



**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation respecting  
its participation at the Bureau Meeting and 43rd Ordinary  
Session of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*  
(APF)**

**Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la  
Francophonie (APF)***

**Luxembourg, Luxembourg  
7–11 July 2017**

# Report

The parliamentary delegation of the Canadian Branch of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie* (APF), which attended the APF Bureau meeting in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, on 7 July 2016 and the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the APF, also in Luxembourg, from 7–11 July, has the honour to present its report.

Led by **Darrell Samson**, Member and Chair of the Canadian Branch, the delegation included the following parliamentarians: the Hon. **Dennis Dawson**, Senator; **Paul Lefebvre**, Member and Vice-Chair of the Canadian Branch; **Francis Drouin**, Member; **Sylvie Boucher**, Member; **Anne Minh-Thu Quach**, Member; **Joël Godin**, Member; and **Robert Aubin**, Member and Chair of the APF's Parliamentary Affairs Committee. The delegation was assisted by Jean-François Lafleur, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Branch; and Chloé Forget, an analyst with the Library of Parliament and advisor to the Canadian Branch.

Close to 400 participants from approximately 50 branches attended the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the APF: Andorra, Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels (hereafter Belgium), Benin, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Catalonia, CEMAC (Parliament), Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Georgia, Greece, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Equatorial Guinea, Hungary, Jersey, Jura, Laos, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Moldavia, Niger, New Brunswick, Ontario, Poland, Quebec, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Switzerland, Chad, Togo, Valais (Canton of), Aosta Valley, Vaud (Canton of) and Vietnam. Representatives from several organizations related to the Francophonie were also in attendance.

The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual session marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the APF. It was established in 1967 as the *Association internationale des parlementaires de langue française* (AIPLF), and Canada was one of the founding countries.

## **Bureau business**

The Bureau of the APF met in Luxembourg on 7 July 2017. The meeting was chaired by the Hon. Aubin Minaku, President of the APF and Speaker of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). **Darrell Samson**, Member and Chair of the Canadian Branch; and **Robert Aubin**, Member and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee of the APF, attended the Bureau meeting, along with over 40 parliamentarians.

## **Opening of Bureau meeting**

The President of the APF, Aubin Minaku, began the meeting with opening remarks. Mr. Minaku then asked members of the Bureau to adopt the agenda.

## **Bureau composition**

Aubin Minaku, President of the APF, said that he was informed that Pascal Terrasse (France), then the APF Parliamentary Secretary General, had resigned as a member of the National Assembly and that it was moved that Michèle André, former minister and Senator (France), replace him as Secretary General until the APF executive is renewed. Mr. Minaku had appointed Michèle André as Parliamentary Secretary General on 2 June 2017, in accordance with the APF statutes. The APF Bureau approved the appointment.

He noted absences and substitutions, welcoming **Darrell Samson**, Chair of the Canadian Branch of the APF.

The Bureau members then adopted the minutes and the record of decisions from the Bureau meeting held on 2–3 February in Quebec City, Canada.

APF membership

The Parliamentary Secretary General and Senator (France), Michèle André, said that no new applications for membership had been received. Talks with the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories in Canada were ongoing.

### **Activity report of the Parliamentary Secretary General**

The Parliamentary Secretary General and Senator (France), Michèle André, presented her activity report. She began by paying tribute to her predecessor, Pascal Terrasse, pointing out that many of his goals had already been achieved, one of them being clarifying the budget program and accounts, which resulted in recruiting an accounts committee and reforming APF oversight processes. She congratulated the Political Committee for its work on developing preventive diplomacy mechanisms.

Senator André outlined the results of activities of the first half of 2017 based on the set priorities and said that the results were in keeping with the objectives of the APF's 2014–2018 strategic framework adopted in July 2014 during the Plenary Assembly in Ottawa. The activity report is focused on the institutional meetings held mainly in the spring. She discussed the APF cooperation activities for 2017. She addressed the following:

- She noted the key decisions of the Bureau's inter-sessional meeting in Quebec City, Canada, in February 2017, and those of the APF committee and network meetings in the spring.
- She provided an update on the relationship with the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF).
- Two networking projects are being finalized: the future APF network of young parliamentarians and the network of francophone parliamentary ethics officers.
- She provided an update on the APF's participation in international meetings.
- On the theme of democratic oversight, she updated the Bureau on the branches that had been suspended or placed under observation: the Syrian Arab Republic

(suspended since 2011) and Burundi (under observation since July 2015). She said that the Central African Republic's suspension was lifted in July 2016.

- On parliamentary cooperation, she said that the APF has not led any fact-finding and network missions (electoral mission) since the Bureau's January 2017 meeting. She then provided information on seminars for parliamentarians and officials, such as the international parliamentary training program (*Programme international de formation parlementaire*—PIFP) established by the Quebec Branch.
- She also touched on the multilateral parliamentary development programs implemented in Madagascar and in Mali. She spoke about cooperation activities to support women parliamentarians. She also discussed internships and training sessions for officials and youth programs.
- She said that preparations are underway for parliamentary cooperation projects with the parliaments of the Central African Republic and Haiti.
- She discussed the Young Francophone Parliamentarians Program, specifically the 3<sup>rd</sup> session that took place in Asia in March 2017. Young parliamentarians wish to create a young parliamentarians network within the APF.
- She also touched on the multilateral parliamentary development programs implemented in Madagascar and in Mali.

The Parliamentary Secretary General wrapped up by pointing out that the APF was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and that a book had been published to mark the occasion.

The Bureau adopted the Parliamentary Secretary General's activity report.

### **Presentation of the APF's 43<sup>rd</sup> Session in Luxembourg**

Mars Di Bartolomeo, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, stated that the Bureau's proceedings were taking place in the same room where it held its very first meeting 50 years earlier. He was also delighted to welcome the participants of the Francophone Youth Parliament (FYP).

The theme for the general debate would be on linguistic diversity. Luxembourgers, particularly known for their linguistic diversity, speak several languages: Luxembourgish, French, English, Portuguese and Italian.

An exhibit of photos of the creation of the APF had been mounted by the Luxembourgish Branch to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the APF.

He announced the inauguration of Rue de la Francophonie.

He said that the Prime Minister and the Grand Duke of Luxembourg would attend the opening ceremony, and that Jean-Baptiste Lemoine, Secretary of State to the Minister

of Europe and Foreign Affairs (France), wished to address the APF's parliamentarian members.

Aubin Minaku, President of the APF, congratulated Mars Di Bartolomeo and moved that this be added to the agenda.

### **Parliamentary cooperation**

The Parliamentary Secretary General, Michèle André, provided an update on the APF's various cooperation programs. Cooperation activity programming was approved in February 2017 and is well underway.

She mentioned the parliamentary seminars. Five seminars had been approved, but only two had been delivered to date: one on maintaining birth, marriage and death records (Niger); and one on climate change (Madagascar). She proposed two new seminars: one for Central African parliamentarians, scheduled for July 2017, once security assurances have been provided; and the other on decentralization for Tunisian parliamentarians in fall 2017.

She then discussed the program for parliamentary officials, which has been almost completely delivered. Parliamentary officials from Togo and Benin received training on administering and organizing parliamentary proceedings in April 2017. Similar training would be given to officials from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos in April 2017.

She then discussed the Noria program and summarized the activities to modernize information systems, support promotion of the Francophonie and support training and internships. Certain branches (Madagascar and Mali) benefit from this program. Guinea, Burkina Faso and Cameroon would be benefiting from the program shortly once their requirements were identified. Moldavia was the only branch of the APF being supported by the Francophonie Promotion module. At the request of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, which is responsible for this program, the Bureau agreed to have the program evaluated. The program has been operating for the past 15 years. The OIF would cover half the cost of the evaluation, and a call for tenders had been launched to find an evaluator. Planète publique was the successful candidate, and a final report was expected in late October 2017.

She then touched on the youth program, including the National Youth Parliament (NYP) program in Madagascar, featuring a mock parliament to educate young Madagascans. The Francophone Youth Parliament was taking place at the same time as the APF Plenary and was attended by 60 young people from 30 APF branches.

The planned observation mission to Burundi could not take place. She hoped that this mission could take place later on in the year.

She then discussed multilateral programs on francophone parliamentary development. Mali and Madagascar benefit from these programs. A needs identification mission was planned for Haiti. The Central African Republic (CFA) would benefit from these programs shortly, but security assurances must be in place before the needs identification mission could go ahead.

Lastly, she discussed programs for young francophone parliamentarians. She acknowledged that Bruno Lefebvre, Member (Wallonia-Brussels Federation), one of this program's representatives in the Europe region, was in attendance. This program provides young parliamentarians with networking opportunities. She said that there are plans to establish a network of young parliamentarians.

Bruno Lefebvre, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels), said that young parliamentarians met in Asia, at the same time as the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, and were able to discuss two selected working session themes: shared growth and work-life balance. The Parliamentary Affairs Committee invited them to their meeting, where they discussed creating a network of young parliamentarians within the APF. Since their meeting in Asia, young parliamentarians have been working on creating this network as a permanent structure of the APF. The goals of this network could include rallying young parliamentarians around the values of the Francophonie and language, sharing experiences, working with the structures of young parliamentarians, increasing the contribution of young parliamentarians within the APF, etc. This network would include young parliamentarians who were under 35 when they were elected and had served less than two parliamentary terms. The network would focus on issues of particular interest to young people. Mr. Lefebvre said that the network would become official in Quebec City during the next annual session.

This was followed by a discussion among parliamentarians about the age required to join the Network of Young Parliamentarians. Philippe Courard, Speaker of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels) felt that the proposed age limit of 35 was too restrictive and that the number of terms should be what really mattered. He also said that there should be coordination with the other committees and networks when selecting a theme. **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, said that he shared this view and called for clarifications regarding the meeting frequency for this new network. Bruno Lefebvre, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels), said that an annual meeting was being considered.

Parliamentary Secretary General Michèle André recommended that the working group of young parliamentarians meet during the year so that draft statutes would be ready for July 2018. She also recommended that the working group be heard from two days after the Political Committee.

Aubin Minaku, President of the APF, recommended that the young members meet with the Political Committee so they could work on the draft statutes and come up with a schedule.

### **Treasurer's report on the 2016 financial statements and update on 2017 programming**

Alex Bodry, Member and Treasurer (Luxembourg), presented the highlights of the *2016 Financial Report and Statements* and the report on the *2017 Programming Update*. Mr. Bodry said that the 2016 fiscal year ended with a surplus of €4,585.

Revenues were €1,542,163 and expenditures were €1,537,578.

Own-source revenue was down 15% (€142,572) compared to the 2016 budget, due mainly to challenges with collecting dues from member branches. Mr. Bodry said that the APF's own-source revenue is made up in part by dues, but some dues payments were late. The number of dues outstanding was growing. The collection rate in 2015 was 85%, while in 2014 it was 91.5%. He therefore asked the branches concerned to settle their accounts. He proposed a comprehensive review on APF dues and calculation periods and suggested that the Bureau review the matter.

Expenditures were down 28% as a result of management efficiencies by the APF General Secretariat.

In addition, the Treasurer's report (Appendix 2 of his report) presented branches' in-kind contributions in 2016. The report highlighted the Canadian Branch's contribution, including the assignment of a full-time parliamentary official to the Secretariat General in Paris. Also included:

- The Parliamentary Affairs Committee's intersessional meeting hosted by the Canadian Branch 22–24 April 2016 (about 30 participants);
- The Americas Regional Assembly (ARAM) hosted by the Canadian Branch in Ottawa 25–28 July (20 participants);
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Young Francophone Parliamentarians Program hosted jointly by the Canadian, Ontario and Quebec branches from 30 October to 4 November.

The Bureau approved the 2016 financial statements and noted the updates to the 2017 programming.

## **Regulatory issues**

### **Reform of APF statutes**

Jacques Legendre, Senator (France) and Chair of the Political Committee, presented the plans for reforming the APF statutes, which involve amending the APF rules. The main reason for this reform is to comply with the rules for statutes of associations under French law. He explained that the APF was constituted under the law of 1 July 1901, which had been amended, and that the APF must therefore comply with the rules governing statutes of associations under French law. The amendments would be mainly technical in nature.

First, the proposed reform amends the current APF rules to rename them "Statutes of the *Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie*." The purpose of this amendment is to avoid any confusion between "statutes" and "by-laws." Consequently, the proposed reform would amend the title of the rules and the articles referring to the rules so as to clarify that they are statutes.

Second, the proposed reform to the statutes would add to the list a new clause to article 9 of the rules governing the roles and powers of the Plenary Assembly adding that it has the authority to appoint an auditor.

Third, the proposed reform would amend article 12 by adding the ability to establish by-laws.

The proposed reform was adopted and will be submitted to the Plenary Assembly.

### **Draft amendments of the APF's democratic oversight processes**

Philippe Courard, Speaker of the Parliament of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels), presented draft amendments to the APF's democratic oversight processes. This proposal was supported by Jacques Legendre, Chair of the Political Committee and the members of the working group within that committee.

The proposal would introduce three customized, graduated democratic oversight mechanisms that meet the requirements for transparency, flexibility and responsiveness:

- warning
- supervision
- suspension

These three mechanisms are outlined in the draft amendments to the APF's democratic oversight processes. The draft amendments also outline how these different mechanisms are to be implemented, including their impacts, possible support measures and possible penalties.

There was discussion about electoral missions. Someone pointed out that it is important for observers to be sent and for this to be planned in advance since this type of mission takes time to prepare. Some pointed out that the APF should play a greater role with respect to observation missions, while others said that national sovereignty limited this type of action by the APF.

Jacques Legendre, Senator (France) and Chair of the APF Political Committee, said that electoral missions are carried out only when the country in question has requested one—they are never imposed. Didier Berberat, State Councillor (Switzerland) and Chair of the APF Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee, pointed out that the countries in question ask to have parliamentarians take part in an observation mission within a very short timeframe just before the election date, calling into question the countries' genuine interest in hosting election observers. Jacques Legendre added that it takes time to prepare to send election observers, and it is up to the countries to submit their requests to the APF Secretariat within a reasonable timeframe. Jacques Chagnon, Member (Quebec) and First Vice President of the APF, agreed with his colleagues, stating that the APF should not be blamed when a country submits a request within an unreasonable timeframe. Aubin Minaku, President of the APF, said that holding elections is an act of sovereignty and that it is up to the countries seeking to legitimize the process to make the request, although the APF could make informal inquiries in the lead-up to elections to see whether countries wish to have observers. Sylvestre Ossiala, Member (Congo), said that the APF considers itself a democracy



watchdog, adding that it should take on a more proactive role. The Parliamentary Secretary General, Michèle André, Senator (France), said that the issue of timeframes with the OIF to organize election observation missions was discussed a few years ago and that the OIF sometimes prefers to pay experts rather than select parliamentarians who are not always available. **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee of the APF, recommended putting together a rapid response team ready to react quickly, such as a team of current or former parliamentarians available to the APF to serve on this type of observation mission. Mr. Minaku and Mr. Chagnon supported this idea.

The Bureau approved the draft reform, which will be tabled at the Plenary Assembly.

### **Proposed appointment of an auditor**

Alex Bodry, Member and Treasurer (Luxembourg), said that during the Bureau meeting in Quebec City, it was decided that an auditor would be appointed during the Annual Meeting in Luxembourg. The appointed auditor would certify that APF accounts are regular and accurate and help improve internal decision-making and budget control. The position of auditor would be incorporated into the APF statutes, as provided in the draft amendments to the statutes.

Steps had been taken to contact four French auditing firms (IMA, KPMG, STRAUSS and EXAFI). The auditor would serve for a six-year term and carry out account audits and checks. Alex Bodry, Member (Luxembourg) and Treasurer, said that EXAFI was the firm most suited to the APF's requirements and presented the most interesting bid. The Parliamentary Secretary General, Michèle André, Senator (France), supported the proposal.

Aubin Minaku, President of the APF, therefore recommended that this proposal be accepted and tabled at the APF Plenary Assembly.

### **Partnership agreements with the APF**

**Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, presented the partnership agreement with the Association francophone des autorités de protection des données personnelles (AFAPDP) and summarized the key points. Privacy issues have long been of interest to the Parliamentary Affairs Committee. This agreement pools AFAPDP and APF expertise to help find appropriate solutions to the stated requirements of parliaments and the AFAPDP.

Salibou Garba, Member (Tchad) and Chair of the Co-operation and Development Committee, presented a summary of the agreement between the Forum francophone des affaires (FFA) and the APF.

### **Committee work**

The President of the APF, Aubin Minaku, asked the committee chairs to summarize their activities since the Bureau's last meeting in January 2017.

Jacques Legendre, Senator (France) and Chair of the Political Committee, summarized the committee's work at the meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 10–11 April 2017. He said that the participants discussed current political issues and the Committee adopted six declarations. He also said that parliamentarians reviewed the Canadian Branch's draft report on the legalization and decriminalization of cannabis from a public policy standpoint.

**Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, presented his report summarizing the committee meeting in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, on 24–26 March 2017. A number of draft reports were also reviewed at the meeting: ethics officers and codes of ethics in the parliaments of francophone countries, data protection authorities in francophone countries, bicameralism in francophone countries, and francophone electoral missions.

Didier Berberat, State Councillor (Switzerland) and Chair of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee (CECAC), presented that committee's report, as well as the report of the Parliamentary Network to Fight HIV/AIDS, which reports to CECAC. He reported on CECAC's most recent meeting in Cotonou, Benin, on 3–4 May 2017. CECAC had studied several reports, including one on preventing violent extremism and radicalization, the commodification of education and civic education in La Francophonie.

Lastly, Salibou Garba, Member (Chad) and Chair of the Co-operation and Development Committee, tabled the committee's report. He summarized the committee meeting in Saint-Denis, La Réunion (southern Africa) on 1–3 March 2017. The committee had studied the Canadian Branch's report on shared economic growth.

### **Activities of the APF's Network of Women Parliamentarians**

Lydienne Epoube, Member (Cameroon) and Chair of the Network of Women Parliamentarians, presented her activity report. She summarized the intersessional meeting in Quebec City, Canada, held on 10–12 March 2017. The Network studied the Canadian Branch's report on violence against women and girls.

### **Reports from regional chargés de mission**

The Bureau members heard from the regional chargés de mission about activities in their respective regions.

Geneviève Inagosi Kassongo, Member (Democratic Republic of the Congo), chargée de mission for the African region, presented her activity report. She summarized the discussions during the 25<sup>th</sup> Assembly in Rabat, Morocco, on 22–24 May 2017. Participants discussed the political and security situation in francophone Africa and two more specific themes: one on stability and good governance to promote sustainable and harmonious development in francophone Africa, and the other on the challenges and issues surrounding entrepreneurship in Africa.

Nathalie Desrosiers, Member (Ontario) and chargée de mission for the Americas region, presented her activity report. She summarized the discussions that took place during the videoconference on 19 April 2016 chaired by **Darrell Samson**, Member (Canada)

and Chair of the Canadian Branch. Participants had agreed to use part of the Americas region funds to invite two parliamentarians from the Haiti Branch to attend the 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Americas Regional Assembly (ARAM). This decision was in keeping with the implementation of the Americas region consolidation/expansion plan.

Nguyen Thuy Anh, Member (Vietnam) and chargée de mission of the Asia-Pacific region, presented her activity report. She discussed the activities organized in the region, including the meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and the meeting of the Young Francophone Parliamentarians 20–27 March in Asia (Cambodia and Vietnam). She also reported on the region's participation in the activities of the APF and La Francophonie.

Jean-Paul Wahl, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels) and chargée de mission for Europe, presented the European region's report. He told Bureau members that the conference of European region chairs was held in Vallée d'Aoste on 26–30 September. The 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the Region was focused on the theme of the economic Francophonie. He announced that the 30<sup>th</sup> European Regional Assembly would focus on strategies to develop to promote employment and sustainable and socially just growth.

### **Ordre de la Pléiade and the Senghor-Césaire Award**

Michèle André, Senator (France) and Parliamentary Secretary General, presented the Bureau members with the table of branch nominations for the Ordre de la Pléiade.

Didier Berberat, State Councillor (Switzerland) and Chair of CECAC, discussed progress on the new rules for the Senghor-Césaire Award. CECAC was tasked with preparing draft rules, which Mr. Berberat presented to the Bureau. The new rules were adopted unanimously.

### **APF communications policy**

The Parliamentary Secretary General, Michèle André, Senator (France), discussed the APF communications tools, including the APF and Francophone Youth Parliament Facebook pages. The APF has a Twitter account and was trying to expand its Twitter presence.

### **Other business**

The Parliamentary Secretary General, Michèle André, Senator (France), discussed the changes and replacements that have occurred in the APF Secretariat. Thierry Vanel would replace Didier Le Bot as Administrative Secretary General. Jacques Maziade, CECAC advisor and assistant to the Parliamentary Network to Fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, would return to the Canadian Parliament at the end of the year and be replaced by Simon Larouche.

### **Date and location of next meeting**

The President of the APF, Aubin Minaku, pointed out that the French Section would be hosting the Bureau this winter. Jacques Legendre, Senator (France) and Chair of the Political Committee, confirmed that this was still the case.

### **Proceedings of the Network of Women Parliamentarians**

The APF's Network of Women Parliamentarians met in Luxembourg on 8 July 2017 and was chaired by Lydienne Epoube, Member (Cameroon).

Participants adopted the draft agenda and record of decisions from the Network meeting on 10 March 2017 in Quebec City, Canada. They then heard from the Chair, who presented her report on activities since the March 2017 intersessional meeting.

The members then heard Michèle André, Senator (France), present her report on migrant women in francophone countries. A resolution was then moved and adopted by the Network of Women Parliamentarians.

**Sylvie Boucher**, Member (Canada) and rapporteur of the Canadian Branch, presented the final version of her report on engaging men and boys in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls. This report had been proposed in Tangiers, Morocco, in February 2016, a first draft was submitted to the Network in Madagascar in July 2017, and an expanded version was presented in March 2017 in Quebec City. The draft report describes the international commitments to end violence against women and girls and to involve men in these efforts. It provides an overview of gender-based violence, addresses efforts to engage men and boys, and provides examples of what is being done in APF member countries. It discusses the role of male parliamentarians in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls. Ms. **Boucher** pointed out that ending violence against women and girls and getting men and boys involved in these efforts is a priority for many APF branches. That said, there is still much to be done and many challenges to address around the world to end violence against women and girls and to get men and boys involved to end it. Consequently, she tabled a draft resolution to act on her report, encouraging countries and men and women parliamentarians to take action on violence against women and girls. The draft resolution led to a discussion and the final version of the resolution:

- Encourage States to ratify international conventions on ending and preventing violence against women and girls;
- Encourage States to adopt effective legislation targeting violence against women and girls and ensure that this legislation is administered and enforced effectively throughout the country;
- Call on States to bring in policies, concrete initiatives and campaigns such as advertising campaigns, projects and programs in order to engage and educate men and boys about violence against women and girls so it can be prevented and stopped;
- Call on States to compile reliable, comprehensive data on violence against women and girls so as to be better able to measure, assess and appreciate the

scale and gravity of this type of violence, in part to inform prevention and elimination programs and initiatives;

- Call on States to develop information campaigns in order to educate women who have experienced violence about available resources and services and to encourage them to report the violence they are experiencing;
- Encourage male parliamentarians to get involved and to play a leading role in addressing violence against women, such as by bringing forward and adopting new legislation and legislative amendments, and by taking concrete action to end violence against women and girls;
- Call on men and women parliamentarians to participate in public events condemning violence against women and girls;
- Call on men and women parliamentarians to support and promote initiatives to educate and engage men and boys on the issue of violence against women and girls; and
- Call on States and parliamentarians to develop a platform to share best practices on fighting and preventing violence against women and girls and engaging the public in these efforts.

Françoise Bertieaux, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels), presented her report on the impact of non-registration on women's rights.

Maryse Gaudreault, Member (Quebec), presented her report on the international commitments to gender equality and women's rights.

As part of the meeting, the Network of Women Parliamentarians heard from various speakers on the following topics:

- An update on the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence convention by Bridget T. O'Loughlin, Head of the Violence Against Women Division, Council of Europe, and by Françoise Brié, independent expert, Comité GREVIO Committee, Council of Europe
- How to promote the participation of girls and women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) industries? by Justine Sass, Chief, Section of Education for Inclusion and Gender Equality, UNESCO
- Decent work for women: challenges and possible solutions, by Claire Courteille, Director of the ILO Office for the European Union and the Benelux countries
- Gender as a factor in reducing disaster risk, by Rahel Steinbach, Program Specialist, Disaster Risk Reduction, UN Women

Lastly, ideas about future topics that could be addressed by the Network were discussed. **Sylvie Boucher**, Member (Canada), presented a draft proposal for a report on refugee women's mental health. Women are particularly vulnerable, and their special mental health needs require attention. Armed conflict, persecution and displacement give rise to multiple problems such as violence, separated families, disrupted social networks, increased poverty, deteriorating public order, difficulty meeting basic needs, and a lack of access to basic services. These problems can cause significant psychological and social problems for refugee women. She proposed to produce a report that could:

- inventory and describe the special mental health needs of refugee women and girls;
- develop a portrait of programs and services specifically designed to address refugee women and girls' mental health needs currently delivered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and affiliated organizations; and
- provide an overview of initiatives, programs, legislation and best practices designed to address refugee women and girls' mental health needs once they arrive in their new host country, particularly francophone countries.

This was followed by a discussion on this proposal. Several parliamentarians said that the reproductive and overall health of refugee women should be addressed. The Network adopted the topic of the health of refugee women, and a first draft of a report will be presented at the next meeting of the Network of Women Parliamentarians.

Before concluding the meeting, the members of the Network agreed on the question to be put to the Secretary General of La Francophonie, Michaëlle Jean, during the Plenary Assembly.

### **Work of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee**

The Parliamentary Affairs Committee met in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, on 9 July 2017, **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, presiding. Anne Brasseur, Member (Luxembourg), welcomed the committee. Mr. **Aubin** thanked the Luxembourgish Branch.

As suggested by Mr. **Aubin**, the delegates from each branch introduced themselves in turn, including **Darrell Samson**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Canadian Branch.

The branches in attendance adopted the amended agenda, minutes and record of decisions from the last meeting held 24–25 March 2017 in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

Mr. **Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, briefed the branches on certain subjects discussed at the Bureau meeting on 7 July 2017, including the appointment of an evaluator and the selection of Planète publique to assess the Noria program and submit a report by the end of October.

The Committee moved on to tabling and review of the following draft reports:

- *Bicameralism in Francophone Countries*, rapporteur: Claudine Lepage, Senator (France) and Vice-Chair of the Committee, substituted by Cyril Pellevat, Senator (France);
- *Data Protection Authorities in Francophone Countries*, co-rapporteurs: Josué Mbadinga (Gabon), Vice-Chair of the Committee, and Imbassou Ouattara Abbas, Member (Côte d'Ivoire);
  - Fathi Derder, National Councillor (Switzerland), discussed the implementation of new data protection legislation in Switzerland. He thought that a new questionnaire should be issued and the report updated.
  - As part of the presentation of the draft report, the Committee heard from Jean-Philippe Walter, President of the Association Francophone des Autorités de Protection des données Personnelles (AFAPDP). According to Mr. Walter, the AFAPDP helps data protection authorities to share best practices and expertise, to support francophone States as they introduce personal data protection laws, and to promote data protection among francophone nations. AFAPDP believes that the draft report should be expanded and fine-tuned before its final approval. Mr. Walter noted that there have been significant advancements in data protection around the world, and not all branches filled out the questionnaire. The report would be more useful if it analyzed the legal framework for data protection among member States. Mr. Walter also explained the impact of the European Union's new data protection regulations.
- *Ethics officers and codes of ethics in francophone parliaments*, rapporteur: Jean Rouselle, Member (Quebec). Mr. Rouselle explained that Quebec's Ethics Commissioner, Ariane Mignolet, could not attend the meeting. He read a letter from her proposing that a francophone network on parliamentary ethics be established.
  - As part of the presentation of this draft report, the Committee also heard from the following:
    - Marc Bertrand, mediator for Wallonia and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, President of the Association des Ombudsmans et Médiateurs de la Francophonie (AOMF). The AOMF is an organization of mediators and ombudsmen of OIF member States;
    - Ferdinand Mélin-Soucramanien, law professor, former ethics officer of the French National Assembly. He gave a presentation on France's system.
- *Follow-up on report concerning undocumented children*, rapporteur: Claudine Lepage, Senator (France), Vice-Chair of the Committee, substituted by Cyril Pellevat, Senator (France).

- The Committee heard from Laurent Dejoie, President of the Association du notariat francophone (ANF), in relation to this subject.

The Committee also heard from Georges Nakseu Nguefang, Director of Political Affairs and Democratic Governance at the OIF, on the subject of francophone electoral missions.

The Committee members discussed the following topics with regard to parliamentary cooperation programs:

- *Francophone electoral missions*, rapporteur: Nadia El Yousfi, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels). Georges Nakseu Nguefang, Director of Political Affairs and Democratic Governance at the OIF, spoke on the role of the OIF and APF in electoral missions. **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, raised two issues. First, a problem has been identified in recent years concerning the very tight deadlines given to the APF. In some cases, the OIF is approached at the last minute, but the APF is the last to receive the information and this makes it difficult to assign a parliamentarian to a mission. The APF previously suggested that a group of former parliamentarians be put together for this purpose. Second, Mr. Aubin mentioned outsourcing and suggested that one or two parliamentarians could participate in the mission, accompanied by an official who would write the mission report. Mr. Nakseu Nguefang replied that former parliamentarians might be able to participate in electoral missions. As for the second issue, the OIF could not write a mission report in the interest of objectivity.
- *NoriaProgram*, **Robert Aubin**, Member and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee. Mr. **Aubin** discussed the Noria Program, which was created 15 years ago to build the capacity of francophone parliaments in the southern hemisphere. The program offers support in three areas: (1) improving parliamentary information systems; (2) promoting the Francophonie among parliaments whose language of work is not French; and (3) supporting training and internships for parliamentarians and officials on new technologies. Mr. **Aubin** reiterated that the program is being evaluated by Planète publique.
  - The Committee then heard from François Mouterde, Associate Director of Planète Publique, who provided a status report on the evaluation. The data collection and analysis stage will take place in July and August 2017, and a report with recommendations will be prepared in October 2017. He then discussed the budget for the evaluation.
- *Parliamentary seminars and training workshops*, rapporteur: Louis Vlavonou, Member (Benin).
- *The Geoffrey Dieudonné Award*, rapporteur: Nadia El Yousfi, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels).



- *Multilateral programs on francophone parliamentary development*, rapporteur: **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Committee Chair.
- *The Francophone Youth Parliament and National Youth Parliaments*, Josué Mbadinga (Gabon), Vice Chair of the Committee. Representatives from the Francophone Youth Parliament made a presentation on “What is your ideal Francophone Youth Parliament?”
- *Young Francophone Parliamentarians Program*, **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee. A young parliamentarians network is being organized and should be announced in July 2018 in Quebec City.
- *Review of APF’s draft conventions with outside institutions*, **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee. The Committee sent Mr. **Aubin** the draft framework agreement with the AFAPDP, which he presented to the Bureau. This convention is similar to the one reached with francophone mediators and ombudsmen. Mr. **Aubin** stated that he would present a draft resolution on developing parliamentary cooperation at the plenary session. The Committee supported the Chair’s wish that this resolution be presented on behalf of the Committee.

The Committee moved on to the APF’s strategic monitoring plan: Study of francophone parliaments’ requirements concerning comparative law. Mr. **Aubin** gave an overview of the plan in the absence of Pierre-Flambeau Ngayap, Senator (Cameroon). The plan proposes, among other things to create a tool on the APF website to give access to specific information, such as a virtual library.

Discussions turned to the follow-up on resolutions proposed by the Parliamentary Affairs Committee and adopted by the APF in Madagascar in July 2016. Mr. Aubin stated that Canada, Madagascar and Quebec have provided follow-up information. He asked the other sections to prepare a table showing their follow-up on resolutions for the next meeting of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee.

**Darrell Samson**, Member and Chair of the Canadian Branch, discussed Canada’s follow-up on resolutions concerning national institutions in francophone countries that promote and protect human rights, and young people’s political involvement in francophone nations. Mr. **Samson** summarized various Canadian initiatives in response to the resolution.

The next item was the Committee’s question for the Secretary General of the Francophonie. **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, announced the results of the election of the Committee’s executive:

- Chair: **Robert Aubin**, Member (Canada);
- Vice-Chairs: Claudine Lepage, Senator (France), and Josué Mbadinga, Senator (Gabon);

- Rapporteurs: Nadia El Yousfi, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels), Imbassou Ouattara Abbas, Member (Côte d'Ivoire), Louis Vlavonou, Member (Benin), and Jean Rousselle, Member (Quebec).

The Committee then discussed topics for upcoming reports.

Mr. **Aubin**, Member (Canada) and Chair of the Parliamentary Affairs Committee, stated that reports will be prepared on parliamentary ethics officers and codes of ethics in francophone parliaments, and on personal data protection authorities in francophone countries.

The Committee approved a new subject for a report – parliamentary representation by expatriates in the francophone world – which will be conducted by Claudine Lepage, Senator (France). Fathi Derder, National Councillor (Switzerland), proposed a draft report on the role of parliaments.

### **Work of the Political Committee**

The Political Committee met in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, on 9 July 2017, Jacques Legendre, Senator (France) and Chair of the Political Committee, presiding.

The branches in attendance adopted the agenda and minutes from the last meeting held 10–11 April 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Committee conducted a round-table discussion on recent political events in the various branches. **Dennis Dawson**, Senator (Canada) and Committee rapporteur, was asked to speak on behalf of Canada. He noted that 2017 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation, and that U.S. President Donald Trump has had an impact on Canada, especially regarding the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Representatives from the FYP spoke on reconciling the rule of law with the fight against terrorism.

The Political Committee reviewed political situations in francophone countries. Charles Otando, rapporteur (Gabon), presented his report on the subject, which was then adopted by the Committee.

The Committee passed draft resolutions on political situations in the following countries:

- Syrian Arab Republic
- Central African Republic;
- Burundi;
- Democratic Republic of Congo;
- Lebanon.

During discussions on the resolution concerning the Syrian Arab Republic, **Paul Lefebvre**, Member (Canada) and Vice-President of the Canadian Branch, proposed an amendment to the resolution pointing out that intra-Syrian peace talks sponsored by the

United Nations represent the best option for a lasting solution to the conflict. The Committee accepted the amendment.

The Political Committee also adopted the draft resolution on terrorism in the Sahel.

Following discussion, the Political Committee recommended that the suspension of the Syrian branch and the preventive observation of the Burundi branch continue. It was noted that an APF networking and fact-finding mission would help to re-evaluate the status of the Burundi branch.

The parliamentarians reviewed the report entitled *The Fight Against Religious Radicalism*, presented by André Drolet, Member (Quebec). This report will be discussed further at a subsequent meeting of the Political Committee.

**Dennis Dawson**, Senator (Canada) and rapporteur, presented the final version of his draft report *The Legalization of Marijuana from a Public Policy Perspective*. The final version summarizes the state of legalization and decriminalization around the world and in francophone countries. It briefly describes issues concerning the international drug control regime, and various legalization and decriminalization measures introduced by the governments of Uruguay, the states of Colorado and Washington, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands. The report demonstrates that approaches to legalization and decriminalization vary greatly from one legislature to the next. Senator **Dawson** explained that he had added information about the cannabis bill introduced by the Government of Canada since the Committee's last meeting in April, and described Bill C-45 (Cannabis Act). Lastly, Senator **Dawson** addressed the debate on this bill in the Canadian Parliament and the general debate on narcotics control internationally. The Political Committee adopted the report.

Anne Seydoux-Christe, Member (Switzerland), tabled a report on the death penalty in francophone countries. This report will be discussed further at a subsequent meeting of the Political Committee.

The Political Committee prepared for the Q&A session with Francophonie Secretary General Michaëlle Jean, to be held during the plenary session.

Jacques Legendre, Senator (France) and Chair of the Political Committee, gave an overview of the technical amendments to be made to the APF Statutes.

Alain Onkelinx, Member and rapporteur (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels), gave an update on reforming APF democratic oversight processes. The Political Committee had approved them at its spring meeting. However, Mr. Onkelinx stated that the Bureau approved the review of the normative framework for these processes.

Bruno Lefebvre, Member (Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels) and representative for the APF's Young Parliamentarians Program, presented the draft initiative to establish an APF Young Parliamentarians Network. The Committee agreed to study the draft statutes for the network at the next meeting.

The Committee approved the nominations to the Committee's executive.

The Political Committee discussed themes for upcoming reports, including United Nations peacekeeping missions in francophone nations. Alain Onkelinx, Member

(Belgium / French Community / Wallonia-Brussels) and rapporteur, was given responsibility for this theme.

### **Work of the Co-operation and Development Committee**

The Co-operation and Development Committee met in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, on 9 July 2017, Salibou Garba, Member (Chad), presiding.

The branches in attendance adopted the agenda and minutes of the last meeting, held 2–3 March in Saint-Denis de la Réunion, La Réunion.

The Committee heard from various speakers on the following subjects:

- *The Economic and Digital Francophonie*, Kako Nubukpo, Director of the Economic and Digital Francophonie at the OIF;
- *Draft agreement between the APF and the Forum Francophone des Affaires*, Jean-Max Rakotomamonjy, Speaker of the National Assembly of Madagascar;
- *Activities of the Agence française de développement*, Zolika Mouabdallah, parliamentary relations officer;
- *Civil Status and Economic Development*, Laurent Dejoie, President, Notariat Francophone;
- *Draft memorandum between the APF and the Conférence Permanente des Chambres Consulaires d’Afrique Francophone (CPCCAF)*, Denis Deschamps, Executive Officer, CPCCAF.

Representatives from the FYP gave a presentation on the issues and challenges surrounding francophone youth and digital entrepreneurship.

The Committee reviewed draft reports and resolutions on the following subjects:

- *The impact of international migration on francophone countries*, rapporteurs: Stéphane Demilly, Member (France), and Ndoula Thiam, Member (Mali);
- *Monitoring the economic strategy for the Francophonie*, rapporteur: Benoit Charrette, Member (Quebec);
- *Health systems in francophone countries*, rapporteur: Angélique Ngoma, Member (Gabon);
- *Monitoring the international trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization*, rapporteur: Benoit Charrette, Member (Québec).
- *Draft resolution on shared economic growth: discussion on Sustainable Development Goal 8 in francophone countries*, rapporteur: **Francis Drouin**, Member (Canada).

Mr. **Drouin**'s resolution relates to the report on shared economic growth and Sustainable Development Goal 8, reviewed at the Committee meetings in La Réunion Island in March 2017 and Madagascar in July 2016.

The resolution summarizes efforts to date and notes that development activities related to the Millennium Development Goals have led to progress, but the results have been uneven worldwide. The resolution notes that the poorest, most marginalized and vulnerable groups have been left behind, and women are over-represented in these groups. In September 2015, UN member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to guide the agenda. The resolution notes that the goal of the 2030 Agenda is to leave no one behind, and SDG 8 promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth. The resolution recognizes that, while the UN General Assembly's resolution creating the 2030 Agenda states that sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth is essential to prosperity, this cannot be achieved unless wealth is shared and inequities are addressed. Therefore, the resolution:

- calls on States to pass laws and introduce programs, policies and initiatives supporting shared economic growth;
- calls on francophone parliamentarians to pass legislation that implements policies supporting shared economic growth, and to hold their governments accountable for action on this issue;
- encourage francophone parliamentarians to consider issues such as employment, education, technical training, and equality between men and women as key determinants in shared economic growth when they are making laws and holding their governments accountable;
- ask francophone countries and the OIF to evaluate opportunities for international cooperation related to building the capacity of statistical agencies in francophone countries, in order to guide initiatives targeting shared economic growth and assess progress based on evidence.

The Committee adopted the resolution by Mr.**Drouin**.

A discussion ensued on the Committee's future work. Mr. **Drouin** presented a new proposal for a draft report on agriculture and digitization. The report would examine the Francophonie's interest in digitization. Agriculture plays a significant role in economic development in many parts of the world and in various francophone countries, including Canada. There is also a growing interest in using digital tools in the agriculture industry. Mr. **Drouin** stated that the report could explore the benefits of digitization for sustainable agriculture and the constraints that might restrict its use or the anticipated results. It could also present smart agriculture initiatives by APF member countries and highlight best practices.

The Committee followed up on its proposed resolutions that were adopted by the APF in Madagascar in July 2016. **Francis Drouin** addressed Canada's follow-up activities concerning agricultural policy instruments in francophone countries, and shared growth

and the fight against poverty in francophone countries. Resolution follow-up documents have been sent to the APF Secretariat and they summarize Canada's various initiatives.

The Committee closed by electing a new Chair: Sylvestre Ossiala, Member (Democratic Republic of Congo).

### **Work of the Education, Communication and Cultural Affairs Committee**

CECAC met in Luxembourg, Luxembourg, on 9 July 2017, Didier Berberat, State Councillor (Switzerland), presiding.

More than 30 branches were represented at the meeting.

The branches adopted the agenda and the minutes of the last meeting held in Cotonou from 3–4 May 2017. Mr. Berberat presented his report on activities conducted since the CECAC meeting of May 2017. The activity report was then adopted.

Carole Poirier, Member (Québec) and rapporteur, gave a status report on implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Cape Verde, Lebanon and Vanuatu, which have joined the Francophonie, have still not ratified the Convention. In November 2016, the Quebec National Assembly hosted a seminar on the diversity of cultural expression in the digital age.

Mr. Berberat reported on the 8th Francophone Youth Parliament. CECAC's theme for the youth parliament is "How can education help to prevent radicalization?" Participants in the FYP debated this topic and voted on a resolution. Two FYP participants reported to CECAC on the results of the debate and resolution, which highlighted the importance of education as an early intervention and the need to prevent stigmatization.

Carole Poirier, Member (Québec) and rapporteur, submitted her final report *Civics in the Francophonie* and the related resolution. The resolution was adopted by CECAC.

The Committee heard from various speakers on the following subjects:

- *Young people in the Francophonie: challenges, issues and perspectives*, Ma-Umba Mabilia, Education and Youth Director, OIF. Mr. Mabilia discussed various youth issues, such as unemployment, lack of job stability, gaps between training and labour market needs, participation in civic life, and access to health care. Government policies and strategies must be participatory, inclusive and well-funded.
- *Agence universitaire de la Francophonie*, Jean-Paul de Gaudemar, Rector. Mr. de Gaudemar discussed university education and the strategy implemented by the Agence universitaire de la Francophonie.
- *Fédération internationale des professeurs de français* (FIPF), Stéphane Grivelet, Secretary General. Mr. Grivelet introduced the FIPF and its mission and objectives. Mr. Berberat then presented a draft resolution on French teachers' associations. The resolution was adopted following discussion.

Christian Levrat, State Councillor (Switzerland), presented a draft resolution on preventing violent extremism and radicalization pursuant to a report on deradicalization. The draft resolution was debated and adopted. Joël Godin, Member (Canada), suggested that the word “Islam” be replaced with “religion” in order to be fair, provide a broad perspective and avoid stigmatization.

CECAC approved candidates for appointment to the executive.

Lastly, CECAC discussed proposals for future themes. The following were selected:

- demography and funding for education (Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo);
- distance education and knowledge transfer (Philippe Mouiller, Senator (France) and CECAC rapporteur);
- use of digital tools in education and schools (Carole Poirier, Member (Québec) and CECAC rapporteur);
- student mobility in Francophone countries (Guinea and Canadian branches).  
**Joël Godin**, Member (Canada), said he would like to participate in this report on behalf of the Canadian Branch.

Mr. Berberat noted that Jacques Maziade was withdrawing as a CECAC advisor and would be replaced by Simon Larouche of the Canadian House of Commons.

Lastly, Mr. Berberat noted that the Parliamentary Network to Fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria would meet in Morocco in the fall of 2017, and that the next meeting of CECAC would be held in Côte d’Ivoire in the spring of 2018.

### **Work of the APF Plenary**

The APF plenary was held in Luxembourg on 10–11 July 2017, Aubin Minaku, President of the APF and Speaker of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Congo, presiding. Several dignitaries addressed the assembly during the official opening ceremony:

- Mars di Bartolomeo, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg;
- Aubin Minaku, President of the APF;
- H.E. Michaëlle Jean, Secretary General of the Francophonie;
- Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg; and
- His Royal Highness Henri, Grand Duke of Luxembourg.

The plenary continued, and the assembly adopted the agenda and took attendance. It then adopted the record of decisions from the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the APF held in Antananarivo, Madagascar, 11–12 July 2016.

The Secretary General of the Francophonie, H.E. Michaëlle Jean, addressed participants. She emphasized the importance of the APF's work and the complementary nature of the OIF and APF, as illustrated by their various joint initiatives. The APF requires strong and stable funding commitment in this regard. Ms. Jean also emphasized the importance for young people to be involved politically. She noted that the OIF accepted the APF's request to collaborate on the Noria program, showing the trusting relationship between the two organizations. Ms. Jean also highlighted the work of parliamentarians who participated in fact-finding and networking missions during elections in the Francophonie.

The Secretary General addressed a number of common challenges. The Francophonie faces complex crises, and there are many attacks on peace and democracy. These crises have tremendous human, political and economic costs. A two-fold response is needed: operational prevention, which focuses on preventive diplomacy to reduce risks; and structural prevention, which supports institutional democratization. Parliaments play a vital role in this work. Ms. Jean pointed out a number of political and institutional situations in the Francophonie that leave some branches vulnerable and open to violence. Only strong and independent democratic institutions can overcome crises. Therefore, there is a need to expand technical, policy and electoral support measures conducted in cooperation with the APF.

The Secretary General then discussed massive forced migrations, noting that they affected more than 65 million people in 2016. Closing borders in response to an influx of migrants and refugees fuels xenophobic prejudices and extremist groups. She emphasized that it is important to focus on the causes for these migrations, such as crises, conflicts, poverty, a lack of prospects, soil degradation, etc. Support for innovation, entrepreneurship and job creation is a way to help people who are living through this type of crisis. For example, entrepreneurs in the southern hemisphere have difficulty obtaining a visa to move freely and lack the mobility needed to conduct business, form partnerships, etc. Ms. **Jean** called on parliamentarians to be catalysts for change, especially to promote mobility. The OIF and APF must work together to advocate in this regard.

She then raised the issue of women's economic empowerment. Too often, women are on the economic sidelines, yet they have a vital role to play in sustainable development and inclusive growth. Ms. **Jean** went on to talk about quality education in French and the need for the international community to be involved in climate change. She raised the problems caused by terrorism and violent radicalization, and emphasized the need to better coordinate ground forces in many francophone countries and increase prevention. Youth employment activities can help significantly. Lastly, Ms. Jean touched on the importance of culture.

Questions relating to several of these themes followed.

The Parliamentary Secretary General presented her report on activities since the Madagascar session in 2016.



Alex Bodry, Member and Treasurer (Luxembourg), presented the *2016 Financial Report and Statements*. The Assembly adopted the financial report and the updated 2017 program, and approved the funding of a number of parliamentary cooperation activities.

Presentations were made by the following individuals:

- Michel Sidibé, Executive Director, UNAIDS (United Nations joint programme on HIV/AIDS);
- Stève Gentili, President, Forum francophone des affaires;
- Louis Chauvel, Professor of Sociology at the University of Luxembourg, spoke on francophone societies in 2050, a generation of sustainable human development;
- Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne, Minister of State attached to the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

The plenary adopted the draft amendments to the democratic oversight processes and penalties, and approved the choice of EXAFI to serve as auditor.

The plenary proceeded to a thematic debate on “Linguistic diversity, cultural diversity and identity.” **Dennis Dawson**, Senator (Canada), delivered an address on this subject, highlighting the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation, and Canada’s linguistic diversity. He noted that there are more than 200 mother tongues spoken in Canada. He also mentioned the central role of the French language in Canada, where more than 7 million Canadians speak French and the language has an institutional recognition.

The plenary adopted the draft reports and resolutions presented on behalf of the standing committees and the Network of Women Parliamentarians. The following resolutions were adopted:

- a. Resolution on the situation in Burundi;
- b. Resolution on the situation in Lebanon;
- c. Resolution on the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic;
- d. Resolution on the situation in the Central African Republic;
- e. Resolution on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo;
- f. Resolution on terrorism in the Sahel;
- g. Resolution on the commodification of education;
- h. Resolution on preventing violent extremism and radicalization;
- i. Resolution on civic education;
- j. Resolution on French teachers’ associations;

- k. Resolution on French education;
- l. Resolution on parliamentary cooperation;
- m. Resolution on shared economic growth;
- n. Resolution on issues and challenges regarding entrepreneurship;
- o. Resolution on women in STEM industries;
- p. Resolution on engaging men and boys in preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls;
- q. Resolution sexual and reproductive rights;
- r. Resolution on migrant women.

The Canadian parliamentarians presented the resolutions that they had tabled in committee or as part of the Network of Women Parliamentarians.

The chargés de mission from the African, American, European and Asian regions reported on their respective activities.

The APF then elected its Bureau members.

Aubin Minaku, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Jacques Chagnon, Speaker of the Quebec National Assembly and recently elected President of the APF, addressed the delegates.

The APF heard the finalists in the FYP debating competition.

Before adjourning the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session, the President of the APF announced that the 44<sup>th</sup> Session would be held in Québec City in July 2018.

## **Conclusion**

Through its participation in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, the Canadian Branch accomplished its objectives of meeting its international obligations in the Francophonie, actively participating in discussions with the OIF Secretary General, ensuring approval of its candidates for the Ordre de la Pléiade, maintaining international ties and representing its interests.

Moreover, the Luxembourg session was an opportunity for many new Canadian parliamentarians to develop ties with parliamentarians from across the Francophonie and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the APF. Lastly, the Canadian Branch's rapporteurs presented their draft reports and resolutions on themes that affect Canadians and citizens of the Francophonie.

Respectfully submitted,

Darrell Samson, M.P.,

Chair of the Canadian Branch of the  
*Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)*

## Travel Costs

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian Branch of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Bureau Meeting and 43 <sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session Meeting of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Luxembourg, Luxembourg
<b>DATES</b>	7–11 July 2017
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Dennis Dawson
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Darrell Samson, M.P. Paul Lefebvre, M.P. Francis Drouin, M.P. Sylvie Boucher, M.P. Anne Minh-Thu Quach, M.P. Joël Godin, M.P. Robert Aubin, M.P.
STAFF	Jean-François Lafleur, Association Secretary Chloé Forget, Analyst
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$37,190.76
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$18,457.75
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$5,755.00
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$150.97
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$170.79
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$75.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$61,800.27</b>

