



**Report of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée
parlementaire de la Francophonie***

Bureau meeting and 45th Ordinary Session meeting

Abidjan, Ivory Coast

From July 4 to 9, 2019

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) that attended the APF Bureau meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on July 5, 2019, and the 45th Session of the APF, also held in Abidjan from July 6 to 9, 2019, has the honour to present its report.

Led by the Honourable Éric Forest, Senator and Vice-President of the Canadian Branch of the APF, the delegation included the following parliamentarians:

- The Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais, Senator;
- The Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator; and
- The Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator.

The delegation was assisted by Chloé Forget and Dominique Montpetit, advisors to the Canadian Branch, Jean-François Lafleur, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Branch, and Mike McDonald from the Senate Corporate Security Directorate.

Close to 300 parliamentarians from 51 branches attended the 45th Session of the APF. Representatives from several organizations related to the *Francophonie* were also in attendance.

BUREAU BUSINESS

The Bureau of the APF met on July 5, 2019. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable François Paradis, Speaker of the National Assembly of Quebec, MNA (Quebec) and President of the APF. He began the meeting with opening remarks and then gave the floor to the Speaker of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire.

The Bureau members adopted the agenda and minutes of the Bureau meeting held on January 31 and February 1, 2019, in Brussels, Belgium.

The President of the APF then reported absences and substitutions and gave an update on certain provisions of the APF statutes on branch membership, and the Bureau took note of the desire of the Chair of the Political Committee to review and clarify those statutes. Bureau members also took note of the fact that Guillaume Soro, Member (Côte d'Ivoire), and Bassatigui Fofana, Member (Côte d'Ivoire), are no longer part of the Côte d'Ivoire Branch and will therefore not continue their mandate with the Bureau of the APF. The Bureau approved the appointment of Amadou Soumahoro, Speaker of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, as First Vice-President of the APF.

Jacques Krabal, APF Parliamentary Secretary General and Member (France), then addressed the issue of Bureau composition, adding that there are special considerations for Saskatchewan, the Northwest Territories and French Polynesia. The Bureau reiterated that the Saskatchewan Branch must pay its dues for 2016 and 2017, issued a favourable opinion to the Plenary Assembly regarding the membership application of the Assembly

of French Polynesia and authorized the Parliamentary Secretary General to continue negotiating with the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories.

Mr. Krabal also presented his activity report for the first half of 2019, which was adopted. During his presentation, he addressed the issue of the organization's funders, thanked the General Secretariat team for its work preparing the Annual Session and reported on the various issues affecting APF branches, such as cross-border violence, the refugee crisis, undocumented children, democracy and the rule of law.

The Bureau then adopted the draft agenda and draft scheduling of proceedings of the 45th Session of the APF.

Mr. Krabal gave an update on the APF's various multilateral co-operation programs, including

- the multilateral parliamentary development program of the National Assembly of Mali;
- the multilateral francophone parliamentary development program of the National Assembly of the Republic of Haiti; and
- the multilateral francophone parliamentary development program of the National Assembly of Madagascar.

The Bureau adopted the updated co-operation programs and decided to develop a multilateral francophone parliamentary program for the National Assembly of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Krabal then reported on the Noria Program, adding that it was renamed the Programme Numérique APF in 2018. He also spoke about the various initiatives carried out throughout the year, as well as those that will be implemented shortly. The Bureau adopted the status report of the *Programme Numérique APF*.

Alex Bodry, APF Treasurer and Member (Luxembourg), then presented the 2018 financial report and statements. Mr. Bodry said that there was a €27,002 surplus for fiscal year 2018, which was allocated for parliamentary co-operation during the February 2019 Bureau meeting. He addressed the issue of unpaid dues, adding that their impact on the APF's finances is significant. Mr. Bodry then presented the 2019 Programming Update, which was adopted. In addition, the Bureau authorized funding for a number of initiatives that support parliamentary co-operation and solidify the status of the French language.

Mr. Krabal presented the new APF 2019–2022 strategic framework, adding that the branches had already been consulted on the matter. The Bureau decided to submit the framework to the Plenary Assembly with a favourable opinion.

The Bureau then heard a presentation of two draft partnership agreements with the *Institut international pour la Francophonie* (2IF) and the African Parliamentary Union (APU). The Bureau decided to submit these draft agreements with a favourable opinion to the Plenary Assembly for ratification. Moreover, the Bureau approved the modification of the APF's status in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) from observer to associate member.

The Bureau heard presentations on the work of the APF's four standing committees¹ and two networks² and took note of them. After the presentation on the work of the Political Committee, the Bureau decided to maintain the alert for the Cambodia Branch and issue an alert for the Benin Branch.

The Bureau then discussed the *Ordre de la Pléiade*, the Senghor Césaire Award and the Geoffrey Dieudonné Award. First, the President of the APF submitted the table of branch nominations for the *Ordre de la Pléiade* to the Bureau members, who partially adopted it. The Bureau agreed to postpone its review of the nominations submitted by the Benin Branch. Second, Didier Berberat, State Councillor (Switzerland) and Chair of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee, presented the process for presenting the Senghor Césaire Award and selecting its recipient. Lastly, Claudine Lepage, Vice Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee and Senator (France), added that the Geoffrey Dieudonné Award was established in memory of Geoffrey Dieudonné, who was murdered during a mission in Bamako in 2015.

Before closing its proceedings, the Bureau heard a tribute to Didier Berberat, Chair of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee from 2008 to 2019 and State Councillor (Switzerland). His term will end on November 30, 2019.

The President of the APF suggested that the next Bureau meeting be held in Dakar, Senegal, in January 2020. The Bureau adopted his suggestion.

NETWORK FOR WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS BUSINESS

The Network of Women Parliamentarians met in Abidjan on July 6, 2019, Lydienne Eyoum Minono Epoubé, Member (Cameroon), presiding.

The Network adopted the agenda and record of decisions of its meeting on February 26, 2019, in Hanoi, Vietnam. Participants then heard from the Chair, who presented her report on the Network's activities since the February 2019 inter-sessional meeting. During her presentation, the Chair spoke about some co-operation initiatives the Network of Women Parliamentarians participated in.

The Network then heard a joint presentation by Antonia Ngabala Sodonon, UN Women Resident Representative, and Sylvie Adou Gougoua, Project Manager for UN Women, entitled: "Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030: A Multistakeholder Strategy for Accelerated Action."

The Network of Women Parliamentarians also heard presentations on four reports :

- Report on women's empowerment in the digital age in French-speaking countries, presented by Stéphanie Kerbarh, Member (France), and Bénédicte Peyrol, Member (France). After presenting the report, Stéphanie Kerbarh moved a resolution on the issue, which was adopted. In the discussion on the resolution, the Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator (Canada), said that girls in mixed classrooms often do not participate in scientific activities, adding that it is important

¹ The Parliamentary Affairs Committee, Political Committee, Co operation and Development Committee and the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee.

² The Network of Women Parliamentarians and Young Parliamentarians Network.

to incentivize them to do so and put an end to preconceived notions of women in STEM.

- Report on cyberviolence against women and children, presented by the Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator (Canada).
- Report on women's empowerment in the digital age in French-speaking countries, presented by Senator Mégie. After presenting the report, Senator Mégie moved a resolution on the topic, which was adopted.
- Report on the transnational trafficking of women and girls in French-speaking countries, presented by Mathias Reynard, National Councillor (Switzerland). After presenting the report, Mr. Reynard moved a resolution on the topic, which was adopted.

In her presentation on the draft report on cyberviolence against women and children in French-speaking countries, Senator Mégie said that the rights of women and children must be protected in both online and real-world situations. She also shared best practices for preventing violence against women. Senator Mégie ended her presentation by emphasizing the role parliamentarians can play in preventing cyberviolence against women and children, for example, by ensuring that existing legislative provisions respect the rights of women and girls and repealing provisions that weaken those rights.

There was a discussion after Senator Mégie's presentation. Some Network members said that it would be important to look at examples of best anti-cyberviolence practices implemented by parliaments and governments in the *Francophonie*, especially at the legislative level, and incorporate them into the report. Participants also said that it was important to include information about the role of schools in preventing cyberviolence and promoting digital literacy and media education. The Network agreed to receive a questionnaire from the Canadian Branch to gather information on the APF branches' initiatives to prevent cyberviolence and strategies to protect women and children. The results of the questionnaire will be presented in a second draft report during the 2020 intersessional meeting.

Senator Mégie started her presentation on the resolution on the health care needs of refugee women and girls by saying that the resolution is further to the report on the same issue, which was presented during a past meeting by Sylvie Boucher, MP (Canada), and to a declaration on the issue, which was adopted by the Network in Hanoi, Vietnam. Senator Mégie also said that the draft resolution states that because refugee women and girls are confronted with unique problems, they must receive greater, gender sensitive protection, especially regarding access to health care services, including obstetrical care, mental health resources, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, sex education, family planning and feminine hygiene products. Senator Mégie added that the draft resolution also calls on parliamentarians who are members of APF branches to assert in their respective legislatures that it is paramount to recognize the need to provide special, gender-sensitive protection to refugee women and girls when considering measures to welcome refugees. Lastly, she said that the resolution promotes initiatives to provide health care services that are tailored to the needs of women refugees.

The Network then considered a resolution on the educational consequences of non-registration of children's civil status. The resolution was prepared jointly with the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee and was adopted.

The Network also heard a joint presentation by Myriam Guido and Françoise Koho, from the *Réseau ivoirien de défense des droits des enfants et des femmes*, on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Maryse Gaudreault, MNA (Quebec), then provided an update on the international commitments to gender equality and women's rights. Ms. Gaudreault also offered to provide a form letter to Network members that underscores the importance of ratifying the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. She added that this letter could be sent to the ministers of status of women of the various APF member branches. In addition, Ms. Gaudreault said that the Leadership Workshop for Women Parliamentarians of the *Francophonie* will be held from September 3 to 6, 2019, in Quebec City.

The Chair presented the findings of the work accomplished over the course of the International Conference on Girls' Education and Women's Training in the Francophone Space, held on July 18 and 19, 2019. She shared some of the issues raised during the conference, including the negative impacts of gender discrimination, the lack of access to education in rural areas on girls' schooling and women's training and unwanted pregnancies.

The Network adopted the new composition of its Bureau. Sylvie Boucher, MP (Canada), was elected as rapporteur.

Lastly, the Network discussed the date and location of its next meeting.

YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS NETWORK BUSINESS

The Young Parliamentarians Network met in Abidjan on July 6 and 7, 2019. The meeting was chaired by Gurratan Singh, MLA (Ontario), who was replacing Amanda Simard, MLA (Ontario).

The very first meeting of the Young Parliamentarians Network started with a roundtable discussion where participants introduced themselves and talked about the Network's mandates. The Honourable Éric Forest, Senator (Canada), who was replacing Francis Drouin, MP (Canada) and Rapporteur, emphasized that incorporating a youth perspective into the APF's work is crucial.

The Young Parliamentarians Network then considered Senator Forest's proposal regarding the Canadian Branch's draft report on youth participation in politics. Senator Forest stated that we live in a time of democratic deficit and that one example of this deficit is the drop in youth participation in many countries' parliamentary systems. He added that according to the IPU, youth representation is relatively low in the national parliaments of almost all the countries it studied. The IPU found that in 2018 only 15.5% of the parliamentarians in 150 countries were under the age of 40. Senator Forest also said that there is a significant gap between the share of young people in various APF member branches' parliaments and the young people in their general populations, adding

that critical data on young parliamentarians is needed to further understand the extent of the issue.

Senator Forest added that there are some barriers that limit youth participation in politics. For example, he said that the electoral laws in some countries preclude young people from running in elections as candidates and that young people face certain prejudices, namely that they lack the experience and skills needed to become parliamentarians. Senator Forest also said that systemic barriers, such as the inability to secure campaign funding, can thwart their ambitions. He added that youth under-representation in parliaments has consequences for our democracies: we are not respecting the foundational principles of democracy if we cannot ensure that each demographic is represented in our legislatures. Senator Forest then asked the Network to consider preparing a draft report that would put forward sustainable solutions to encourage youth participation in politics. The Young Parliamentarians Network adopted Senator Forest's proposal.

The Network then heard from various persons and organizations, namely

- the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*;
- the Minister of Youth Promotion and Employment, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire;
- Ibrahim Diabaté, former co-spokesperson of the francophone youth parliament and former youth involvement coordinator of the Plateforme des Réseaux de Jeunesse de la Francophonie; and
- Israël Guebo, who spoke about parliamentarians' communications and social media.

PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Parliamentary Affairs Committee met in Abidjan on July 7, 2019. The meeting was chaired by Claudine Lepage, Senator (France) and Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee (PAC), who was replacing the Chair, Robert Aubin, MP (Canada).

The Vice-Chair presented the agenda, which was adopted by the Committee. She then presented the minutes and record of decisions of the last PAC meeting, which was held in Ottawa, Canada, on April 25 and 26, 2019. The minutes and record were adopted. Ms. Lepage then reviewed the Bureau's decisions that affect the PAC.

The PAC received four reports :

- Report on privacy in francophone countries, presented by Imbassou Ouattara Abbas, Member (Côte d'Ivoire) and Fathi Derder, National Councillor (Switzerland). The PAC adopted a legislative framework on privacy in francophone countries modelled after the report and declaration on the issue.
- Report on the role of Parliament and parliamentarians in the balance of power with their government, presented by Nadia El Yousfi, Member (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia–Brussels).

- Report on parliamentary outreach and bridging the gap between people and their governments, presented by Geneviève Hébert, MNA (Quebec).
- Report on the legislative framework for undocumented children, presented by Claudine Lepage, Senator (France) and Vice-Chair of the PAC, and Imbassou Ouattara Abbas, Member (Côte d'Ivoire). During its consideration of the framework, the PAC heard from Miranda Armstrong, Chief of Child Protection, UNICEF Côte d'Ivoire, and Abdoulaye Harissou, Secretary General of the *Association du Notariat Francophone*. The PAC then adopted a framework to enshrine the mandatory, free and public registration of all newborns and recognize the legal rights of undocumented children.

The PAC then heard from Georges Nakseu Nguiefang, Director of Political Affairs and Democratic Governance for the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF).

The Committee then received six reports on the APF's parliamentary co-operation programs :

- Report on the francophone electoral missions, presented by Nadia El Yousfi, Member (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia–Brussels);
- Report on the *Programme Numérique* APF, presented in the name of Robert Aubin, MP (Canada);
- Report on the parliamentary seminars and training courses, presented by Louis Vlavonou, Member (Benin);
- Report on the Geoffrey Dieudonné Award, presented by Nadia El Yousfi, Member (Belgium/French Community/Wallonia–Brussels);
- Report on the multilateral francophone parliamentary development programs, presented in the name of Robert Aubin, MP (Canada); and
- Report on the francophone youth parliament and national youth parliaments, presented by Pierre-Flambeau Ngayap, Senator (Cameroon).

The Vice-Chair then presented the APF's draft conventions with external partners, including the partnership framework between the APF, Jean Moulin University Lyon 3 and 2IF.

The Committee then followed up on the two resolutions adopted by the Plenary Assembly in Quebec City in July 2018 :

- Resolution on the protection of personal data in francophone countries; and
- Resolution on parliamentary ethics and professional conduct in francophone countries.

Regarding the Resolution on the protection of personal data in francophone countries, the Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais, Senator (Canada), said that Canada has two pieces of federal privacy legislation: the *Privacy Act* and the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*. Senator Dagenais added that the Privacy Commissioner of Canada monitors the application of both acts and that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics has tabled a number of reports on privacy in recent years. Regarding the Resolution on parliamentary ethics and professional conduct in francophone countries, Senator Dagenais said that in Canada, the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner is responsible for administering two legal instruments that govern the ethical behaviour and professional conduct of Members of Parliament and public office holders: the *Conflict of Interest Act* and the *Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons*. He added that senators are also subject to the *Ethics and Conflict of Interest Code for Senators*. Senator Dagenais further added that the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner works with his counterparts within Canada and abroad to share professional advice and expertise.

The Committee then heard an information item on the APF strategic framework 2019–2022.

The Committee then adopted the proposal for a question from the PAC to be put to the Secretary General of the *Francophonie* about the role of the APF regarding francophone election observation missions and birth registration in French-speaking countries.

The Committee adopted its new Bureau composition: Joël Godin, MP (Canada), was elected as Chair of the PAC, replacing Robert Aubin, MP (Canada).

Lastly, the Committee discussed future topics to consider, as well as the date and location of its next meeting.

POLITICAL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Political Committee met in Abidjan on July 7, 2019, Senator Christophe André Frassa (France), Chair of the Committee, presiding.

The branches in attendance adopted the agenda and the minutes and record of decisions of the last meeting, held in Djibouti, Djibouti, on March 5 and 6, 2019.

The Committee held a round-table discussion of recent political events in the various branches. The Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator (Canada), laid out the main political developments that affected the Parliament of Canada's work in recent months. He said Canada is preparing for a fixed-date general election on October 21, 2019. He also highlighted some of the key issues for the next election campaign, including the environment and energy. Senator Dawson concluded by noting that the Government of Canada announced in 2016 that Canada would seek a seat on the United Nations Security Council for a two-year term starting in 2021. He said the vote is scheduled for June 2020.

Rapporteur Geneviève Inagosi Kassongo (Democratic Republic of the Congo), along with Georges Nakseu Nguiefang, DAPG of the APF, presented a report on the political situations in francophone countries. The Committee reviewed the political situations in

the branches that are suspended,³ under observation⁴ or under warning,⁵ and the other branches or regions of interest.⁶ The Committee then adopted draft resolutions on the political situation in Haiti.

The Committee examined the actions the APF and G5 Sahel interparliamentary committee are taking regarding the situation in the Sahel countries.

The Committee also received three reports:

- Report on United Nations peacekeeping operations from the Belgium/French Community/Wallonia-Brussels Branch;
- Report on digital governance, presented by Éric Lefebvre, MNA (Quebec); and
- Report on protecting the rights of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) persons, presented by Senator Dawson.

In presenting the report on protecting the rights of LGBTI persons, Senator Dawson noted that it was the final report. He explained that the Committee commissioned a report on this topic at the meeting in Erevan, Armenia, in the spring of 2018. He said the report shows that LGBTI persons are still subject to violence and discrimination throughout the world and are denied certain rights because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, even though human rights are universal. Senator Dawson pointed out that international law unequivocally states that all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex, enjoy human rights protections. He added that the rights of LGBTI persons are not new and that their human rights claims are based on existing protections in international human rights law.

Senator Dawson stated that his report focuses on the protection of existing rights and makes the case for upholding the rights of all human beings. He named the five duties that states must fulfil to protect LGBTI rights, as set out by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Senator Dawson emphasized that, despite the progress made so far, much remains to be done to protect LGBTI rights around the world. He said the Canadian Branch recognizes that not everyone will respond favourably to the report. Lastly, Senator Dawson said that, while he is presenting a final report, the discussion of LGBTI rights should continue. He added that the Canadian Branch proposes that the Committee study this issue every year, as it has a mandate to monitor the protection and promotion of human rights in the *Francophonie*.

Debate on the report ensued. A number of branches expressed their disagreement with the report and argued that the subject should not be studied. After the debate, the branches from the Africa region held a closed-door consultation. Following this consultation, the Committee formally acknowledged the report on the rights of LGBTI persons and the opposition of the African branches.

³ Syrian Arab Republic

⁴ Burundi

⁵ Cambodia

⁶ Benin, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, France, Haiti, Madagascar, the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad), Togo and Tunisia

The Committee held a debate and discussion on community violence. The Committee heard from sociologist Séverin Yao Kouamé, Professor at the University of Bouaké, Côte d'Ivoire.

The Committee heard a presentation from Anne Seydoux-Christe (Switzerland) on the history of the death penalty in francophone countries.

Emmanuel Maury, Administrative Secretary General of the APF, provided an update on the APF's nuclear test ban and non-proliferation initiatives.

The Chair of the Committee gave an update on membership applications and status changes. He also suggested that a subcommittee be created to review the APF statutes, the option of establishing by-laws for the APF and measures to improve the organization's management and transparency. This proposal was adopted.

The Committee discussed topics for future reports. Senator Dawson proposed freedom of the press as a future topic. He said the rights of journalists are an integral part of freedom of opinion and expression, which are protected by the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and various binding international treaties. He pointed out that freedom of the press is increasingly being curtailed around the world and suggested that the Committee examine press freedoms from a human rights and rule of law perspective, as these issues fall within its mandate. The proposal was agreed to. Éric Lefebvre, MNA (Quebec), proposed a study on artificial intelligence from a human rights perspective.

The Chair of the Committee presented the question to be put to the Secretary General of the *Francophonie*, and it was adopted. Lastly, the Chair announced the membership of the next bureau of the Committee.

COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Co-operation and Development Committee met in Abidjan on July 7, 2019, Angélique Ngoma (Gabon), Chair of the Committee, presiding.

The Committee meeting started with a message from the Chair. The Committee then adopted the minutes and record of decisions for the meeting of May 3 and 4, 2019, held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

The Committee held a round-table discussion on economic news in the various branches. The Honourable Éric Forest, Senator (Canada), provided an overview of recent economic events in Canada. He reported that the Canadian economy remains strong. He noted that real gross domestic product grew by 1.8% last year, putting Canada in second place among Group of Seven countries, but below the average for Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development nations.

The Committee held a hearing on the African Development Bank's climate change and green growth initiatives.

The Committee reviewed three draft resolutions:

- Draft resolution on corruption as a barrier to economic development, presented by Senator Forest;

- Draft resolution on access to digital technology in francophone countries, presented by Harold Lebel, MNA (Quebec); and
- Draft resolution on the employment impact of the digital revolution, presented by Mansour Kamardine, Member (France).

In presenting the draft resolution on corruption as a barrier to economic development, Senator Forest pointed out that the resolution stems from a report sponsored by the Canadian Branch. He noted that the resolution mirrors the report's key findings and the subsequent declaration on the subject. The resolution calls on

- states to pass laws and implement programs, policies and initiatives to foster transparency and fight corruption at all levels;
- parliamentarians to take responsibility for improving the transparency of their own practices and those of their parliament;
- parliamentarians to join forces to fight corruption and adopt laws, programs, policies and initiatives to combat corruption, including corruption in parliamentary processes; and
- parliamentarians to use their powers to ensure sound management of public funds in their country or region.

Following his presentation, an amendment was moved to add a clause calling on states to add corruption prevention topics to school textbooks to educate youth about the issue. The Committee adopted the resolution as amended.

The Committee examined four reports:

- Report on food loss and waste, presented by Jean-Pierre Grin Hoffmann, Member (Switzerland);
- Report on tourism and transportation and its economic impact as a driver of development, presented by Moussa Thiam, Member (Senegal), and Mamadou Diallo, Member (Burkina Faso);
- Report on avenues for international co-operation on climate change, presented by Senator Forest; and
- Report on the monitoring of World Trade Organization (WTO) international trade negotiations, presented by Harold Lebel, MNA (Quebec), and Henri Koubizara, Member (Burkina Faso).

In presenting his report on avenues for international co-operation on climate change, Senator Forest pointed out that climate change is a global issue that requires a global response. He stated that some developing countries are more vulnerable to climate change, yet do not have the financial or technical capacity to deal with the challenge. He submitted that international co-operation is essential to prevent and mitigate the impacts

of climate change. Senator Forest added that the first draft of the report explores four avenues for international climate change co-operation: financial assistance, technology transfer, information sharing and technical support for developing countries. He shared details on each of the four avenues for co-operation. Senator Forest proposed that the next draft add two case studies of cities that are doing exemplary work to prevent and mitigate climate change. He concluded by noting that other examples could be added to the final version of the report in order to create a database of best practices for international climate change co-operation.

Following the discussion on the draft report, it was suggested that a questionnaire be sent to the APF branches to collect examples of climate change best practices. The Committee agreed to the proposal.

The Committee ended its meeting by discussing its future agenda. Harold Lebel, MNA (Quebec), suggested the following topic: rural land use and vitality—evidence of sustainable rural development from the *Francophonie*.

EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE BUSINESS

The Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee (CECAC) met in Abidjan on July 8, 2019, Didier Berberat, State Councillor (Switzerland), presiding.

The branches in attendance adopted the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting, held in Hanoi, Vietnam, on February 26 and 27, 2019. The Chair presented a report on CECAC's activities since the February 2019 meeting and the activity report of the Parliamentary Network on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Both reports were adopted.

Christine Labrie, MNA (Quebec) and Rapporteur, reported on the implementation of UNESCO's *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.

CECAC then took up two resolutions passed at the Plenary Assembly held in Quebec City in July 2018:

- Resolution on TV5 Monde funding; and
- Resolution on the importance of education about the rights of people with a melanin deficiency.

Regarding the TV5 Monde funding resolution, the Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator (Canada), explained that Canada supports TV5's work in several ways, including as one of the five partner governments that contributes to TV5. She added that Canada presided over this work in 2018 and 2019 and provides financial support to TV5 Monde and TV5 Québec Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage. She noted that Canada's funding for TV5 is part of a voted appropriation in the Government of Canada's annual budget that is approved by the Parliament of Canada. Regarding the resolution on the importance of education about the rights of people with a melanin deficiency, Senator Mégie explained that, in Canada, a person's colour is a prohibited ground of

discrimination under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. She said that some actions, if they are based on a prohibited ground of discrimination, may be considered discriminatory. She went on to share some Canadian parliamentary initiatives that address the issue of people with a melanin deficiency.

CECAC then heard from Sophie Léonard, Deputy Representative, UNICEF-Côte d'Ivoire, on the actions UNICEF is taking to build classrooms and improve civil registration in Côte d'Ivoire.

CECAC reviewed and adopted four draft resolutions:

- Resolution on the replenishment of the Global Fund. On this topic, CECAC heard from Claire Baudot, Advocacy Manager, Global Health Advocates;
- Resolution on student mobility;
- Resolution on distance learning and knowledge transmission; and
- Resolution on the educational consequences of non-registration of children's civil status (joint resolution with the Network of Women Parliamentarians).

In presenting the resolution on student mobility, Senator Mégie said it stems from the declaration on student mobility that CECAC adopted at its meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam. She added that adopting the resolution would be a first step toward implementing the APF's new strategic framework for 2019–2022, which includes action to support strategies promoting student mobility in francophone countries. She explained that the Canadian Branch's resolution calls on parliamentarians in APF branches to

- promote agreements, programs and scholarships that make it easier for students to study at francophone institutions;
- take into account the various barriers students encounter and the many challenges the various francophone countries face; and
- establish mechanisms to promote student mobility in the *Francophonie* while providing incentives to encourage graduates to work in their country of origin in order to limit "brain drain."

In addition, Senator Mégie said the resolution calls on francophone parliamentarians in developed countries to support developing countries' efforts to increase access to high-quality, affordable education, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 4 of the UN's 2030 Agenda.

CECAC also received two reports:

- Report on the use of digital technology in schools, presented by Christine Labrie, MNA (Quebec); and
- Report on sports and the *Francophonie*, presented by Philippe Mouiller, Senator (France).

CECAC reviewed the rules for the Senghor Césaire award. Senator Mégie proposed amending section 4.1 of the rules to add the chair of the Young Parliamentarians Network to the award's jury. The proposal was adopted.

CECAC discussed the APF's participation in the international conference on education and training for girls and women in francophone countries, which was held in N'Djamena, Chad, on June 18 and 19, 2019. CECAC heard more about the conference from Youssef Arrif, Deputy Director of the OIF's education and youth division.

The Chair suggested that CECAC pose a question to the Secretary General of the *Francophonie* about the international conference on girls' education. CECAC agreed to the question.

Lastly, CECAC considered future subjects for its work, adopted a new list of members for its bureau and discussed the date and time of its next meeting.

PLENARY SESSION BUSINESS

The APF met in Plenary Assembly in Abidjan on July 8 and 9, 2019, François Paradis, President of the National Assembly of Quebec and President of the APF, presiding.

The opening ceremony began with speeches from five officials:

- Jean-Marc Yacé, Mayor of Cocody;
- Amadou Soumahoro, President of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire;
- François Paradis, President of the National Assembly of Quebec and President of the APF;
- Louise Mushikiwabo, Secretary General of the *Francophonie*; and
- Daniel Kablan Duncan, Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

The proceedings continued, and the Assembly adopted the agenda.

Jacques Krabal, Parliamentary Secretary General of the APF, provided an update on the membership of the Bureau and the Plenary Assembly. He announced that a new membership application had been received from the Assembly of French Polynesia (as a member). He added that the Serbian Branch had asked to change its status from observer to associate member. The Plenary Session approved these requests.

The Secretary General of the *Francophonie*, Louise Mushikiwabo, addressed the Assembly. She said she plans to strengthen the culture of efficiency and transparency at the OIF and improve its communications. She also emphasized the importance of boosting co-operation between the OIF and APF and ensuring the two organizations complement each other on issues such as digital technology, education, civil status, communication and research funding. She mentioned that one arena for co-operation is the recently established joint APF-OIF committee.

The Secretary General of the *Francophonie* highlighted the *Francophonie*'s role in peace, security and human rights issues, including the APF's role in this regard. She explained that the *Francophonie* must set itself apart from other international organizations by rooting its approach to peace, democracy and human rights in dialogue, attentiveness, respect, coordination and prevention. Finally, she set out some of her priorities for the *Francophonie*, including the vitality of the French language, education for girls and women, the French language's role in the digital world and international organizations, and gender equality.

Following the speech from the Secretary General of the *Francophonie*, the Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator (Canada), asked her to share her vision for youth mobility in francophone countries and the OIF's efforts to improve this mobility, break down the barriers youth face and achieve the youth strategy's mobility objective. She answered by noting that the *Volontariat international de la Francophonie* is one of the OIF's key youth initiatives and that the OIF is working to open this program to more youth. She urged francophone parliamentarians to support mobility for youth in francophone countries, especially youth from the Global South.

Jacques Krabal, Parliamentary Secretary General of the APF, presented his report on activities since the Quebec City session of 2018. Alex Bodry, Treasurer and Member (Luxembourg), presented the 2018 financial report and statements and a programming update for 2019. The Plenary Assembly adopted the financial report and the 2019 programming update and approved funding for a number of parliamentary co-operation initiatives.

Mr. Krabal presented the APF's 2019–2022 strategic framework, which the Plenary Assembly adopted.

The Assembly heard from Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization.

Claudine Lepage, Vice-Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, presented the draft partnership agreement with 2IF. Mr. Krabal presented the draft partnership agreement with the APU. Both agreements were ratified. Finally, Mr. Krabal presented the draft agreement with the IPU.

François Paradis, President of the APF, introduced the topic for the Plenary Session's debate: Parliament and strengthening democracy. The debate began with a presentation from Professor Yacouba Konaté, who discussed parliaments and democracy in francophone countries.

The Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais, Senator (Canada), gave a speech about the representativeness of Canada's parliamentary institutions. He explained that the Senate of Canada was created in 1867 as a counterweight to the House of Commons, the goal being to provide appropriate representation for the country's various regions in the Parliament of Canada. He added that the Senate has become more diverse since it was created and that its members advocate for other under-represented groups of Canadians. Senator Dagenais argued that the strength of democracy depends on parliaments and that parliamentarians must above all do everything they can to ensure citizens are represented in their parliaments. He then shared some of the practices and initiatives of

the Senate and House of Commons of Canada that bring civil society into their work, such as the hearings parliamentary committees hold with experts and community groups for their studies. Moreover, he explained that the Parliament of Canada makes every effort to inform the public about how parliamentarians fulfil their duties and how public funds are used. He concluded by emphasizing that APF members need to work together to strengthen democracy in francophone countries.

The Plenary Assembly then heard a presentation on the replenishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria from Françoise Vanni, Head of External Relations at the Global Fund.

The Assembly adopted the following resolutions presented on behalf of the standing committees and the Network of Women Parliamentarians:

- Resolution on the political situation in Haiti;
- Resolution on digital governance;
- Resolution on corruption as a barrier to economic development;
- Resolution on student mobility in the *Francophonie*;
- Resolution on the replenishment of the Global Fund;
- Resolution on the employment impact of the digital revolution: issues and perspectives in francophone countries;
- Resolution on access to digital technology in francophone countries;
- Resolution on the use of digital technology in schools;
- Resolution on the use of digital technology for distance education and training in higher education in francophone countries;
- Resolution on the educational consequences of non-registration of civil status;
- Resolution on the health care needs of refugee girls and women;
- Resolution on digital technology and women in francophone countries: opportunities and dangers; and
- Resolution on human trafficking.

The Honourable Éric Forest, Senator (Canada), moved the resolution on corruption as a barrier to economic development, which was based on a report by the Canadian Branch.

The Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator (Canada), moved the resolution on student mobility and the resolution on the health care needs of refugee girls and women, which were based on reports by the Canadian Branch.

The Assembly adopted two legal frameworks on privacy protection and mandatory, free and public registration of births and legal recognition of undocumented children.

The chargés de mission for the Africa, Americas, Europe and Asia regions presented reports on their respective activities.

Finally, the Plenary Assembly elected new senior leaders for the APF to two-year terms. Amadou Soumahoro, Member and President of the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire, and Darrell Samson, MP (Canada), were elected President and First Vice-President of the APF, respectively.

CONCLUSION

At the 45th Annual Session of the APF, the Canadian Branch had the opportunity to contribute to the APF's work by presenting draft reports on issues that affect all residents of francophone countries. The Canadian Branch's reports on youth participation in parliamentary proceedings, cyberviolence against women and children, avenues for international co-operation on climate change and the protection of the rights of LGBTI persons opened an important dialogue with the branches representing countries and regions across the *Francophonie*.

The Canadian Branch achieved its goals, which are to promote the spread of the French language, encourage the study of social, cultural and economic issues of common interest to foster co-operation among APF parliamentarians, and spark a cultural dialogue. More broadly, the Canadian Branch engaged in dialogue to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and increased co-operation and solidarity among francophone countries.

The Abidjan session was also an opportunity for a number of Canadian parliamentarians to forge links with parliamentarians from across the *Francophonie*.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Drouin, MP

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i>
ACTIVITY	45th Ordinary Session of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie</i>
DESTINATION	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire
DATES	July 4 to 9, 2019
DELEGATION	

SENATE
The Honourable Dennis Dawson, Senator
The Honourable Éric Forest, Senator
The Honourable Jean-Guy Dagenais, Senator
The Honourable Marie-Françoise Mégie, Senator

HOUSE OF
COMMONS

STAFF
Chloé Forget, Analyst
Jean-François Lafleur, Association Secretary
Dominique Montpetit, Analyst
Mike McDonald, Corporate security directorate of the
senate of Canada.

TRANSPORTATION	\$ 46,784.77
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 11,538.53
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 5,132.81
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 993.09
TOTAL	\$ 64,449.20