

Section canadienne de
l'Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie



Canadian Branch of the
Assemblée parlementaire
de la Francophonie

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

29th Assembly of the Africa Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Niamey, Niger

May 16 to 18, 2023

REPORT

The delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (hereinafter the “Branch”), attended the 29th Assembly of the Africa Region of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (hereinafter the “APF”), in Niamey, Niger, from May 16 to 18, 2023. The delegation consisted of Mr. **Francis Drouin**, MP, President of the Branch, and International President of the APF, and Ms. Julie Pelletier, Administrative Secretary of the Canadian Branch. The delegation is honoured to submit its report.

29th Assembly of the Africa Region

Four regions are represented within the APF: Africa, America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. Each region ensures that the APF’s objectives are implemented within the specific context of its region. The regions are also places for proposals and discussions, the conclusions of which are conveyed to the Bureau and to the Plenary Assembly of the APF by the regional Chargés de mission and the Parliamentary Secretary General. They meet once a year. This year, the branch presidents of the Africa region met in Niger, at the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Seini Oumarou, President of the National Assembly.

On May 16 and 17, 2023, the work brought together the 16 representatives of the African branches of Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, Niger, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Togo. For two days, in the House of the National Assembly of Niger, they were able to discuss the region’s current major issues.

Four speeches marked the opening ceremony. First, His Excellency Faustin Boukoubi, First Vice-President of the APF and President of the National Assembly of Gabon, commended Niger’s efforts to consolidate peace and security in the Sahel region. He stated that the APF was an objective, inclusive and comprehensive space capable of implementing targeted support processes. Second, Mr. Bruno Fuchs, member of the National Assembly (France), Parliamentary Secretary General, presented the major projects that the APF intends to promote in the new 2023-2027 strategic framework. President Oumarou then welcomed all the delegations and spoke about the current concerns of the Nigerian people. Finally, Mr. **Drouin**, as International President of the APF, concluded that opening session by emphasizing the importance of the regional assemblies, which make it possible to address topics and issues specific to the regions. He reiterated that the APF, as watchdog of democracy, will pay close attention to the concerns expressed at this forum. He also reminded that political crises have continued to rock French-speaking countries in recent years and that the APF is determined to find sustainable crisis exit solutions that align with the values and ambitions of the populations they represent, while reiterating the need to make young people central to political decisions. He concluded by congratulating the Africa region for the transitional countries’ involvement in its work, which is in line with the APF’s tradition.

A minute of silence was observed in memory of the many victims of the floods of May 4 and 5, 2023, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Faustin Boukoubi, Chair of the Assembly, then launched the work by adopting the agenda, and then gave the floor to Mr. Dah Sansan, Chargé de mission of the Africa

region. He gave his report before the Assembly by presenting a review of the APF's meetings and actions in 2023 and of the involvement of the African branches in the organization's bodies, including the parliamentary cooperation mission to Niger in February 2023, and holding the Parlement francophone des jeunes in Cotonou, Benin, in July 2023. The report was adopted.

Parliamentarians from Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali then talked about the political and social crises facing their respective countries. They called upon the goodwill, understanding, and active solidarity of the members of the APF and of the African region towards their countries, with a view to potentially changing the status of their branches that are currently suspended from the APF. Political and security challenges were also raised by the parliamentarians from Cameroon, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Côte d'Ivoire. The DRC called for more sustained action by the APF in their country. Finally, the debate shed light on the need to examine the APF's ability to respond quickly to requests from its members and how it must respond objectively in the event of disputes among them. This item on the agenda concluded with Chairman Boukoubi's call to the branches to show solidarity and make progress on the relationships among the region's countries in order to strengthen brotherhood.

The Assembly discussed the general debate about parliamentary initiatives and public policies that could be established for three expert-led themes:

- *The challenges of democratic governance and security in francophone Africa* by Mr. Mahaman Tidjani Alou, professor at the Université Adbou Moumouni in Niger;
- *Food security in the face of political, social, and economic crises* by Mr. Mahamadou Aboubacar, High Commissioner and National Coordinator of Food Systems Consultations in Niger; and
- *Protection of forest ecosystems and the fight against desertification in Africa* by Colonel Major Ibro Adamou, Secretary General of Niger's Ministry of the Environment.

The final item on the agenda made it possible to:

- take note of the discussions initiated by Benin and Rwanda for establishing a solidarity fund for the Africa region in order to help the branches that do not have the budgetary capacity to participate in the APF's activities. A draft text will be submitted to the member branches to gather their input for an upcoming meeting of the Africa region;
- encourage the branches to honour their commitment and proceed with paying the dues arrears;
- provide an update on the progress with the review of the APF's Constitution, the associated regulations, and the democratic vigilance mechanisms;

- set up a committee on the APF's attractiveness in Africa under the chairing of Niger and with the support of the parliaments of Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Morocco, Madagascar and Togo; and
- highlight the importance for the APF to work together with the Chargé de mission of the Africa region so that the organization can target the true needs of the region's members, with the aim of adequately meeting them.

The regional meeting concluded with the adoption of the *Communiqué final*, the reading of a motion of thanks to the Nigerian authorities and a closing speech by Mr. Seini Oumarou, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of Niger and President of the Nigerian Branch of the APF.

Other activities on the sidelines of the Assembly

During his mission, President **Drouin** also had the opportunity to meet with Nigerian political figures and thank them for their welcome.

His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of Niger, welcomed all heads of delegation. The political situation, environmental challenges and avenues for cooperation for the countries of the Sahel with La Francophonie were brought up.

Second, President **Drouin** had discussions with His Excellency Mr. Hassoume Massaoudou, Niger's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Minister pointed out the diplomatic relations that exist with Canada and his desire to see those relations strengthened with the return of a Canadian embassy in Niger. The security situation, the role of climate change and misinformation in the crisis in the Sahel were also raised. On behalf of the APF, Mr. **Drouin** emphasized the role that the francophone space can play in dealing with these issues and sought Niger's support at the request of the APF to obtain observer status at the UN.

President **Drouin** also took part in an informal exchange with Mr. Dansa Kourouma, President of Guinea's National Transition Committee (NTC). Mr. Kourouma gave a presentation about the difficult political situation that currently exists in his country and about the actions of various partners involved that are working for a peaceful transition. He also talked about the work of the NTC, a transitional legislative body that he chairs. Established on January 22, 2022, following a coup d'état in September 2021, the NTC is aiming to restore constitutional order in the country. President **Drouin** underscored Guinea's courage in initiating reconciliation between the Guinean people and the international community.

On May 18, President **Drouin** visited the Wadata market to learn more about this cooperative, created in 1992, to chat with its craftsmen and had the chance to see the full diversity of Nigerian craftsmanship.

Through its attendance at all the meetings held in Niger, the Canadian Branch has achieved its objectives, namely fulfilling its international and interparliamentary obligations, strengthening its ties with the African branches of the APF, deepening its understanding of the regional issues in Africa and defending Canadian values and interests to various parties.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Drouin, M.P.

President of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Chair of the Canadian Section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Travel Costs

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| ASSOCIATION | Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie |
| ACTIVITY | 29th Assembly of the Africa Region of the APF |
| DESTINATION | Niamey, Niger |
| DATES | May 16 to 18, 2023 |
| DELEGATION | |
| SENATE | |
| HOUSE OF COMMONS | Mr. Francis* |
| STAFF | Ms. Julie Pelletier |
| TRANSPORTATION | \$20,397.81 |
| ACCOMMODATION | \$3,260.58 |
| PER DIEMS | \$458.88 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | \$1,085.60 |
| REVENUES | (\$11,567.08) |
| TOTAL | \$13,635.79 |

*Some travel expenses were covered by the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.