



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

Parliamentary Conference on the G5 Sahel

New York, New York, United States of America

From November 14 to 15, 2019

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF) is honoured to present its report on its participation in the Parliamentary Conference on the Sahel, which took place in New York, United States, on November 14–15, 2019.

Darrell Samson, M.P., President of the Canadian Branch and First Vice-President of the APF chaired this conference, which was organized by the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*.

Approximately thirty parliamentarians and parliamentary officials took part in the exchanges during these two days.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting opened under the chairmanship of Darrell Samson, First Vice-President of the APF, and in the presence of representatives of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Also present were Issaka Sidibé, President of the National Assembly of Mali; Pino Cabras, Italian Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Representative from Contributing Countries to the G5 Sahel Alliance; Jacques Krabal, Member of the National Assembly (France) and APF Parliamentary Secretary General; and José Rosemberg, representative of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization to the United Nations. Mr. Samson welcome participants.

After interventions by Mr. Krabal and Mr. Rosemberg, Mr. Samson welcomed the participants of the different panels of the conference and officially opened proceedings.

SESSION 1: PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE AND COMMITMENTS OF THE FRANCOFONIE AND THE UNITED NATIONS FOR THE SAHEL

The first session was devoted to a parliamentary consultation on the follow-up of the commitments of the Francophonie and the United Nations in the Sahel. These two bodies are committed to finding solutions to the crisis in the Sahel. Several initiatives are under way to provide a strong and coordinated response to the threats facing Sahel countries.

The permanent representatives of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger to the United Nations and the parliamentarians attending the conference discussed the various initiatives to help the Sahel, including the deployment of a peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the Security Council's approval of an integrated United Nations Strategy for the Sahel and, more recently, a UN Support Plan for the Sahel.

In addition to these initiatives, resolutions are regularly adopted by the UN Security Council as the situation in the Sahel evolves. The topics of the resolutions include the situation in Mali, the extension of the mandate of MINUSMA, women in peace and security processes, the prevention and fight against the financing of terrorism and UN peacekeeping operations to achieve the objectives of stabilizing the Sahel.

The Representative of the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) to the United Nations, Narjess Saidane, stressed that the OIF wanted to become more involved in efforts to help the Sahel. Ms. Saidane has undertaken several initiatives in that regard, including strengthening the analysis and strategic thinking capacities of the research centres in the Sahel countries.

SESSION 2.1: SECURITY ISSUES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SAHEL

The conference heard from Samia Ladgham, Head of the Africa Branch of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Emmanuel Roux, Permanent Representative of Interpol to the United Nations, and Chris Harland, Deputy Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations on security and defence issues and economic and social development for sustainable peace.

Ambassador Ion Jinga, Chair of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations, Nicolas De Rivière, Ambassador of France to the United Nations, and Namie Di Razza, Researcher at the Centre for Peace Operations at the International Peace Institute, were also in attendance.

They noted an inextricable link between security and development that requires working on both simultaneously in order to implement coordinated solutions to the governance, development, security and resilience challenges facing the Sahel.

The experts noted that the existing security systems in the Sahel are no longer sufficient to address the current situation. The multi-faceted threats of terrorism and inter-community violence require countries to reform their defence and security systems to maintain territorial control and put an end to the constant violence. The Sahelian crisis has led to an increase in cross-border crime. Co-operation between countries is needed to respond to this threat. In addition, legislatures can also contribute to this fight by proposing measures that would make actions more effective.

Similarly, the poverty in numerous Sahelian countries makes them vulnerable to the many violent extremist groups in the area. In the Sahel, certain initiatives are being implemented to enable these populations to build their resilience to these threats. Foundations for regional development must absolutely be built in order to meet the Sahel's challenges and ensure lasting peace. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians are in a better position to identify their needs and communicate them to the appropriate stakeholders.

They concluded by arguing that there must be a focus on women in future initiatives, given that they are the primary civilian victims of these conflicts. Furthermore, young people, who are both the victims and perpetrators of this violence, are plagued with unemployment, which makes them vulnerable to extremist groups. Young people must be fully taken into account as stakeholders discuss a solution to the Sahelian crisis.

Furthermore, lasting peace cannot be built without the integration of refugees. In the Sahel, there are two main categories of displaced persons: those who are internally displaced and others who are externally displaced. While both categories share the same

difficulties in terms of their precarious living conditions, those from outside the country have a difficult time registering newborns and getting their children into school.

SESSION 3: PREPARATION OF PARLIAMENTARY ACTION

The parliamentarians discussed the role that they can play in ensuring security and regional development in the Sahel. They asked themselves how they can become more involved in developing concrete solutions for the Sahel and how they can better represent the voice of parliamentarians and public representatives, especially those elected in constituencies that are heavily affected by violence in the Sahel, and help to implement these solutions.

Discussions also focused on a partnership project between the APF and the G5 Sahel Inter-Parliamentary Committee (CIP G5 Sahel), which was created in 2018 for the purpose of monitoring the development of democracy. Democracy is a key aspect to complement the security and development aspects of the G5 Sahel if the region is to win the fight against terrorism and poverty.

Lastly, discussions took place to ensure the coordination of the future action of the APF regarding the Sahel and how it can consider pooling its efforts, particularly through a partnership with the CIP G5 Sahel.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Drouin, M.P.

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

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the <i>Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie</i>
ACTIVITY	Parliamentary Conference on the Sahel
DESTINATION	New York, New York, United States
DATES	From November 14 to 15, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Darrell Samson
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 22.08
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 0.00
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$ 0.00
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 22.08