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**Chair**

**Mr. Alan Tonks**

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## Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Alan Tonks (York South—Weston, Lib.)):** Good afternoon, members of the committee and ladies and gentlemen. Perhaps we could just commence, if members of the committee would take their places.

Welcome, Mr. Sadik. We appreciate very much your being here. This is the 59th meeting of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development. I'm sure you'd be interested to know that.

Today we are televising, in the video-conference format, something that will be very interesting to those who are watching these televised proceedings.

We have Jill Rutter, the director for strategy and sustainable development with the United Kingdom Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Also, we have Caroline Season, who is a senior policy adviser.

Mr. Sadik, since we're ready to go with the video conference, would you be agreeable to leaving the deputation part, and then we'll go on with the video conference?

**Mr. Pierre Sadik (Sustainability Specialist, David Suzuki Foundation):** Yes.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that.

Is that okay with the members of the committee?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Fine. Thank you.

Members of the committee, you know that out of the Commissioner of the Environment's report we had been looking at the whole issue of a sustainable development framework that would guide and measure the actions that are being taken with respect to climate change and the issues associated with sustainable development. Today, on our video conference, we have, as I said, the United Kingdom Department for Environment. We're going to be talking about their experience. It's very much appreciated.

This is the first time I have chaired a meeting with a video-conference format, so you're going to have to allow for some searching of the proper procedure.

Are we coming through loud and clear, Ms. Season and Ms. Rutter?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter (Director, Strategy and Sustainable Development, United Kingdom Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs):** Yes, that's absolutely fine.

**The Chair:** Very good. Are you prepared to make an initial statement and then answer questions? Is that a comfortable format for you to go through?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** That's absolutely fine, yes.

**The Chair:** All right. What we do is we actually listen to your presentation and then we have a 10-minute sequence of questions and answers as we go through the various members, on a party basis. I think we'll have you make a presentation and then we'll have a question and answer period.

Let me just say, on behalf of the committee, how absolutely delighted we are that you would take the time to share the U.K. experience with us. We're looking forward very much to engaging with you on this very important issue.

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** We're actually delighted to have this opportunity.

I'm sorry, I was informed by your clerk that it was quite normal to give video conferences to the committee. I hope this works, because we thought we were clicking into something that you were well experienced with; we're certainly not so experienced at doing this. We think it's quite an important example for the future.

**The Chair:** The clerk may be experienced, but I personally am not. I just wanted to make sure you realized that.

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** It's a new experience for all of us.

**The Chair:** Is the translation coming through? Good.

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** What I thought I would do is just run through, very briefly, the background to the sustainable development strategy that was launched by our Prime Minister on March 7, just to give members of the committee, Mr. Chairman, some context. Then I'll talk a bit about what we think are some of the key new features of that strategy. Finally, because I think, looking at the auditor general's report, that some of the areas of interest to the committee may be around some of the institutional structures and the delivery structures within government, I'll talk a bit about that. So I'm just going to do that quite quickly. If I'm speaking too fast, because I know it's all being translated, please slow me down. Obviously, it's harder to have a sense of that sitting here in DEFRA.

What was the background to the review of the sustainable development strategy? The review was kicked off in 2004, but it was a review of a strategy that was originally published in 1999, and that was the second U.K. sustainable development strategy. The first one was published by the previous administration in 1994.

There were various reasons why we needed to review the strategy in 2004. It was partly because the way we govern the U.K. had changed, with devolution, regionalization, etc., and partly because of external events, for example, the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Our thinking on energy policy had moved on with the energy white paper, and we perceived that there was a need to drive delivery in a new and more powerful way.

We also asked the Sustainable Development Commission, which acts as an independent adviser to government, to review progress up to 2004, and their verdict was, and this sounds a bit like a U.K. school report, "shows promise, but must try harder". So that was what we were trying to do.

In April 2004, we launched a big public consultation around the new strategy, which we called "taking it on". The first phase of the consultation was a public consultation. We got a lot of responses, both online and through letters, but then we set up a process of working groups with mixes of stakeholders and government departments. But crucially, for developing this strategy, we set up a program board chaired by our permanent secretary—I'm not sure whether that's a deputy minister in Canada, but it's the top official in our department—with senior representation from across government from key government departments. That was tasked with taking forward developing the new strategy, and that was what the Prime Minister launched on March 7.

We actually launched two documents that day. We launched the U.K. strategy, and that deals with the issues for which the U.K. government is responsible. But we also agreed with our colleagues in the devolved administrations, and this document, what we call the new U.K. framework, was launched by the Scottish First Minister. That is a document within which the U.K. strategy sits, but also the Scottish strategy, which will be published in a few weeks' time, and a new Northern Ireland strategy, which is under development. It is also where our colleagues in Wales—where the Welsh Assembly Government has a statutory duty on sustainable development—take forward their scheme that they're statutorily obliged to produce. That's part of our slightly complex devolution arrangements.

I'll just run through what is in those documents. Those documents are designed to set out a shared vision, principles, and priorities, looking long term. The focus there is to 2020, though obviously we don't define goals that far out in any really concrete way. But it's definitely trying to look beyond the normal lifetime of a parliament.

What is in the new strategy? The first thing that's in the new strategy and the new framework is an agreed upon U.K. sustainable development goal. Those of you who are familiar with Brundtland will note that it's a sort of variation on a theme of Brundtland's. It places particular emphasis on integration of the environment, the economy, and society, and that was a response to some of the comments we had from stakeholders about the way in which the 1999 strategy had four bullets on sustainable development. But people felt too much that departments were tending to do what we

might call in England a bit of a pick-and-mix approach, a bit of à la carte, choosing which of those objectives they wanted to emphasize rather than trying to achieve them all at the same time. We tried to overcome that with a new U.K. sustainable development goal, which is in the documentation we have.

● (1535)

We also set out and agreed with the devolved administrations, agreed with the Sustainable Development Commission, five new guiding principles for sustainable development. These are our tests that are supposed to be applied to all new policy going forward. Those five new guiding principles are all supposed to be applied. They're not in any particular hierarchy, but they are: living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy, and just society—if you like, those are sort of two of the outcomes. And the ways in which we achieve that: by achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science—defined widely as evidenced—responsibly. So those are our five new principles.

That was quite a gain for us, because in the 1999 strategy, the U.K. government had ten principles, the Sustainable Development Commission had six different principles, the Scots had three principles, and the Welsh had a list of tests for their schemes. So this is a new, much more unified framework.

We also agreed on areas for common action. We focused on four priority areas, which, again, is another development over the 1999 strategy and was felt to be an important move forward to the extent that they mix means and ends. The four that we have are: sustainable consumption and production, which is, in particular, in the first instance, decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation; climate change and energy; protection of natural resources and environmental enhancement, which wasn't actually a priority we consulted on but was a theme that came out very strongly through our consultation that we were underemphasizing; and finally, creating sustainable communities, both at home but also creating a fairer world, so the big development agenda.

One of the approaches in the 2005 strategy is to try to integrate from community, local, regional, national to global throughout those themes. Through the document, we have three key themes. One is the need to involve people, but the second one—and this was a message that emerged really strongly from our consultation—is that government, particularly with the business community, could not expect other people to be happy about making their behaviours more sustainable if it failed to lead by example, so that's a very strong theme in our new strategy. And third, improving the delivery framework, what we call getting serious about delivery. So a lot of the comments on the 1999 strategy were that the words and the intentions were fine, but it lacked a proper delivery framework.

There are a lot of commitments in the strategy. I don't want to go through that. I think the Sustainable Development Commission counted them and found 250 commitments in there, so we're monitoring progress there.

To measure our progress, though, we have an indicator set. We have 20 agreed indicators for the U.K. framework, and we have a further 48 indicators for measuring progress on the U.K. strategy. DEFRA will report annually on our progress on those indicators, and the strategy has a commitment that if those are going in the wrong direction, policy interventions will be made.

As I said, one of the key things was a much beefed-up delivery framework. One of the elements of that—and I think this is where you may note that we're actually lifting what we regard as some Canadian good practice—is expanding the role of the Sustainable Development Commission, which reports to the Prime Minister, from being simply an adviser and “critical friend of government” into being a more effective watchdog of government progress. So rather than my team reporting on whether the government is doing what it said, we're asking the Sustainable Development Commission, which consists of 20 appointed independent commissioners and the staff, to report on progress to the Prime Minister and to first ministers.

• (1540)

We're requiring every government department and executive agency to prepare a sustainable development action plan by the end of this year so that we can see how they will contribute to delivery. We're looking at the case for extending statutory duties linked to SD based on a review of whether that has worked in practice. We have a big agenda about embedding sustainable development, working with our office of the deputy prime minister, into local and regional government. We're also putting a lot of emphasis on skilling for sustainable development and working with what was the Centre for Management and Policy Studies—since April, the National School of Government—on the big agenda around integrating SD into their curriculum for policy-makers and operations managers in the civil service at all levels. So that's the sort of framework we've set.

Just as a final word about governance, we have a very complicated diagram of the organizational structure. At the top of that organizational structure to oversee progress, the Prime Minister is chairing a cabinet committee that is going to oversee the government's energy and environmental policies, monitor the impact on sustainable development of the government's policies, and consider climate change, security of supply, affordability of energy.

Underneath that is a ministerial committee—which every department is represented on—of sustainable development ministers, because every government department has its own sustainable development minister. That is particularly looking at the way in which the government contributes to sustainable development through the conduct of its own business, and they will have a particular responsibility for looking at the SD action plans.

We also have groups of officials that shadow those committees. We took forward the sustainable development program board with senior officials, which oversaw the development of this strategy, to oversee the development of delivery on the strategy. We've set up a separate board chaired by the second-most senior official, I think, at the Ministry of Defence—the second permanent secretary at the Ministry of Defence—to oversee the review of our framework on sustainable operations in government, which we call the framework for the government estate.

So we now have a much more comprehensive delivery structure that we hope will ensure that both the commitments in the strategy and, more importantly, the principles going forward will have a much greater say in policy-making in government, because it's impossible in a strategy like this to prescribe every challenge the government will face. It's not an attempt to do that. So we think that gives us a much better organized framework around future delivery within this coordinating framework, which all government departments have signed up to.

It's quite noticeable that when the Prime Minister launched this on March 7 he was accompanied not just by our Secretary of State, but also the Home Secretary, Charles Clarke. We had ministers from our housing local government department, from our transport department, from our international development department. Had we not changed the date at the last minute, we would have had ministers from the foreign office and the education department, and a number of other departments as well. So it was a comprehensive, cross-government launch for what I hope is a comprehensive, cross-government strategy.

With that, I'll conclude my remarks. I hope that wasn't too long, and I'm happy to take questions.

• (1545)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much for that.

Ms. Season and Ms. Rutter, we do have Mr. Pierre Sadik, who is the sustainability specialist with the David Suzuki Foundation. I wonder if it would be appropriate and whether you would find this more inviting in terms of process if we were to hear from Mr. Sadik. Do we have you with us long enough that we could then take about three-quarters of an hour or half an hour to have questions of either you or Mr. Sadik?

Are we okay with that timing?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** Yes, we're fine with that.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Members of the committee, shall we proceed in that mode? Okay.

Mr. Sadik, thank you for being here. This is really a wonderful opportunity, not only to hear what the Suzuki Foundation's perspective is in terms of the sustainable development framework, but also to compare it to the U.K.'s. This is a really extraordinary opportunity for that.

Without any further ado, perhaps you would like to make your presentation, and then we'll go into a question and answer format.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have about an eight-minute presentation. Does that work in terms of the timeframe?

**The Chair:** That's fine, yes.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** Canada is better positioned than almost any other nation to become a world leader in sustainability. Canada's potential sustainability advantage stems from our tremendous natural wealth, our large country, our well-educated and skilled workforce, our prosperous economy, and our strong social systems.

However, despite our strong values and extraordinary natural assets, Canada is struggling environmentally. Last month the David Suzuki Foundation released a report, "The Maple Leaf in the OECD", based almost 100% on OECD data. Unfortunately, the results showed that Canada's environmental ranking vis-à-vis the other countries of the OECD is 28 out of 30. This was on the basis of 29 environmental indicators, on some of which Canada finished quite poorly. For example, on energy consumption, Canada finished third from the bottom; on water consumption, we were in second to last place; on emissions of volatile organic compounds, last place; nuclear waste, last place; the number of species at risk, fourth from the bottom. The report also established that Canada's rank in relation to the other countries of the OECD has not changed over the course of a decade, between 1992 and 2002. Furthermore, last week it was revealed that a study commissioned by the Prime Minister warns that Canada is more vulnerable to climate change than any major industrialized country on the planet and that Canada is dangerously unprepared to deal with the unavoidable consequences of climate change.

So there is a disturbing gap between Canadians' environmental values and our country's environmental performance. To close this gap, we need to develop and implement a new and pragmatic environmental and economic agenda through the introduction of a national sustainability plan, the type of thing we've heard from Ms. Rutter that the United Kingdom introduced earlier this decade.

Last year the David Suzuki Foundation released a document, "Sustainability within a Generation", which has been brought here for you today. It really has a lot of the hallmarks of a national sustainability plan for Canada. The goal of "Sustainability within a Generation" is to make Canada a world leader in sustainability by the year 2030, in 25 years.

The report was well received at senior levels of the Government of Canada. In fact, on the heels of the release of "Sustainability within a Generation", something called the competitiveness and environmental sustainability framework was introduced and an early version of that, not coincidentally, was called "Sustainability within a Generation".

The competitiveness and environmental sustainability framework sought to integrate economic and environmental priorities. The idea was to make the environment every department's concern by framing environmental issues in terms of competitiveness issues for Canada. In many respects, this is a fair framing because chickens of a poor environment will ultimately come home to roost in a country and harm a country's economic competitiveness.

Unfortunately, somewhere along the way the framework was derailed, and it has at best presently become a non-cohesive program of the sort that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has found, unfortunately, plagues Canada.

Some are of the opinion that the framework and its offshoot, the sector sustainability tables, actually represent an environmental step backward and that the tables could effectively dismantle many of the environmental protections and safeguards that our government currently has in place.

That's why we come to a true national sustainability plan. Canada needs to undergo a shift in environmental governance by adopting an approach that is systemic, long-term and results-oriented. An overarching national sustainability plan will facilitate this type of shift by guiding the implementation and augmentation of existing initiatives and ensuring a coordinated approach. It's not necessary that we reinvent the wheel in terms of some of the programs that the Government of Canada currently has in place, but they do need to be coordinated and augmented by other measures.

● (1550)

It's widely recognized that a well-articulated, long-term plan with clear objectives, firm timelines, and accountability along the way is the most important action governments can take in moving sustainability forward. In that regard, the David Suzuki Foundation is currently preparing a model national sustainability act, which should be available in January of next year.

The OECD and Canada's environment commissioner have repeatedly urged the adoption of a federal sustainable development strategy. A federal strategy would guide the departmental sustainable development strategies that currently lack coherence and would address sustainable development issues at the level of the federal government. It should be noted that this is in contrast to a national sustainability plan, the implementation of which Canada committed to at the Johannesburg world summit in 2002. A national sustainability plan of the type the U.K. has introduced would address sustainable development issues at the federal and provincial and private sector levels, whereas a federal sustainability strategy principally operates through the federal government and the jurisdiction of the federal government.

In terms of moving forward in Canada, the key components of a national sustainability plan include a compelling vision of the future, a set of guiding principles, clear objectives with indicators to measure progress, a firm timeline with milestones along the way, and accountability at each step of the way as well. The competitiveness and environmental sustainability framework could have been—and should have been—a first step on the path to a national sustainability plan. However, it lacks several of the fundamental elements of an effective sustainability plan, including objectives, timelines, and indicators for measuring success.

Some of the elements are fairly self-evident. Vision is simply something that captures the imagination of Canadians. Guiding principles are fundamental principles, pursuant to which all the other components of a national sustainability plan would be introduced and implemented. Some of the potential principles, and some that I have no doubt the U.K. sustainability strategy has adopted, are items such as the use of the precautionary principle, or the principle that we ought to try to live within our means and within our environmental limits; the application of the “polluter pays” principle; and the application of the principle of intergenerational equity.

Objectives and indicators are other important components of any plan. This involves clear, measurable objectives—probably the single most important element of a national sustainability plan. Objectives provide guidance. They enable strategic planning. They offer certainty for business and the private sector, and they promote transparency and accountability. The nations regarded as international leaders in national sustainability strategies or plans have set ambitious long-term objectives. For example, Sweden has 16 broad environmental quality objectives and 71 interim targets. The U.K., as we heard from Ms. Rutter, has 20 broad categories of objectives.

What we've learned from other nations on the leading edge of this type of plan, such as the U.K., Sweden, Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, is that after years of experience, in some instances, with the introduction of these types of things, it has begun to pay dividends in terms of environmental protection, economic competitiveness, and the health of the citizens of these nations.

Sweden, for example, has had a long-standing national sustainability plan in place. Sweden is on target to exceed its Kyoto climate change target. Its greenhouse gas emissions are 4% below the 1990 level. Sweden has reduced pesticide use by 80% since 1980. It has reduced water consumption by 34% over the course of two decades and sulphur dioxide emissions by 80% since 1980.

● (1555)

There are countless other examples of how national sustainability plans that coordinate the environmental and economic policies and programs a government has in place have paid off for countries around the world.

In conclusion, it's clear on the basis of experience of other nations and on the basis of what we can see ourselves, with the problems Canada has encountered in the environmental progress it has tried to make, that it's integral, for an effort to be successful, to have some overarching, guiding, national sustainability plan in place.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Sadik.

Ms. Rutter, are you and Ms. Season still with us?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** We're still here, yes. We had muted you, but we're still here.

**The Chair:** Good.

We're now going to go to the format with questions and answers. We're going to begin with Mr. Jean, then we'll go to Mr. Bigras, and then to Mr. McGuinty and Mr. Cullen.

Oh, Mr. Mills is going to lead off, and then possibly Mr. Jean will pick it up.

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Ms. Rutter, I have a couple of questions I would like to ask you.

First of all, I've noticed in the U.K. sustainability strategy that you encourage government's working with local communities, and a lot of public consultation, and so on. One thing I would have to say we lack in Canada is some form of leadership in many of the areas of sustainability, whether we're talking about water or air quality or even about garbage.

I'll use garbage as one of my examples. Here, we have this passing the buck: it's not a federal issue, it's sort of a provincial issue, but really it's a municipal issue. As a result, we end up not doing much that's sustainable and we end up putting it in a hole in the ground.

I wonder how the U.K., from a federal level—and I know it's a different structure—provides that leadership for the municipalities. You mentioned that in 1999 you had everybody doing their own thing, whether it was Scotland, Wales, or whatever. I wonder how you might offer advice to us in terms of federal leadership in areas of sustainability such as water, air, garbage, and so on.

●(1600)

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** Our system is very different, not least because on issues such as water, air quality, and waste targets, a lot of our legislation actually comes from the European Union. There are areas where there is community competence, so we are working in a framework that is already negotiated at the European level.

We might take waste as an example. I'm not a waste expert, so you want to think about that when you listen to this. In the area of household waste, one of the issues we address in this U.K. strategy is this issue of behaviour change. We're now moving away from having dealt with the big old problems of point-source pollution. Mr. Sadik mentioned the reduction in acid rain and sulphur dioxide emissions. That was achieved mainly by dealing with big point-source pollution from industrial complexes. We're now much more moving into areas where the problems come from the behaviour of individuals.

If we look at the way in which we're tackling waste, we have quite a serious imperative on waste in the U.K. We have targets—to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill—that have come down to us from the EU. They're part of EU legislation, and we need as a government to meet those targets.

We're doing various things. If you look at our sustainable development strategy, we talk about the various things that need to be in place for people to change behaviour. Compared with many of our European colleagues, we have a poor record on recycling. This is about the domestic waste stream. But we have a strategy now that is based on funding activity at a local level, and later this decade we are introducing a scheme whereby local authorities will be given landfill allowances of how much waste they are allowed to send to landfill. If they do not reduce the amount of waste going to landfill, they will have to buy trading allowances. So we're having something like an emissions trading scheme, but a landfill allowance trading scheme there.

We're also taking measures—and this was in the government's manifesto at the last election—to enable people to recycle more of their waste. Some research we had done on behaviour suggested that one of the big motivators for people in terms of waste was actually whether their neighbours recycled, that you didn't have to change anyone's attitude, you only really needed to give them better facilities.

So we are moving on waste to massively extend the availability—and the local authorities do this, but there are clear government targets—of what we call “curbside” recycling. You don't have to take your waste anywhere. Basically, you bin it up, put a bag outside, and the local authority comes to collect it. There are government targets.

We are at the moment working on a revision of the waste strategy. That's being worked out with both local authorities and other stakeholders in government within the context of our EU targets. That is applying the principles of sustainable development strategy. That will be out for consultation early in the new year and then go final in the second half of next year. That's going to take these principles and apply them to this difficult issue of waste.

We're also at the moment revising our air quality strategy, because air quality is an area where we are missing some EU targets. There's a lot of joint work going on there with the transport department,

because our big problem on air pollution is now emissions from transport.

So this provides a context for joint working across departments. That's an area where the environment and transport departments share what we call a public service agreement. The basis on which you get your money from treasury is that you agree on what you'll do in return. We share a public service agreement there on air quality, but again, those targets are then cascaded down to local authorities.

●(1605)

**The Chair:** Ms. Rutter, Mr. Mills would like to jump back in.

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Following up on waste as you introduced it, you mentioned that the EU has its targets, and so on. I find it interesting that you're still talking about landfills when Germany, for example, has 4,400 gasification plants where they deal with their garbage. The Netherlands has similar numbers in relation to population. Obviously places like Berlin have been doing it for 70 years. I find it interesting that you say you're bound by the EU rules, yet you don't seem to be talking about it.

We can even go back further. Our largest city, for instance, has a garbage problem and we truck it to Michigan. That seems to be even one step back from where you might be.

I have a personal interest in this, in that I have managed to convince the county I live in to go to Germany, look at a gasification plant, and actually plan to build one to handle all municipal garbage in Canada. I just wonder why you can't make that jump, as opposed to talking about curbside collections and so on, which is a long way backwards.

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** We are talking about trying to reduce the amount that goes to landfill. That's our big objective. This is an area where we would recognize—

**Mr. Bob Mills:** Why have a landfill at all, though?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** Energy from waste is going to be one of the themes of the new waste strategy review. We realize we have a lot to learn from other people on that and we're very willing to learn. Again, this is not an area where I have particular expertise.

We have quite an acute difficulty in the U.K. We don't have anything like the space Canada has, and we particularly have a problem with the acceptability of siting both landfills and incineration near settlements. Those are issues we also need to address.

**Mr. Bob Mills:** You can't use the word "incineration". I very carefully used the word "gasification", which is totally different from the old-fashioned incinerator where you have black smoke, dioxins, and everybody dying of cancer. Don't call it incineration; call it gasification. The technology is old technology. It's put forward by further companies in the world in both Germany and Italy.

I find it amazing that part of your sustainability wouldn't be embracing that. We use the excuse that we have lots of space; that's why we have landfills. You use the excuse that you don't have lots of space and you have a hard time locating landfills. Let me tell you that in Canada we have a hard time locating landfills anywhere as well.

I just wonder why we can't move forward. I must admit I have been visiting garbage facilities for 30 years, so I do know a lot about garbage facilities around the world. But that would be one question.

The final thing is, how much do you use penalties and incentives to change people's behavioural patterns?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** On the waste point, one of my colleagues has just done a review on energy from waste, and that is going to be a theme in the new waste strategy. We are aware that hits a lot of sustainable development buttons, so we are definitely getting that further onto the radar screen. I'm sure we'll be looking to the Canadian experience there.

On the penalties and incentives, we use both. We need to see what instruments are fit for the behaviour we're trying to change. Obviously one person's penalty is another person's incentive. We have been moving to some of these trading schemes. We see an advantage in trading schemes. We launched the U.K. emissions trading scheme a few years ago, and that has morphed into the European emissions trading scheme. We have a lot of environmental regulation, and for that regulation to be effective it needs to be backed up by both proper enforcement and a proper penalty regime. We are at the moment having a review of our enforcement policy and those regimes to make sure they are fit for purpose.

One of the things about incentives and the attraction of incentives and things like trading schemes is to incentivize innovation and new ways of doing things, whereas penalties are more appropriate when you need to control and stop something. They don't give such great incentive to continual innovation improvement. In our sustainable development strategy we have a section describing how we see the role of these various mechanisms. There is also a role that we haven't thought of before for much more sophisticated thinking about the use of social pressure—things like name and shame ranking lists, and that sort of stuff. Recognition is important.

● (1610)

**The Chair:** Ms. Rutter, I'm sorry to cut you off there, but we're running to a fairly tight timeframe because we do have votes tonight. So if I'm pressing you a little it's because I'm trying to get all of the members in, in their question sequence. I'm sorry to interrupt you there.

Mr. Bigras now has 10 minutes to ask some questions.

Mr. Bigras.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—La Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In Canada, there is much debate about implementing the Kyoto Protocol. How are the roles defined? Should the provinces have a greater role to play? Is it up to the federal government?

I would like you to explain exactly how the European Union succeeded in finding a flexible solution for its member states by implementing a three-pronged model for distributing the objectives negotiated among the member countries. Canada negotiated an overall distribution objective, but there is no distribution among provinces. How did you arrive at this distribution model that was negotiated among the 25 member countries of the European Union?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** I don't want to be unhelpful, but that's how we got to the agreement of the goals between the member states. It's an issue that we could let the committee have a note on, but it's not an area where I'm really competent to describe the process that it went through.

There is a tradition in Europe of negotiating things like that. We negotiate international agreements through community competence and then member states agree collectively how they will do it. But that was a process before I came into the department. So we could let you have a note on that, but I can't really answer it this evening, I'm afraid.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** I would like to put some questions to Mr. Sadik, so that he will not have wasted his time coming to this committee. As I read your report, I saw that according to your indicators, the United Kingdom ranks 18<sup>th</sup> among the 30 OEDC countries in your list. Since you often referred to the United Kingdom as an example, please tell us the reasons why you put it in the 18<sup>th</sup> place.

I would also like you to tell us about your environmental indicators and the parameters that you chose for establishing them. Are they very different from those developed at the Round Table on the Environment and the Economy? Are they similar? Do they take the round table's findings into account?

● (1615)

[*English*]

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** Thank you, Mr. Bigras.

The U.K. finished 18th, probably in large measure because the ranking is based on the most recently available OECD data, which is 2002. The U.K. aggressively began pursuing a national sustainable development strategy, as we heard from Ms. Ritter, in 2000 or thereabouts, early in the decade. So I imagine there's somewhat of a time lag in terms of the effects coming into place and really starting to pay off for the U.K.

I would note, though, that a ranking of 18 is nonetheless 10 spaces ahead of the Canadian ranking of 28th. I think one can say with some confidence that ranking ahead of Canada and some of the other countries that finished very poorly has to do with the implementation of a modest sustainability plan earlier in the 1990s in the U.K.

In terms of the indicators, are you referring to the 29 environmental indicators that were used in the OECD report?

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** *Oui.*

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** As I said, those indicators are, for the most part, from the OECD, and they are simply data points that the OECD collects from various countries using a very highly credible method with checking and collecting data from critical sources. These are data points in terms of things you can see in the report, everything from emissions to consumption to the number of endangered species in a country at any given point in time. So it's a snapshot.

What we've done is taken a snapshot in 1992 and taken a data snapshot in 2002. That data is probably, in some instances, the type of thing the round table is working on in terms of its indicators. Right now, it has funding for three indicators: air, water, and greenhouse gas emissions. I wouldn't be surprised if at some point in the future the OECD will, in terms of collecting data from Canada, come to rely upon the indicators that were started by the round table, and that are now being taken up by Statistics Canada and Environment Canada, and plug those into the biannual data compendium the OECD prepares and that we rely upon in preparing our ranking of the various OECD countries.

Ultimately, one would want indicators that would be used domestically for us to assess how Canada is doing environmentally. One would probably want them to be a little bit more detailed and sophisticated for domestic use, particularly on a regional level. You'd want to be able to deal with certain airsheds and watersheds. You'd want a high level of sophistication that probably wouldn't be necessary for the type of ranking that's done by the OECD, because the OECD data gives you a snapshot of the entire country. As I say, we'd like to look at regional variances and be able to adjust our policy domestically on the basis of that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bigras.

Mr. McGuinty.

**Mr. David McGuinty (Ottawa South, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good evening, witnesses, in London, England.

I have a question for Ms. Rutter. First of all, have you had an opportunity to look at Canada's Kyoto plan in its entirety?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** No, I haven't done that.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Okay. Can you give us some idea, from a U.K. perspective, of what we've done right? What have you looked

to in a Canadian context that has helped think through the challenges you're facing that we're facing here at home?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** I deal with U.K. domestic sustainable development strategy, so I've been focused very much on what the U.K. is doing, right and wrong. The part of Canada that, as I said, we have been looking to in my part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has been your audit arrangements around sustainable development and the role of your Auditor General and the role of the departmental sustainable development plans. My climate change colleagues obviously deal with Canadian counterparts on a very, very regular basis. But that's been part of the thinking why we put that in the U.K.'s new SD strategy.

• (1620)

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Okay. Thank you very much.

There's commentary in Canada from time to time about the European Union's emissions trading system, and there's a lot of criticism about the EU's trading system. For example, there are often comments that try to indicate it's building nothing more than a large bureaucracy, with lots of staff, and is a difficult environment to monitor and enforce.

From a U.K. perspective, can you comment on how important emissions trading will be as a market mechanism to achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** We're obviously looking for emissions reductions from various sectors, one of which is business. The big mechanism for delivering on business is through the emissions trading scheme and the national allocation plan.

We think emissions trading is a very positive and economically efficient way of delivering emissions reductions, although you are right that you need to ensure that you minimize the associated administrative costs, not least because it gives precisely the kinds of incentives towards innovation that I mentioned to your colleague earlier.

In this role in DEFRA, I have never spoken with EU colleagues, and I don't deal with the EU side. My climate change colleague on the EU side is indeed at an EU meeting this evening; otherwise she might have joined us and would have been able to answer your questions.

In my previous job, I was working at British Petroleum—BP, as it was then—a big oil company. I worked on their pilot emissions trading system. Certainly, we reckoned that the system we introduced within BP saved a lot of energy, saved a lot in costs, and was a very efficient way of delivering emissions reductions. We believe emissions trading has that same potential.

The U.K. government is keen to see the extension of the emissions trading scheme. In our sustainable development strategy, you'll see that we are committed to bringing aviation within the EU emissions trading scheme. We're also keen to see whether it can be extended to surface transportation.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, can I ask a question of Mr. Sadik?

**The Chair:** Yes, of course.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Thank you for joining us, Mr. Sadik.

I'd like to ask a few questions about your report.

I congratulate the David Suzuki Foundation, particularly on writing up front that this is an amalgamation of ideas coming from the foundation and from a plethora of Canadian organizations and players in this field.

When going through the report, I was also struck by the extent to which what you're calling for in the report is in the report, "Sustainability within a Generation: A New Vision for Canada", drafted by David Boyd, and the extent to which this is in lockstep with what our government has been working on for over a decade. That's not to say there aren't some options. There are some terrific options here for consideration to dig down deeper and wider in each of these nine critical areas

But I would like to go back, and I think my colleague, Mr. Wilfert, might like to pick up on this in a moment.

I spent a lot of time working on indicators. I drove the national round table project to come up with six indicators. There are indicators and there are indicators. The Davos indicators say that Canada is at 5th place and at 49th place. The OECD indicators say that we're 28th out of 30. The genuine progress indicator out of Nova Scotia, which has never been ground-truthed anywhere, says that we're not on the radar screen. I know that by constructing a suite of indicators and how those indicators are weighted, one can easily position a nation state in a certain order.

Monsieur Bigras earlier cited from the round table an attempt to put forward six understandable indicators for Canadians to rely on, so that we can expand the notion of wealth in the country—what it really means to be wealthy. Those six indicators will hopefully be taken up in budget-making processes in the future.

In your experience, if we were to take six different suites of indicators, as Canadians, how do we know that one suite of indicators that is weighted differently to another is in fact accurate? Why would we trust one suite of indicators over another?

• (1625)

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** There is a difference in ranking that Canada has sustained under various indicator assessment reports, including the Davos report that you've referred to or the Yale report, where Canada also ranks relatively high.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** What place were we in the Yale report?

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** In the Yale report we were in the top ten of 140 countries—most of the countries on the plan.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** Fifth place out of 140 countries.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** The difference in some instances, in some respects, apart from the weighting of the indicators.... The indicators in our report, "The Maple Leaf in the OECD", are weighted on a certain level, entirely equally. All 29 indicators count exactly the same. The Yale report, for example, and perhaps the Davos World Economic Forum report as well, and the Conference Board of Canada take into account the state of the environment in Canada and not the pressures on the environment. The problem we have with that is the state of the environment skews the results because Canada is a large country geographically with a small population. We have to also look at the ecological footprint of Canadians on a per capita basis. That's what pressure assessments look at. They look at how much Canadians, on a per capita basis, are emitting; how much Canadians are consuming; how much Canadians are using. The fairness in that is the planet is a finite entity, so we have to attribute to each individual a certain allocation of the world's resources, in a theoretical sense. That translates in the methodology underlining these reports. That's our bone to pick, so to speak, with the World Economic Forum and the Yale reports. They don't lead to an accurate picture of how Canada is actually doing.

**Mr. David McGuinty:** I have one last quick question for you, Mr. Sadik.

In all of this report, I don't know how many options or calls for measures there are in here—I didn't tally them up—but say 70, maybe 100. If you were to stop any one of a thousand citizens coming off a bus in this city today, what three measures would the Suzuki Foundation ask them to pursue? Isn't that one of our big challenges, that Canadians want to do the right thing? You mentioned environmental values. What would you ask them to do?

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** We would ask people to live more sensibly. That simply means very practical things, and it would have to be accompanied by a social marketing campaign. There is an ongoing social marketing campaign to consume in this country. We all know that. We'd ask people to consume more sensibly. For example, instead of driving a Nissan Pathfinder, drive a Ford Focus wagon. Your quality of life would probably be just the same, arguably better, and you would be doing a heck of a lot for our environment, and in the long run for our economy, because our economy is dependent on a long-term sustainable environment. There's one example.

**The Chair:** We'll think about two more as we are proceeding.

Thank you, Mr. Sadik.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP):** Thank you, Chair, and thank you to both of our guests.

Ms. Rutter, just one potentially brief question, although I'm sure the answer is complex. The reason the committee has asked you to present before us is because your country has been acknowledged as a leader and an important force in getting things done, whereas in Canada we've struggled to meet, in black and white terms, the reductions we have committed ourselves to under the Kyoto regime. Struggle is an understatement.

How important were the three factors of timelines, indicators, and objectives to the United Kingdom in achieving some of the success you've already enjoyed?

• (1630)

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** Talking about climate change or talking about generally? On climate change in particular?

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** If you can—I'm not sure of the extent of your expertise on climate change—if not, then let's talk about more general sustainable development goals.

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** There's a very interesting question about the sustainable development strategy, which I think is some of the reservation about the 1999 strategy: how much did it actually change what people would do? Did the government just do things it would have done anyway, or did it do things differently because of the sustainable development strategy?

I think I would point to the 2003 energy white paper as really marking a shift. The government was focusing much more on sustainable development in looking at energy policy. There we have four big drivers of energy policy. We looked at our fuel poverty, at affordability—the social aspects of energy—and at long-term security of supply, but we also have the need to drive towards a low-carbon economy as a driver there.

As you know, the U.K. is on course to meet its Kyoto target for 2008-2012, but at the moment—and you'll have seen that from recent stuff around the U.K.—it is falling short of the more ambitious domestic target the government set in the energy white paper for the short term. We still have the long-term goal of reducing our carbon emissions by 60% by 2050, and what we have going on now is a big cross-departmental program review of the measures we can take to get back to that 20% target. Having those targets out there guides policy.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I'd like to be a bit more specific in the question. We've struggled in this country and through this government with the actual inclusion of specific timelines and targets, with respect either to a reduction in the creation of carbon in the first place or to a mixing of the energy pool we draw from.

We have a great deal of difficulty in pinning the government down to a target and a date. This is the objective we are hoping to achieve. I'm assuming the U.K. used such firm targets and was then measured against those targets on that timeline. Is that the case, and if it was the case, how important has it been to your success?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** We have a clear target for 2010 and a clear target for 2050. As I say, we project whether we're going to meet the 2010 target. This time last year—December of last year—we initiated a review of the measures we needed in the domestic climate change program to meet that 2010 target, because the projections then showed we were not on course to meet it.

That's more ambitious than our Kyoto target. We're on course to meet the Kyoto target. We have a more ambitious domestic goal; there is a lot of discussion, if you're reading the British press at the moment, and a lot of leaks and things are coming out about what measures the government might take to get us back on a corrective path towards that 2010 target.

One of the problems there is that the forecasts of where we're going to be in 2010 move around a bit, but there's a very clear commitment from the Prime Minister, as you'll have seen recently, to put us back on track to that 2010 goal. That is a big guide of policy.

A lot of the other indicators we have in the sustainable development strategy—and, as we said, there are a lot of them—map onto the specific kinds of public service agreements I mentioned earlier. These are goals agreed between the treasury and departments as part of our two yearly spending settlements, so we will have goals that either are the whole sustainable development indicator or part of that sustainable development indicator. They set out clear targets, and those are used to drive performance in departments. That's what people's performance contracts and remuneration are based on. We do use this targeting approach, and I think having firm public targets out there to aim for has concentrated the minds much more on delivery.

• (1635)

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** I'd like to be clear on that last point and then take another question. On the performance guidelines for the bureaucracy, is it true that some key people essentially have their pay connected to the performance of their individual systems?

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** They are probably not connected as directly as you would see in business, but people are held accountable for delivery, and departments are held accountable for delivery of their public service agreements. We have quarterly discussions in our management board on our progress towards delivery on those. We have to report to the treasury every quarter on whether we're on track or not on track.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Thank you very much, Ms. Rutter.

Just to take a moment with Mr. Sadik, I have two quick questions. One is on the ranking of Canada within the OECD in a recent report. I asked a question about this in the House, and I believe the Minister of the Environment responded that if Turkey could rank so high in your ranking, then your report had little validity for Canada. I'm wondering if you can qualify again why you believe your report stands up.

Second, on the conversation I just had, how has Canada fared in the process of setting key targets and performance guidelines compared to some of our other OECD partners?

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** Thank you, Mr. Cullen.

The minister's rhetorical response in the House in connection with our report that Mexico ranked above Canada—I think Mexico ranked 13th in the report and Canada ranked 28th—was, “If you'd like to drink a glass of water in Mexico City rather than in Canada, be my guest”.

One might question how some countries like that can rank above Canada—Turkey is another one—and the reason is that there are really two types of countries in the OECD. There are high-income countries and there are emerging economy low-income countries. As I indicated to Mr. McGuinty, we're looking at pressures on the environment and per capita consumption in this report. You'll find that in the low-income countries, in many instances with vast populations, the citizens simply aren't in a position to consume and emit on a high per-capita basis like some of the high-income countries. You'll see a difference along those lines. I think that's a very understandable explanation for the differences in emissions.

In terms of Canada and a national sustainability plan *vis-à-vis* some of the other countries ranked, we can just hit some of the highlights in the ranking. We'll see that many of the countries that do quite well and finish ahead of Canada are either those low-income countries where a collapsed or emerging economy precludes high per-capita emissions, or they are countries that over the course of the last half decade or decade have implemented, in a way that Canada simply hasn't, a centralized mechanism for introducing environmental protection measures and achieving sustainable development.

That is not to say that Canada hasn't hit some very high spots. The Government of Canada has done some very good things moving in the direction of sustainable development. We do not need to reinvent the wheel. The problem is that these points here and there are completely uncoordinated, and they do not operate together when they're disparate in uncoordinated measures.

Secondly, they need to be augmented by additional measures. Some of the countries that have finished relatively well, such as Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and a few others, have for some time had overarching national sustainable development plans in place. That is really the nub of the difference between our ranking and their ranking.

**The Chair:** Mr. Cullen, I'm going to have to interrupt because of the ten-minute time limit.

Mr. Jean.

• (1640)

**Mr. Brian Jean (Fort McMurray—Athabasca, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you to our presenters.

My questions are for Mr. Sadik. I did read the report from the foundation and I was very impressed with it. Unfortunately, I was very disappointed with the report card we received as a nation.

You said we were well placed as a nation in this particular venture. On some of the issues I have recently discovered that come to mind, we are a very resource-based economy today. Of course, in the future we will have the second or first largest oil reserve in the world. The demand on that is going to be tremendous, especially with emissions the way they are coming currently from our resource-based industry in Alberta. We do 25% more travel than the average nation, as a result of the great expense of our nation. We require more heat and

more energy consumption just as a result of the nature of our climate. Of course, we are the most vulnerable nation to climate change.

With those things in mind, how are we well placed? Do you mean from a technological advantage? I think we start from a much different place than most nations, especially because of the relatively wild nature of most of our land. Could you comment on that? Then I have some other questions for you, please.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** As I said, I think Canada is well placed because we're a highly developed country, we have an extremely competitive and prosperous economy, we have a highly skilled workforce, and we have an abundance of resources. We have all of the tools still at our disposal to be able to move in a sustainable direction.

What's interesting is that, as stated in our report “The Maple Leaf in the OECD”, while we found that Canada has improved on 17 of the 29 environmental indicators, the rate of improvement was below the OECD average. That's surprising, because when you're already near the bottom of the pack in 1992.... It's harder to move ahead when you're already performing well, whereas Canada is performing poorly.

There's existing off-the-shelf technology the leaders in the OECD are already using, methods that have been tried. The information is out there in terms of what will succeed and what will fail, plus, when you're doing poorly, it's easier to move up simply because the low-hanging fruit is available for you.

In that sense, for the reasons I've listed and because of Canada's relatively poor ranking earlier in the 1990s, we should be in a position to make some progress, particularly *vis-à-vis* the other nations of the OECD.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** So in essence, because we started at the bottom, we've got more ability to get to the top.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** Yes, and the leaders are operating in a rarefied zone where there's less wiggle room. We have a lot of wiggle room to make mistakes as we learn and move up, yet we're not doing that. We're improving below the OECD average.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Now, I know that representatives of the foundation are very subtle in their comments, but I'm not looking for subtle comments here. What do you think about the indicators and the objectives from the national round table? What do you think is going to happen, keeping in mind what you've already said and what the track record for the last 10 years has been, in that they haven't even kept up to the average of the OECD?

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** The indicators are it's a fantastic start. We love to give credit where credit is due. We're looking to Canada in terms of the work the round table had done in connection with the indicators.

I fear, based on Canada's track record, that we will fumble the ball somewhere along the way. We will have decent indicators, but they will not be plugged into an overarching system where they can be used to their optimum capacity.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Especially in relation to the objectives, for instance, I think it was mentioned earlier that in fact the U.K. has something like forty indicators for the U.K. itself and some twenty for the balance. They have it for every department, and even at every level they have some quality indicator and some form of reward or punishment with respect to meeting the objectives. We don't have that currently.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** There's a reward system, and the indicators are an integral component of a larger structure we simply don't have here in Canada.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Thank you.

Those are my questions, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Now Mr. Bigras.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question for the representative of the United Kingdom.

I have always believed that a strategic environmental assessment must be at the very basis of any sustainable development strategy. This means that departments should be obliged to produce environmental assessments of their plans, policies and programs.

Canada adopted guidelines more than 20 years ago. Now the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development has noted that these guidelines are often disregarded.

Does the United Kingdom's Sustainable Development Strategy also include these elements of strategic environmental assessment? If so, how are departments compelled to implement environmental assessments of their plans, policies and programs?

• (1645)

[English]

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** I have a slightly multi-layered answer. Major programs under EU law—this is a new EU requirement that has just come in—have to undergo a strategic environmental assessment. That's a new requirement.

One of the things we require is we have a policy that if any government department in the U.K. issues a new policy that is going to have major impacts on the public or the private sector, they're required to publish alongside it what we call a regulatory impact assessment, an RIA. The focus, until April 2004, of those RIAs was very much on the economic impact, in particular the impact on business costs. But in April 2004 the scope of the RIAs was expanded, and now they are required, in addition to looking at economic costs and benefits, to also look at environmental costs and benefits and social costs and benefits. There is a check list, which is on the website of the cabinet office that requires this, that gives a series of questions people should ask themselves about the impact of that policy, and that has to be published.

That's relatively new. I wouldn't say it is being done everywhere or being done well everywhere. But our National Audit Office is about to audit government performance with those new regulatory impact assessments to see the extent to which that is being used.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** What makes this compulsory? Are there regulations, are there guidelines, are there any legal or regulatory obligations to proceed with strategic environmental assessment?

[English]

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** The strategic environmental assessments that are required apply to a subset of policies. Those are required under EU law. But the much more general obligation to do regulatory impact assessments is required good practice mandated by the cabinet office on government departments. That's the requirement.

Every policy proposal has to be accompanied by a regulatory impact assessment that now has to incorporate these additional features on environmental consequences and social consequences and ask other questions. For example, my department looks after the concerns of rural England, and departments have to what we call rural-proof that policy as well. This is a way of ensuring that all concerns are addressed in a policy.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Bigras.

Members, we're getting down to the last few minutes. We do have two notices of motion that we'd like to get into, so, Mr. Wilfert, I think you'll be the final five-minute questioner.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert (Richmond Hill, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank Suzuki and our friends from England for appearing today.

I just want to say in response to the Suzuki Foundation that the minister welcomed their report. The fact is that, yes, I think you made a very important distinction between the state of the environment and the issue of environmental pressures. I could, which I don't think is very helpful, get into a mug's game about all of the different indices and the fact that we've stood 5th, 4th, 6th, 3rd, etc., in the same reports where the British have been 21st, 9th, 12th, 18th, etc.

The fact is that this report doesn't, in my view, take into account a lot of the work we've done since 2002, which clearly is that, including the Species at Risk Act, we've committed over \$3.5 billion for remediation dealing with health and safety for communities and we've introduced the greenest budget in Canadian history. The list goes on and on. Clearly we are, Mr. Chairman, working with the foundation. We welcomed the report. It's a moment in time in 2002, and obviously I think it's important that we also now take into account much of the change that has gone on in government policy and initiatives over the last while. One of the dangers, Mr. Chairman, is often when we do look at any report, it is a moment in time, and the question is, what have we been doing since? If in fact since 2002 we hadn't been doing anything, I certainly would accept any criticism. But the reality is that we have been doing a lot, and a lot of this, of course, I presume, will show up, as it's shown up in other reports—whether it's the pilot “Environmental Performance Index” one or whether it's the “Ecosystem Wellbeing Index”. These have shown up.

I'd just like to get a comment, if I might, regarding the issue of a moment in time and the fact that, yes, our pressures are going to be quite different from those in some of the other countries that you measure.

• (1650)

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** In terms of the moment-in-time component, the report tracks Canada's record for the period of a decade, 1992-2002, and, as I've indicated, finds progress on 17 of 29 indicators, although progress below the rate of progress that is the OECD average, backsliding on 11 of the 29 indicators, and no change in relative position over the course of that decade.

It's not entirely accurate to say that the report represents a period in time. It represents a tracking of data collected from the same sources over the course of a decade.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** If I might, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to suggest that if many of the initiatives since 2002—policy, financial, and otherwise—had been taken into account in this report, you might have a different picture.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** That's right. The report only uses the most readily and latest available data that the OECD has, which was 2002. We'll be releasing a report again in two years that will have data up to 2004, and we can all look forward to seeing what kind of progress the Government of Canada has made in that two-year period that you're referring to.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** I know, Mr. Chairman, the government looks forward to working, as we have, with the Suzuki Foundation, and in fact they have been extremely helpful in many areas. As you know, one of the key areas for the minister has been that sustainable development and the environment are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the minister has been working very hard to do a number of the things the Suzuki Foundation, among others, has advocated. I would suggest that when we see the report in a few years we shall certainly see—I'm very confident—progress in many of the indices, because as was pointed out by Mr. McGuinty, depending on the report, different indices are used and they're not all starting from the same position. But I certainly welcome it and want to reinforce that here at the committee.

**Mr. Pierre Sadik:** Now it's on the record—your confidence in progress between now and the time of the report.

**Hon. Bryon Wilfert:** Absolutely.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Sadik and Mr. Wilfert.

At this particular time the clerk has reminded me, Ms. Rutter and Ms. Season, that the time is 10 o'clock in England, so we do appreciate the fact that you have spent this much time at this hour with our committee. On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank you for that.

Ms. Rutter, Mr. Bigras had indicated that he would like some information with respect to the process whereby the framework for sustainability was established with respect to the EU. You had undertaken that you might be able to provide some additional information on that process. Would that be possible for you to follow up on?

• (1655)

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** Just to clarify, I think his question was about how the EU managed to allocate out the national targets under Kyoto.

We'll talk to our colleagues and supply him with some information on that, although I'm not sure whether it may not just be all negotiations behind closed doors. We will see what we can do.

**The Chair:** Whatever that is, we'd appreciate receiving it, and thank you for your efforts in this respect.

**Mrs. Jill Rutter:** Surely, and thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you so much, and good night.

Thank you, Mr. Sadik.

Members of the committee, we now will deal with our notices of motion.

The first is Mr. Cullen's notice of motion. Since we're in public, perhaps I should read it.

That the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development instruct its research staff to produce a briefing in consultation with the office of the Commissioner of the Environment on the Government's response to the Committee's seventh report: *Finding the Energy to Act: Reducing Canada's Greenhouse Gas Emissions*.

Mr. Cullen.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This came out of some conversations with different committee members after we received the government response to our report, a report in which we invested a great number of meetings and months. Upon some of the analysis of the response by the government, and some of the responses being less than adequate, we've put this motion forward.

I'd also like to make a small, friendly amendment to it in the first sentence:

That the Standing Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development instruct its research staff to produce a briefing and draft response in consultation with the office of the Commissioner of the Environment—

I believe the schedule has been rejigged so that Madam Gélinas is here this Thursday.

**The Chair:** That's right.

**Mr. Nathan Cullen:** That's not in any collaboration with that. They seem to be two separate events.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Is there any discussion on that? All in favour?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll go to the second motion. Of course, our chronology will be dependent on whether we can do this.

Mr. Jean has suggested that members travel to Fort McMurray, Alberta, for a tour of the oil sands plant sites to see first-hand the issues facing the industry and the community as they relate to environmental issues.

Mr. Jean.

**Mr. Brian Jean:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just very quickly, I think the reality here is that Fort McMurray and the area is in its infancy of investment. We're expecting \$150

billion of investment there over the next four years. What better time to have an opportunity to mould it strategically from a federal perspective. It's just an amazing opportunity, and I think the committee should go there to see first-hand what we can do to help our environment.

**The Chair:** At the risk of prejudicing the discussion, I'd say this is one of the best suggestions we've had. But when?

We thank you for that, Mr. Jean.

Is there any discussion? Do we have a consensus on trying to set this up?

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.):** Do we have the budget to fly?

**The Chair:** We'll have the clerk draft up a budget, and we'll have this back. But we have a sense that we'd like to go in that direction—that's north, to Fort McMurray. The timing, obviously, will have to be worked out.

On a point of order, I have received a request from Mr. Watson to briefly go in camera. We do have about five minutes or so.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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