

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

Meeting of the Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs

Luang Prabang, Laos

April 10 to 11, 2024

Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF), which took part in the meeting of the Committee on Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs (the Committee) held in Luang Prabang, Laos, from April 10 to 11, 2023, has the honour to present its report.

The delegation was composed of **the Honourable Amina Gerba**, Independent senator and rapporteur of the committee. Parliamentarians from the four APF regions took part in the Committee's meeting.

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee's work opened under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mohammed Reda LAHMINE (Morocco). The Committee examined issues relating to human development (health, population and poverty), sustainable development (environment, energy and agriculture) and economic development from the angle of cooperation, democracy and solidarity.

Following the adoption of the agenda and the minutes and record of decision of its last meeting, the Committee proceeded to a round table during which participants discussed the economic news of their branch. **The Honourable Amina Gerba** took part in the round table. She spoke about economic growth and inflation, unemployment and the housing shortage.

The Committee was also briefed on the progress of two reports:

- the draft report on biodiversity: protecting and preserving biological diversity, presented by Virginie Dufour (M.N.A., Quebec); and
- the follow-up report on international trade negotiations conducted within the framework of the World Trade Organization, presented by Virginie Dufour (M.N.A., Quebec).

The Committee also discussed potential topics for future meetings. These included the circular economy and the eradication of plastic waste. **The Hon. Amina Gerba** suggested developing a report around the theme of women's entrepreneurship for empowerment. She said that the first draft of the report could explore the best ways to support women entrepreneurs in the Francophonie, existing francophone initiatives in this regard and the link between entrepreneurship and women's empowerment. The report would also aim to identify gender-specific barriers that women must overcome to achieve success in the business world. The Hon. Amina Gerba said that a first draft of the report would be presented at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee's future meetings are scheduled to take place in Montreal, Canada, in July 2024 and in Budapest, Hungary, in spring 2025.

AGROECOLOGY SEMINAR AND FIELD VISIT

Part of the Committee's work was devoted to the issue of agroecology at the initiative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the Agence française de Développement (AFD). A visit to the Ban Suan Aounhean and Ban Suan Ai

Aoun farms was held on April 9, 2024. Following the two visits, a seminar on agroecology led by two FAO experts was presented to Committee participants.

In a discussion about these visits, **the Hon. Amina Gerba** underlined the excellent initiative of organizing these visits for the Committee members. She added that visiting these two farms enabled her to see how important the need for empowerment is for young farmers. For example, she underlined the need for guidance if these young farmers are to succeed in obtaining international organic certification and thus access to international markets, which offer significant opportunities due to the high demand for this type of product.

On April 10, 2024, the Committee heard from **François-Xavier Duporge**, AFD country director for Laos and Myanmar, and two FAO experts, Boris Gandon, partnerships specialist for parliamentary alliances, and Pierre Ferrand, expert in the Plant Production and Protection Division. During their discussions, **the Hon. Amina Gerba** asked the speakers how young farmers are supported and how aid recipients are identified. They said that support (knowledge exchange and subsidies) is often offered through regional networks. **The Hon. Amina Gerba** also asked the speakers whether the projects put in place were aimed at strengthening farmers' entrepreneurial skills. They said that support is based on the technical aspects of agriculture but that training on various business models is offered to help young farmers professionalize their business.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Darrell Samson, M.P.

Chair, Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the APF Economic, Social and Environmental Affairs Committee
DESTINATION	Luang Prabang, Laos
DATES	April 10 to 11, 2024
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Amina Gerba
TRANSPORTATION	\$9,120.36

ACCOMMODATION	\$643.16
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00
PER DIEMS	\$481.16
MISCELLANEOUS	\$67.50
TOTAL	\$10,312.18