 1 February 2011).

¹⁶ Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

minority side. The House leaders work out the committee membership. He also talked about Parliamentary sessions.

Asked what the main issues the Assemblée nationale is dealing with, President Bonfoh said they are the issues established by the government – poverty reduction, education, healthcare, and agriculture. He also discussed Togo's relations with Canada and with ECOWAS. Regarding the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire, he said they were working for a peaceful solution while at the same time respecting democracy and the will of the people.

The delegation then toured the Assemblée nationale, which has been housed for 10 years in a conference centre. Following the visit, the delegation gave media interviews.

2. Meeting with Parliamentarians

The delegation met with three Togolese Parliamentarians: Mr. Kokou Aholou, leader of the UFC; Mme Christine Mensah-Atoemne, Chair of the Committee on Human Rights; and Mme Adjaratou Abdoulaye, Second Rapporteur with the Committee on Foreign Relations.

The Parliamentarians discussed the situation of minority parties in the Assemblée nationale. Generally speaking, they support government bills when they feel they are good for the country. Given that Togo is in a recovery period, they are giving the Government the chance to implement its program. Asked about the treatment of minority parties, Mr. Aholou said they are being treated equitably. The Parliamentarians also discussed ways in which Togo can ensure that the transition to democracy proceeds peacefully.

The Parliamentarians then elaborated on the work of their committees. In particular, the Committee on Human Rights is concerned with the rights of women and children. Given the human rights abuses of the past, they said the Committee is necessary to ensure that rights are respected. It visits correctional institutions and health centres to ensure that human rights are being respected, and it publishes reports with recommendations.

The Parliamentarians also discussed education, the lack of which is a big problem in Togo, particularly among rural women and girls. They also discussed the lack of understanding of the political process among much of the population. They said that many people expect the Parliamentarians to build schools.

3. Meeting with the Prime Minister of Togo

The delegation met the Togolese Prime Minister, H.E. Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo, who has lived in Canada and who holds a post-graduate degree in accounting and finance from the Université de Québec à Trois-Rivières.

The discussion began with the subject of the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. Prime Minister Hounbo said he supported ECOWAS in taking a unanimous stand on the matter. Pointing out that African democracies are young democracies, he said the countries in the region need to make sure that the action in Côte d'Ivoire is not copied by others. He noted that this was the first time that ECOWAS Heads of State had taken

a clear position on the outcome of an election. The Prime Minister also discussed some of the factors complicating the attempts to convince Mr. Gbagbo to cede power.

Regarding the situation in Togo, the Prime Minister mentioned the need to improve human rights. He said there is now freedom of the press and that people may write whatever they want. At the same time, however, people say they are still starving and the push for reforms must be accompanied by dividends. Otherwise, people could conclude the old system worked better.

Prime Minister Hounbo noted that the winner-take-all approach no longer applies. He said that minority parties have seven cabinet posts – one quarter of the total. Noting that there are 72 political parties and 80 newspapers (though only two daily ones), he said that it will take from five to 10 years for things to settle down.

On the subject of the economy, the Prime Minister talked about financial reforms and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) assistance it received from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

On the subject of the bilateral versus the multilateral approach to development assistance, the Prime Minister said that he favoured the multilateral approach. He pointed out that Togo receives aid from the World Food Program, of which Canada is the third-largest contributor. At the same time, he said he understood that, from a Canadian foreign-policy perspective, bilateral aid could help focus Canada's presence and support for Togo. He also said flexibility is needed in order to respond to humanitarian crises.

On the subject of Chinese assistance for infrastructure, the Prime Minister said that since Togo has limited resources, it is necessary in the short term. He also noted that the Chinese are building strategic relationships in Africa and that they offer funding. At the same time, he said that recipient countries need to keep their eyes wide open.

The Prime Minister went on to discuss the ways in which Togo is encouraging private sector investment. He pointed to Togo's new code on investment, which needs to be approved by the Assemblée nationale, as well as to Togo's tax benefits and its low labour costs.

Following the meeting with the Prime Minister, the news media conducted interviews with the participants.

4. Meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

The delegation met the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr. Elliott Ohin. He is one of the seven members of the opposition UFC to hold a cabinet post. He discussed the status of ECOWAS, which he said has a common outlook. He talked about the ECOWAS' response to the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. Noting that it could have an impact on Togo and the region, he said Togo's position was a peaceful one.

Minister Ohin then talked about Togo's transition to democracy. He said there had been a long period of internal struggles, and after the 2010 election, the government extended a hand to the opposition. This had resulted in appeasement. Now the

majority and minority parties must work together to reduce misery and encourage development.

The Minister also talked about African unification and regional integration. However, he said that Togo's main priority is to restart the country and to promote development.

The Minister thanked the delegation for its visit and expressed the hope that it would now serve as Togo's ambassador to Canada.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The delegation attended briefing sessions presented by Canadian officials in both Abuja and Accra.

In Abuja and in Accra, the delegation attended receptions hosted by the Canadian High Commissioners, where it met a broad section of the Nigerian and Ghanaian political leadership, civil society, business people, and the diplomatic community.

In Lomé, the delegation hosted a lunch for Togolese parliamentarians.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo are very different countries, with very different challenges. Nigeria, the most populous and powerful country in the ECOWAS region, is a new democracy. Although it has the second-largest economy in Africa, there is still great disparity of income. The energy and transportation infrastructures are inadequate. Violent conflict is common and because there had been recent bombings in Abuja, the security situation during the delegation's visit was tense. Nevertheless, Nigeria is a country of great potential.

Abuja is a thriving, modern city, yet on the outskirts, the delegation visited a development project in an informal settlement in which the residents do not have access to basic sanitation. The delegation went away with an appreciation of the immensity of the problem Nigeria has in bridging the disparity despite having impressive financial and natural resources. Given that security is important to a country as large and as complex as Nigeria, the delegation felt that this disparity should be addressed.

The delegation heard about some of the challenges of doing business in Nigeria. Clearly, developing personal relations is crucial to success. At the same time, the lack of transparency and accountability is a challenge. Another factor is that other countries, such as China, are aggressively pursuing opportunities. Nigeria has many pressing infrastructure needs, but Canadian companies wishing to take advantage of these opportunities need to be willing to make a long-term commitment.

The subject of Nigeria's reputation as a source of Internet scams came up a number of times. Nigerian officials are aware of this reputation and are anxious to show the country in a better light.

The delegation discussed the preparations for the April 2011 elections and in several places in Abuja saw groups of people lined up to register for the vote. It heard that although there have been some problems with the voter registration equipment, the Independent National Electoral Commission is aware of the problems. The delegation

was reasonably hopeful that the election will be conducted fairly and the international community needs to be engaged.

The delegation also heard that much of the conflict in the north of the country tends to be a result of settlers moving into new areas, rather than religious conflict between Christians and Muslims. At the same time, the delegation formed the opinion that the fatal attacks must be of paramount action by the government.

In the area of health, the delegation heard that so many children die before the age of five from preventable diseases and this issue concerned the delegation. As already mentioned, it observed the unsanitary conditions in which many people live. It also heard about the high number of maternal deaths. It was encouraged to hear that Nigeria has a plan for addressing these problems, but also observed that it has a long way to go. The delegation was particularly impressed by the Clinton Foundations' approach to dealing with problems – once it meets its targets, it moves on to another issue.

Regarding Nigeria's international relations, the delegation was encouraged to see the extent to which it is involved in trying to find a solution to the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. These efforts are based on respect for the rule of law.

On the subject of the respect of human rights, the delegation heard that work still needs to be done, but that efforts are being made in this area. It is hopeful that the work to ensure the respect of human rights will continue.

Canada's relations with Nigeria are good and Canada is respected for having stood by the Nigerian people during the military dictatorships. No major irritants were raised, and Nigerian officials were pleased with that their concerns about the process to obtain visas were being addressed. The delegation felt the Canadian government should continue to assist the people and government of Nigeria as they strive to improve security and consolidate democracy and the rule of law.

An area in which increased Canadian involvement would be welcome is that of education. The Canadian education system has a good reputation and the delegation heard that it would be worth exploring opportunities for improving education in Nigeria.

Ghana is a beacon of stability in the region. Since the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1992, it has seen several peaceful democratic changes of power. Its economy is developing and it is approaching middle-income status. Income disparity still exists, however, and poverty persists in rural and northern areas. The government recognizes this and is trying to deal with the challenge. It also has plans for dealing with oil revenue, which is just beginning to come on stream. The delegation noted the general level of development in Accra and the surrounding area. The security situation was much calmer than in Abuja.

On its visit to the Parliament of Ghana, which was in session, the delegation was honoured to be introduced to Parliament and was impressed by the level of debate. It also appreciated the frank discussion it had with its Ghanaian counterparts. The delegation felt that these discussions, as well as the debate it observed, reflected well on the relative maturity of Ghanaian democracy.

The delegation Co-Chairs and Mr. Christopherson were honoured to be received by the President of Ghana and were grateful for the exchange of views. The delegation was encouraged by Ghana's efforts to work with its ECOWAS partners to find a solution to the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. At the same time, it appreciated that many factors need to be considered, but trust that a political solution will be found based on the rule of law, democratic principles, and ECOWAS standards.

The delegation was encouraged that Ghana has a plan to deal with oil revenues. Ghanaian officials are aware that oil revenue can cause distortions in the economy, and they seem ready to exercise leadership so that the revenues are invested wisely. The delegation was also encouraged to hear that dealing with social issues – such as education, housing, and waste management – and working toward reaching the MDGs are part of the government's approach.

The delegation was appreciative of the opportunity to meet members of the Canadian business community. It heard that while there are challenges to doing business in Ghana, they are not as severe as elsewhere in the region. As everywhere in Africa, personal relationships and an understanding of the local culture are important to business success.

Regarding development assistance, the government is anticipating that the relationship with donor countries will change over the next decade as Ghana approaches middle-income status. The relationship is expected to evolve from one of assistance to one of partnership. The government expressed its concern that donors should reward successful development and continue assisting their transition. The delegation concurs.

Despite its successes, Ghana faces many challenges, and the delegation was made aware of some of these when it visited the Accra Girls Correctional Centre. It was moved by the young age of the girls who are incarcerated there, yet was hopeful that the training and the treatment approach benefits their integration successfully.

Ghana's general stability is an obvious advantage in the often-troubled region, and this stability is one reason why the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre and the World Food Programme Humanitarian Depot are located there. The delegation was impressed by how well run these two institutions are and by their modern facilities.

Regarding the World Food Programme Humanitarian Depot, the delegation felt that better publicity could be made of its services in Canada. The UNHRD network can be used by participating non-governmental organizations such as Care and World Vision as a one-stop shop for procurement, transport, and customs import-and-export services. At times of international humanitarian crises, this can be efficient way of helping those in need.

Regarding Ghana's relations with Canada, the delegation found that the two countries' long-term relationship, as well as Canada's strong support for Ghana's development, has created much good will. Many Ghanaian officials from the President on down have personal relations with Canada and these relations offer opportunities for developing the relationship further. The delegation found that Ghanaians and Canadians share a similar outlook. Ghana's prospects are good, and though it is poised to become a middle-income country, it will continue to face many challenges. Canada's continued

support will go a long way to helping make the transition smoothly. In particular, Canada could help Ghana improve its education system. As well, Ghana is an important player regionally, and cooperation between the two countries, particularly with regard to peacekeeping, is an important component of this role. The delegation supports its status as a country of focus.

Togo is the least developed of the three countries. It has only recently emerged from a long period of conflict and must overcome years of stagnation. Development challenges are daunting, yet it must show progress if the population is to support reforms.

In Lomé, the delegation noticed the effects of its long isolation from the international community. The level of development is noticeably lower than that in Abuja or Accra. In Togo, people are concerned with basic survival and obtaining adequate food. The country's run-down infrastructure makes addressing these concerns especially difficult.

The delegation came away from its meeting with Togolese Parliamentarians with the impression that they are anxious to put the conflicts of the recent past behind them and to work together to restart the country. At this stage in the country's development, the opposition members are inclined to support the government's program, rather than to criticize it heavily. At the same time, the Parliamentarians are conscientious about their work in the area of human rights. Generally speaking, however, Togolese Parliamentarians are limited in what they can do by their lack of resources.

The delegation was struck by Prime Minister Houngbo's comment that for reforms to succeed, they must be accompanied by dividends. The government of national unity is a very recent creation, and the delegation recognized that it is in its very early stages and appreciated that reforms must proceed carefully. At the same time, it was encouraged by the Prime Minister's assertion of the need to respect human rights.

The delegation was encouraged by Togo's support for the ECOWAS position on the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire.

While the country is initiating economic reforms and is trying to create the conditions for investment, it will take some time before these show results. In the meantime, Togo will continue to require assistance from the international community. The delegation believes Canada would be well-placed to give greater attention to the development of this country.

Regarding relations with Canada, people at the highest levels of government have personal ties to Canada, and they hold Canada in high regard. The Togolese tend to feel forgotten and they were grateful for the mere fact of the delegation's visit. Togolese officials are also grateful for Canada's support through multilateral channels, such as the WFP. The delegation felt that, given the fragile state of Togo's new democracy, any efforts on the part of Canada to support it would be greatly appreciated. In light of its development at this point, the delegation felt there are opportunities for Canada to play a greater role.

As noted earlier, at the time of the delegation's visit, the recently appointed Canadian High Commissioner in Ghana, H.E. Trudy Kernighan, had not received her accreditation

for Togo. The delegation raised the issue with the Togolese officials it met, and hopes that she will be accredited as soon as possible.

As noted in the section on key issues, one of the delegation's goals was to add to the Association's understanding of African regional organizations. On this visit, as well as on the Association's previous visit to Benin and Burkina Faso, the delegation gained the impression that ECOWAS is functioning reasonably well.

Indeed, the delegation was impressed by the three country's efforts to work with their ECOWAS partners to address the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. (Indeed, the Association published a news release to that effect, a copy of which is included in the Appendix.) In each country, the delegation was aware of intense diplomatic activity taking place as the countries of the region tried to resolve the stalemate. The delegation was encouraged that there is a commonly held view that the region cannot afford to let Côte d'Ivoire set a bad example, particularly as presidential or legislative elections are scheduled to take place in some 20 African countries in 2011. The delegation also took note of the dynamic at play within ECOWAS as the member countries work to develop common positions while pursuing their own interests.

In its meetings with ECOWAS officials, the delegation was impressed by their efforts to foster cooperation between the countries of the region. At the same time, it realized that the capacity of ECOWAS institutions is limited.

The delegation felt the Canadian government should continue to support ECOWAS's positive contribution to integration and regional stability in West Africa. In doing so, the Canadian government is encouraged to pay close attention to the dynamics within ECOWAS.

On the subject of regional integration and efforts to expand trade between the ECOWAS countries, the delegation heard that they are not ready to pursue monetary union throughout the region. Before that is possible, the countries must address other needs – such as improving the supply of energy and transportation links. The delegation experienced this firsthand on its overland trips from Accra to Lomé and back. The road, which is used by transport trucks, is in a shocking state and the customs procedures are chaotic.

As on its other African visits, the delegation remarked on the extent to which countries such as China and India are increasing their presence in the region. With respect to China's role in the region, the delegation was told that it is difficult to refuse its assistance. While the countries realize that China is pursuing its own interests in Africa, they feel that accepting Chinese assistance can be to Africa's benefit as well. At the same time, the delegation heard that the Chinese are putting a great deal of effort into cultivating the kinds of relationships with policy makers that are necessary for doing business in Africa.

Finally, in all three countries, the delegation was able to conduct interviews with local journalists and this indicated better freedom of the press.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their help in making the Nigeria leg of the visit a success, the delegation would like to thank Canadian High Commissioner H.E. Christopher Cooter, Mr. Christian DesRoches, Ms. Trina Oviedo, Mr. David Ross, Mr. Hima Himawan, and Ms. Teresa Holmes. The delegation would also like to thank Dr. Otive Igbuzor and Dr. Orji Ogbureke of the African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development and Mr. Philip Asante of CPCS Transcom. As well, the delegation would like to acknowledge the Nigerian High Commissioner in Canada, H.E. Iyorwuese Hagher, for his help in arranging the delegation's program.

For their help in making the visit to Ghana a success, the delegation would like to thank the Second Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, the Honourable Professor Mike Oquaye, M.P., Canadian High Commissioner H.E. Trudy Kernighan, Ms. Nuala Lawlor, Mr. Charles Longtin, Mr. Ian Myles, Ms. Aoife Gibbons, Dr. Cheryl Gopaul, and Ms. Eunice Dadson. The delegation would also like to thank Ms. Stella Bentsi-Enchill and the members of the the Zonta Club of Accra for their presentation at the Accra Girls Correctional Centre. The delegation would like to thank the Commandant of the KAIPTC, Air Vice Marshall Christian Edem Kobla Dovlo, for making the visit possible, as well as Ms. Aissatou Fall and Ms. Margaret Sosuh of the Gender, Peace and Security Programme for their informative presentation. The delegation is also grateful to Mr. Martin Walsh and Mr. Ismail Omer of the World Food Programme for hosting the delegation at the WFP's Accra Depot. The delegation would also like to thank the Ghanaian High Commissioner in Canada, H.E. Dr. Richard Benjamin Turkson, for his help in arranging the visit.

Regarding the visit to Togo, the delegation would like to thank the President of the Togolese Assemblée nationale, the Honourable Abbas Bonfoh. It would also like to acknowledge the special efforts made by the Minister of Territorial Affairs, the Honourable Dédé Ahoéfa Ekoué, in organizing the delegation's program. The delegation would also like to thank. It would like to thank Mr. Charles Longtin once again for his assistance on the Togolese leg of the visit. For their help in making the visit possible, the delegation would like to thank the Togolese Ambassador to Canada, H.E. Bawoumondome Amelete, and the Togolese Ambassador to Ghana, H.E. Jean-Pierre Gbikpi-Benissan, as well as the Canadian Honorary Consul in Togo, Mr. Mark Antoine and his wife Ms. Anara Makacheva. The delegation is also grateful to Dr. Rasheed Draman of the Parliamentary Centre for adding to the delegation's understanding of the region.

Respectfully submitted,

The Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C.,
M.P., Co-Chair

Canada-Africa Parliamentary
Association

The Honourable Raynell Andreychuk,
Senator , Co-Chair

Canada-Africa Parliamentary
Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Bilateral Visit to Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo
DESTINATION	Abuja, Nigeria, Accra, Ghana and Lomé, Togo
DATES	January 16 to 22, 2011
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Raynell Andreychuk, Hon. Jim Munson
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Mauril Bélanger, Yasmin Ratansi David Christopherson, Lois Brown, Cheryl Gallant
STAFF	Maxime Ricard; Michael Dewing
TRANSPORTATION	\$73,621.13
ACCOMMODATION	\$20,095.43
HOSPITALITY	\$6,302.80
PER DIEMS	\$4,676.28\$
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$1,664.87
MISCELLANEOUS	\$2,394.69
TOTAL	\$108,755.20

APPENDIX

Canada - Africa
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada - Afrique

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2nd, 2011

Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association Encourages Continued Efforts to Resolve the Political Stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire

Ottawa, February 2nd, 2011 – On its recent three-country visit to Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo, a delegation of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association learned first-hand about the challenges the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is facing in dealing with the political stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. The Association encourages the ECOWAS States to continue working together to find a solution that respects the will of the Ivorian people.

From January 16 to 22, seven members of the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association, led by the Association Co-Chairs, the Honourable Mauril Bélanger, P.C., M.P., and the Honourable Raynell Andreychuk, Senator, visited Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo. They were accompanied by Ms. Yasmin Ratansi, M.P., Mr. David Christopherson, M.P., Mrs. Lois Brown, M.P., the Honourable Jim Munson, Senator, and Ms. Cheryl Gallant, M.P.

The delegation met with the President of Ghana, H.E. John Evans Atta-Mills; the Prime Minister of Togo, H.E. Gilbert Fossoun Hounbo; the Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Honourable Henry Odein Ajumogobia; and the Togolese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Honourable Elliott Ohin. The delegation also met with parliamentarians, ECOWAS officials, members of civil society organizations, business representatives, and the news media.

The Côte d'Ivoire Presidential election of 28 November 2010 was declared by the Independent Electoral Commission to have been won by Mr. Alassane Ouattara, but the result was contested by the out-going President, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, who refused to concede power. The delegation was encouraged by the efforts being made by the three countries to work with their ECOWAS partners in addressing this political stalemate despite many complicating factors.

The delegation noted that the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government have taken a common position, as expressed in their Final Communiqué of 24 December 2010 (http://ecowas.int/publications/en/communique_final/session_extra/Communique_Final_CI_election.pdf), recognizing the status of Mr. Ouattara as the legitimate President of

Côte d'Ivoire and in demanding the immediate and peaceful handover of power by the out-going President, Mr. Gbagbo.

The delegation encourages the ECOWAS States to continue working together to find a solution to the political stalemate and hopes that through their efforts the will of the Ivorian people will be respected.

Established in 2003, the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association promotes exchanges between African and Canadian parliamentarians, proposes initiatives likely to lead to better mutual understanding of national and international problems, and works to develop cooperation in all the fields of human activity. In addition, the Association works to develop ties with regional parliamentary groupings and the Pan-African Parliament.

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