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Chair

Ms. Anita Neville

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• (1520)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)): I'd like to begin the meeting, please.

Welcome, Pauline Rankin. You're here to help us as we continue with our study on gender-based analysis. We're pleased that you could find the time to make yourself available, and we're anxious to hear from you.

Professor Pauline Rankin (Professor, Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's Studies): Madam Chair, it's an honour to have an opportunity to address the standing committee this afternoon. In particular, I welcome the chance to speak with you about Canada's approach to gender-based analysis.

Gender-based analysis has been described by one scholar as a deceptively simple concept that is extremely difficult to operationalize. I think that is probably something you're discovering as your proceedings unfold.

Having reviewed the evidence presented to you in previous sessions, I know that you're familiar now with the practices and processes that are under way in several government departments. I would like to contribute to the process this afternoon by offering a brief critical perspective on gender-based analysis.

My introductory comments derive from my dual experience as both an academic researcher and a gender consultant on several CIDA projects, where my specific role has been to aid the institutionalization of gender-based analysis in a number of post-Soviet countries that are undergoing dramatic public sector reform.

I've organized my remarks around four observations.

One, while Canada enjoys an enviable reputation internationally as a leader in gender mainstreaming, unfortunately there is a growing gap between our global presence in this field and the work on gender-based analysis that actually occurs in our domestic policy-making. Our efforts to export gender equality as a core Canadian value have been successful due to the fine leadership provided by CIDA, for example, and the world-renowned work of Statistics Canada in the area of gender statistics, particularly the collection of data on unpaid labour.

At home, however, there remains much to be done. Full implementation of a comprehensive gender mainstreaming strategy is hindered by, among other factors, confusion over what constitutes gender mainstreaming and a lack of sufficient understanding of gender equality issues throughout all branches of government.

There is a pressing need, I believe, for a broader definition of the concept of equality, one that encompasses equality of condition for all men and women, not just an understanding rooted in the idea of equality before the law.

Given the sex equality guarantees embedded in our charter, I think there exists the perception that Canadian women are equal enough, and therefore gender-based analysis can be dismissed—particularly in departments not typically seen as dealing with issues of direct concern to women—as an unnecessary step in policy-making that slows, complicates, and perhaps adds additional costs to an already overburdened policy process.

Two, while the adoption of GBA created new and important opportunities for integrating gender into policy-making, the shift to GBA eroded women's non-governmental organizations as legitimate intervenors in the policy process. This has meant in part that GBA has not been able to realize its full potential as an effective policy tool, given the absence of adequate participation by civil society actors.

Certainly modern governments pay lip service to the need to overcome the democratic deficit, agreeing that civil society needs to play a role in policy-making beyond just electoral participation. But because of the context within which the shift to gender-based analysis occurred, that included program review and also a focus on citizen engagement and a prioritization of service delivery rather than advocacy, women's groups throughout the 1990s increasingly perceived governments as closed to gender equality measures.

This was compounded by the contraction of women's policy machinery, including the closure of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the transfer of the women's program first to HRDC and then to Status of Women Canada, the funding cuts that I know you have already discussed, and concerns over accountability and transparency.

This is relevant for our discussions today, I believe, because these developments resulted in a serious loss of valuable advice from stakeholders about discrimination and inequality, which in turn reduced the overall pressure on the government to address women's equality needs at home. What we see now is that women's groups opt increasingly for what we call “boomerang” strategies—that is, focusing on international action with a view to hoping that somehow domestic agendas at home will be changed.

Three, certainly GBA has much to offer in terms of improved policy-making, increased predictability of policy outcomes, exposure of the gender bias embedded in allegedly gender-neutral policies, and the ability to anticipate unintended policy consequences. At the same time, however, gender-based analysis as a policy tool can lead to a very technocratic and narrow approach to policy-making that may miss the broader perspective on equality needed to protect women's right in concrete and substantive ways.

Certainly, with its promise of generating efficient policy design and outcomes, gender-based analysis is attractive given the finite resources of departments and the need to guarantee cost-effective and efficient public policy. But what has accompanied this shift to gender-based analysis is the reframing of gender analysis as a rational, scientific, and objective form of policy analysis.

We have seen the rise of what we might call the "gender expert" inside government, one who requires a familiarity with data, terminology, tools, and indicators, but who may understand gender equality only in narrow methodological terms rather than as discrimination against women, which may be very complicated in its origins.

The danger, then, is that gender-based analysis becomes a focus just on process—developing tools, training, the establishment of focal points—rather than results. Although it is important that gender analysis be accepted as a core competency of policy-making, we cannot lose sight of the constituencies that this set of tools and processes is designed to help.

This professionalization of gender analysis has also contributed to decreasing the involvement of women's groups in domestic GBA policy-making processes, as the requirement of having a highly professionalized staff capable of generating research and documentation that conforms to the expectations of gender-based analysis doesn't reflect the meagre financial resources currently available to most grassroots women's groups.

Finally, the shift from targeting women's equality to now concentrating on gender equality signalled more than just a change in terminology, moving away from discussing women to discussing gender, with a shift towards a comparative focus on the differences between men's and women's conditions in our society and the construction of how those specific roles come to pass. While this is very useful in some policy areas, it also risks homogenizing women's experiences and masks the marked differences among Canadian women and men.

So although GBA in principle specifically calls for the integration of diversity agendas into the policy process, gender-based analysis is often criticized for encouraging gender...sorry, difference neutrality, and for representing what majority women want as what all women want.

Given the privileging of internal bureaucratic expertise as outlined above, the question is whether GBA as currently practised in Canada risks reinforcing the perceptions of well-educated, predominantly white women as if they were the perceptions of all women. This can lead to policies that, while they may have been subjected technically to a gender analysis, may not meet the needs of the populations they affect.

In conclusion, while the potential benefits of gender-based analysis for Canadian women and men remain substantial, and should not be called into question, I do think we need to be clear about its more problematic aspects.

Thank you.

• (1525)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mrs. Yelich.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC): Thank you.

In your third point, you mentioned that it didn't include grassroots persons. Would you please explain a little further what you meant there?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I don't want to launch into a history lesson, but for more than a century there has been a rather enviable record of interaction between the federal government and Canadian women's groups. At times, that ability of women's groups to lobby governments effectively has marked a real high point in Canadian democracy, and has facilitated the advancements of women's rights in many meaningful ways. My concern, though, is that with the move to gender-based analysis and an internalization of the process of looking at gender equality issues, those constituencies that were once very important in generating research and information about Canadian women's realities are increasingly seeing themselves as being shut out of the process.

So when I'm talking about grassroots groups, I'm talking about community groups and women's organizations, around a variety of issues, that increasingly feel, I believe, and my research shows, gender-based analysis is too complicated a process for them to participate in any longer.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Post office closures across Canada are definitely affecting women a lot, and I'd like your opinion on whether this is a place where gender analysis should come into play. It's becoming disturbing, and women's groups are writing to me about it. I guess that's why I'm going to hit you on the grassroots, because they are concerned. They are primarily caregivers, they are primarily the people who send the cards, and they use the mail a lot, for a lot of reasons.

I want to ask you now if that's a place where gender-based analysis could be very effective and could help us as legislators have better policies.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Yes, I think so. I grew up in a farming community, and I know what it means when the person comes along to drop the mail in the mailbox, or you have a local post office. When those services are gone, sure, it has a differential effect on men and women.

My experience is that gender-based analysis can help us in a whole range of policies. The problem I see at the moment is that we have to be very careful about saying that gender-based analysis is just a new way of looking at the same issues that traditionally have been seen as women's issues. What I would like to see is a broadening of the use of gender-based analysis to look at defence, to look at security issues, to look at budgetary processes, and, sure, to look at the issue of the differential impact of post office closure and a decline in services.

I think it's critical that women's groups have a way into that process. Certainly lobbying individual members of Parliament is an important vehicle, but if we become so focused on developing sophisticated and often complex tools within departments to measure, study, and develop indicators on gender-based analysis, the local women's groups feel that they are ill-equipped to participate in that process. So the gender-based analysis becomes almost a science unto itself that really ends up excluding the very voices that government needs to hear from.

• (1530)

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Then what's the first thing you would do?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Well, I always say the first thing that needs to happen is not something within government, actually. It would be very useful if women's organizations across the country had a crash course in public administration and the policy process. I say that when I travel internationally to do this work, and here at home.

I think the mechanisms within government are alienating for women's groups. There is so much focus of activity on how to develop training tools around gender-based analysis within government that, frankly, the non-governmental sector feels left behind. They don't really understand what's going on. They feel that the process is beyond them, and that increasingly doors are closed, when they used to have at least the confidence that they could lobby departments that were interested in working on those agendas, and that they had a way in.

The Chair: Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Thank you. That's a good answer. Really, it's a very interesting way of looking at this issue.

Russia and the Ukraine, I understand, have implemented gender-based analysis. Has there been any study of the effects of that implementation? It's one thing to implement the actual tools, or the process, but what cause and effect did it have in terms of it actually happening? Did this indeed help the women to be more up in front on some of these initiatives?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I'll try to give a short answer to something about which I could talk for a long time. I've only been back from the Ukraine for about 72 hours. I have been active in Russia and the Ukraine with schools of public administration, as they're developing essentially gender mainstreaming courses within their curricula. These are then delivered to all public servants, through all levels of government, in the Ukraine. In Russia, I've worked with the labour ministry as they've implemented gender mainstreaming techniques within their policy process.

I think the short answer is that it's too early yet to see what the impact will be, but it has been very interesting to watch how quickly governments in transition states are willing to take up gender mainstreaming, for a variety of reasons, mostly because they are increasingly coming to see it as a way of ensuring that policies are targeted better, that the advice they receive is more accurate, and that the policy outcomes will be delivered in a more efficient way.

One of the things that struck me when I was working with the labour ministry in the Russian federal government was that they had a consultative body where women's organizations were consulted on a monthly basis. They were brought together as a round table at various stages of the policy process. So they were basically attached, in a way, to the labour ministry and could offer ongoing advice directly into the policy process.

It's something that we're exporting as an idea internationally, but I fear that it's not in fact happening at home.

Mrs. Joy Smith: How long have you interacted with Ukraine and Russia? What is the timeline?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Over the last six years.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Recently in Ukraine they had an election that has impacted a lot of things. Yushchenko's campaign manager was a woman, actually, and she might be the next prime minister.

Has it helped in any way, her input, or have you seen any difference there?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: She personally doesn't have a reputation as a strong promoter of women's rights.

It's interesting; one of the first things the new government did was to dismantle the existing national machinery for women. I think Ukrainian women were a bit concerned about this.

I'm also concurrently working on a project in the Republic of Georgia. When the "rose" revolution occurred there in November of 2003, the new Saakashvili government did exactly the same thing: they dismantled the existing national machinery for women. From an international perspective, I think there was a great deal of concern about that, but last November the Georgia government announced a new set of consultative mechanisms.

So I think what you'll see in Ukraine is probably a new model, but it has yet to emerge from this new administration.

• (1535)

Mrs. Joy Smith: Could you elaborate a little bit more on your previous comment, where you said that you are going internationally and you're talking about these tools that are implemented, and yet it's not happening here at home?

The Chair: I wonder if you could leave that for the next round, because we're well over our time limit now. You can come back to it.

Mrs. Joy Smith: That's fine, yes.

The Chair: Madame Brunelle.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Good afternoon, Madam.

You just told us that the civil society does not have enough of an input. I know what the civil society includes for us in Quebec, but I wonder if, for you, it includes non-profit organizations, and non-governmental organizations. What do you mean when you say that the civil society is not adequately involved? How could we make sure the civil society plays an optimal role in gender-based analysis?

This committee did not have the opportunity to hear from people outside the government like you. I would like to take advantage of your expertise in this area.

[English]

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I'm using the term "civil society" quite broadly. I mean by that the non-profit organizations and non-governmental organizations. Churches might fall into that as well. It's a broad spectrum of actors.

I think we need some new consultative mechanisms, and we need to realize that the information about gender mainstreaming and gender-based analysis as one tool of gender mainstreaming has not filtered properly, I believe, to that larger community. I'll give you an example.

Three years ago I had a delegation visiting Carleton from Russia. I had invited some representatives from a women's policy unit within the Canadian government at that time. The question arose in that seminar as to how Canadian women's groups were being consulted as these new processes of gender mainstreaming were unfolding. The representative from the Canadian women's policy unit said, very frankly, now that we're doing gender-based analysis, we're so preoccupied with the kind of training and tool-making we're doing inside government we really don't have the time to consult with women's groups any longer.

I thought this was a very honest but very disturbing comment to hear. It seems to me that one of the principles of gender-based analysis is that you do gather research as widely as possible from the actors being directly affected by the policies. I'm not sure that's happening, though, and I think both disseminating more information about what is happening inside government and thinking about new kinds of consultative mechanisms should be a priority.

That said, someone said to me before the proceedings started, "I hope you're not here to talk about more money". I don't actually think the solution as to how to better utilize gender-based analysis requires increased resources. I don't think it's a resource issue. I think it's an information and communication issue. It requires a kind of political will that we're not seeing across the government. We're seeing it in some quarters, but not in others.

The Chair: Madame Brunelle, two more minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Certainly, women's associations told us that the fact operating budgets are no more at the level of committees is indeed a problem.

Is it not too much to ask from those women's group to make a gender-based analysis when they get their funding by project only? Is this not something that prevents them from doing this gender-based analysis?

[English]

Prof. Pauline Rankin: That is my point. That is precisely my point. The way in which the core funding was cut from women's organizations throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s I think seriously compromised the ability of women's groups to generate the kind of research and the kind of briefs that are needed to guarantee them a voice within Canadian policy-making.

I can tell you that there has been a great deal of interest about the first report of the standing committee and the recommendations to increase funding to women's groups. It has been met, within the communities that I know, with great enthusiasm and hope.

You're right, to be able to technically respond to the demands of gender-based analysis, which is a highly specialized tool, it requires the kind of expertise and resources that in the last few years hasn't been available to Canadian women's groups, largely.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Powers.

Mr. Russ Powers (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Lib.): Thank you for attending, Dr. Rankin.

Is there a "one size fits all" for gender-based analysis? I don't know where you're going here; perhaps within government agencies or within bureaucracies or within businesses and so on there's a way of doing it, and perhaps there are other ways for NGOs.

Could you perhaps expand on that? I sensed there was an underlying current to your remarks, and I would welcome you to build on them.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: There was. There's always a subtext with an academic, right?

There are five recommendations I would make. I don't know if this is the appropriate time for me to present them, but if you would like me to, I'm happy to do it.

To be successful, gender-based analysis needs strong champions. It needs strong champions at the political level and it needs strong champions within the highest level of Canadian bureaucracy. I think those champions are pivotal to whether or not gender-based analysis works.

What I am seeing in some of the former Soviet Union countries—this is very interesting to me—is that gender-based analysis is being championed at some fairly high levels, at the level of ministers, high-profile ministers, who are willing to take this seriously. Now, undoubtedly some of that is probably due to donor pressure, or it may be due to what the World Bank wants from these individual countries, but the fact that there are men and women who are willing to champion this is pivotal.

I think we need structures and mechanisms in place that are stable and well positioned within a bureaucracy. Countries where we see gender-based analysis as being the most effective are usually places where the national machinery is linked to some kind of central decision-making within government. It's within the equivalent of a PCO. It's within the prime minister's office. It's lodged somewhere at the nexus of decision-making. And that is a challenge for here in Canada.

I've made the point that I think there needs to be renewed attention to how to re-engage civil society in this process. We also need, in Canada, to broaden the scopes of departments that are taking up GBA in a serious manner. It's not surprising that we find institutionalized attention to gender-based analysis in those departments that are charged with policy areas that were traditionally seen as "women's issues"—quote, unquote—but we need to be moving towards institutionalizing gender-based analysis in meaningful ways in fiscal policy, in trade policy, and in defence.

I think Canada needs to demonstrate leadership here as well. For example, there are already 40 countries worldwide that are seriously experimenting with some sort of gender-responsive budgeting. I can't say in good faith that Canada is one of those.

Finally, accountability mechanisms must be established and enforced—I'm sure you've heard this from previous witnesses—with departmental audits, for example, to measure progress. To assign ownership of who is ultimately responsible for results is critical, as is to be able to measure progress in a systematic way.

For example, in Norway, their recent gender equality act requires departments to provide an annual account of the measures they have implemented to promote gender equality.

To weave back to your original question, no, one size does not fit all. We see marked differences in how gender mainstreaming and gender-based analysis is implemented in different countries. To my mind, a fundamental principle of gender analysis is that you have to take into context the environment within which you're working. It should be sensitive to different cultural constraints, for example.

We have an opportunity here. The Council of Europe in 1998 published a list of what it saw as important to the success of gender mainstreaming. It was a list of about six factors. Canada really had, to my mind, all but two; one was political will at the highest level of government and the other was accountability mechanisms. To my mind, if those two things could be implemented more effectively, gender mainstreaming would have a better chance of realizing its potential.

I have to say that I have perhaps a somewhat schizophrenic relationship to it. When I'm in Canada I criticize how it's done here, and when I'm abroad I promote it.

I do think it has tremendous potential. It's just a work-in-progress.

• (1545)

Mr. Russ Powers: Building on the question, then, we've found, in the brief time we've had of individuals like you coming in to participate, that it's not an easy process. We had a very brief introduction to it as part of the training. You have to be in the right mindset to participate. The process to go through is very intensive.

Perhaps that's appropriate when we're doing this within ministries or departments. But for me, at first blush, is this ever difficult to get your head wrapped around. My concern, whether it's church groups or NGOs or so on, who should be thinking this way, is that what we're playing out is much too difficult. Are there ways of...such as introductory, intermediate, advanced, and so on?

Perhaps I'm being much too simplistic, but this is a challenge.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: No, I think you've identified a core problem. I think there's a fundamental misunderstanding of what it is we're talking about. My concern is that we are so preoccupied with terminology—tools, training, indicators, evaluative techniques—but at some level we still don't have a shared understanding of what it is we're even talking about.

I can give you a one-minute anecdote, if you'll allow me, from an experience I had in Russia. I had done a briefing with a fairly senior official about gender analysis, and I'd thought we'd made the point. When we went back to our hotel, we turned on the television. The gentleman was being interviewed, and he talked about "tender" analysis, which he'd just learned about that afternoon—tender meaning that you had to be really nice to women, and gentle with them. That was an issue of lost in translation, if you will, but it seems to me that some of that goes on here too.

In answer to your question, it's a very complicated, multi-layered problem, that's for sure. It does require us not just to be training people who work within departments on what this means. The fact that you're even having this discussion, and that this standing committee exists, I think is a marked step forward, but we need to have positive messages about the necessity of gender mainstreaming and an understanding of what the issues are, coming from the highest level of government.

Mr. Russ Powers: Dr. Rankin, if you could share your presentation with the clerk, so that it can be translated and distributed to us afterwards, we would certainly appreciate it.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Sure.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your presentation.

I think one of the things many people thought around GBA was that we were so dismayed about the ongoing challenges many women faced, it was a grasping of straws; you know, GBA was going to be the magic solution that brought women into true equality. Over the last several weeks, a couple of things we've heard from groups have really in part addressed that issue around lack of meaningful consultation. We've heard from departments—CIC, HRSDC, and Social Development—around the fact that they perceive that they do engage in meaningful consultation. After CIC was in, I went out to one of the national immigrant women's groups, and they've never even been called, let alone consulted.

In terms of this last budget, people talked about the fact that it was going to be subjected to a gender lens. I mentioned when I came in that we did a really quick word count on the budget speech. Now, a word count is not going to indicate whether there's gender equality, not by any stretch of the imagination, but in the speech, women were mentioned twice, gender was not mentioned at all, equality was mentioned once, and employment was mentioned once.

So if we were going to have a meaningful process around a gender budget, if you could wave a magic wand, what would that look like? If we truly had a budget that reflected the...and I don't mean the content, I'm talking about process.

I'm not asking you to rewrite the government budget—although I'd love for you to do that.

• (1550)

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I don't think you would, actually.

We have many models internationally. The Commonwealth Secretariat has produced a series of documents on how to develop a gender budget initiative. The consultative process could take a variety of forms, but I think what's interesting is when a country's budgetary process has a parallel process—that is, a gender analysis is occurring as budgetary decisions are being made.

For example, in South Africa we have the South Africa women's budget initiative, where at each stage of the budgetary process those analyses are done. They're published. They're discussed within Parliament. There is ongoing attention to how revenues and expenditures are going to have a differential impact on women and men.

Ms. Jean Crowder: You say South Africa does this already?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: There are over 40 countries doing it.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Really.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Yes.

Ms. Jean Crowder: So it's a two-way....

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Sometimes it's done as a parallel process.

Ms. Jean Crowder: But the input is meaningful, and considered, and integrated...?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Yes. Ironically, some of the most effective gender budgeting is happening in African countries at the moment—Tanzania, Uganda, and South Africa is certainly a leader.

The concept of gender budgeting goes back to the mid-eighties. It started in Australia with the production of a women's budget. So there is much international evidence and research from which to draw when we think about this.

From reading your earlier evidence, I know there was mention here of FAFIA's analysis of past budgets. So that information is certainly becoming available in the Canadian context as well.

Ms. Jean Crowder: You talked about political will and accountability mechanisms as being two key things. So what's getting in our way?

I think many of us on the committee have felt very frustrated around the fact that we see the evidence of lack of...but we can't seem to make the movement to get us to the next step.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: This is ironic, perhaps, but I think it's because gender equality is already largely accepted as a core Canadian value. There is an assumption that gender equality already exists in Canada.

It seems that we have been in somewhat of a post-charter malaise for the past 20-odd years, as we assumed that the issue was already taken care of. Now to return to that issue again, and to have to come clean with the fact that there are still gross inequalities in this country....

I mean, if I'm sort of waxing philosophic about it, I would say it's part of the Canadian condition that we assume equality already exists, and it's very difficult for us to think that we still have a ways to go.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith: I'll go back to the question I was going to ask before.

I can't recall exactly how you stated it, but you made an comment inadvertently about...and in part you've already answered this. The connotation was that you are going out internationally, you are promoting gender analysis tools, things like that, and this concept, and yet you're disappointed that here in this country, the implementation stage has not come to the point where you want it to be.

Could you elaborate on that a bit?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Sometimes it's embarrassing, frankly, to be in an international context, to give seminars on how one integrates gender mainstreaming throughout a policy process, and then to have colleagues in other countries say, "So explain how the gender budgeting process occurs in Canada", and have virtually nothing to say about that.

I also think we have seen departments with long histories of women's units—I'm thinking of HRDC, in its previous manifestation—working on gender mainstreaming for several years and still being at the level of designing tools rather than implementing them.

CIDA has a long history of leadership in this, thinking back to integrating women into the development processes, going back to the 1970s. The kind of work that CIDA is able to promote and support internationally, using gender as a crosscutting theme, integrating it in development projects in interesting ways, is not matched by some of the work that's happening domestically. And it's only when you're put in that position that the contrast becomes even more stark for you.

• (1555)

Mrs. Joy Smith: Well, I commend you on some of the comments you're making, because I think it's very clear what you're stating.

You also made a very interesting comment about women's organizations taking a crash administration course to be able to get in on some of the processes in job-related initiatives and things like that, and getting women's organizations aware of that. I think what you're saying is that it's great to have the tools, but we have to implement it rather quickly and bring this up in the forefront.

What would be your recommendations to allow that to happen in women's organizations? What can we do? Here you are going across into other countries, with money to make sure these tools are known and that kind of thing, but what can we do here that might help it?

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I'd like to see departments share with their constituencies some of their own tools, practices, thinking, and research on gender mainstreaming. I guess the sense I have is that we are so focused internally on the processes within departments we've lost sight of who the constituencies are and the ability to share with them what's actually going on within government.

So I would like to see work on gender mainstreaming opened up to the larger communities so that women's NGOs.... I mean, many of them don't know what gender-based analysis is. They don't understand what evaluation tools are being developed. They don't understand how that training is happening. So sharing that with the very constituencies that in turn can be most helpful in the actual process I think is critical.

There's also a gap in our educational system. We want to be sure that....

I understand that the new Canada public service institute is now interested in integrating gender analysis into its program of study. I think that's very important. But the truth is that in a large majority of public administration schools, for example, in this country there's virtually no attention to gender analysis. So those people who are graduating with advanced degrees in public policy and public administration can certainly still get a degree in Canada and have no sense of what gender mainstreaming is all about.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Savage.

Mr. Michael Savage (Dartmouth—Cole Harbour, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Welcome, Dr. Rankin. I'm not normally a member of this committee, but I jumped at the opportunity to come today and learn a little bit more about GBA.

I have three questions. I'll state them up front and let you answer. They may be short snappers.

One, have any provinces strayed into GBA in their decision-making or policy-making?

Two, have any corporations in the world, or in Canada, made an effort to use GBA in making policy—for example, banks, utilities anybody like that?

My final question may have been answered, but which model is the best in the world? You mentioned Tanzania, I think, some of the other African nations, and Australia.

Thank you.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: In terms of provinces, I think we have to look to Quebec. I know that the committee has heard about the way in which the Quebec government has sponsored pilot projects, in a variety of sectors, to work not across government on how to implement gender analysis but to look in specific sectoral areas. I think some important work is being done there.

Certainly if the committee was interested in that, I could suggest witnesses who would be able to speak to this better than I could. Certainly, Quebec is a leader in it.

I think corporations have been using gender mainstreaming for a long time. I always use the example of when car companies started to realize that women bought cars; suddenly the ads changed, and women started to sell cars on lots. The private sector knows that this is important, and they understood that a long time ago. If you want to make a profit, you want to know who your audience is and you want to target appropriately.

I don't know about Canadian banks, but I do think that retailers probably have something to tell us about how gender analysis works in their decision-making processing.

Best examples? It depends on what you're looking for. If I were to suggest countries where we want to find examples of how gender mainstreaming is implemented government-wide, I think we're looking to Nordic countries, particularly Sweden and Norway. The example I gave of Tanzania was specifically around the budget issue.

So it depends on what we're looking for. Someone recommended to me lately to shy away from using "best" practices and to move to "better" practices. I don't think, as your colleague stated, that one practice fits all, or that we can just say that if only we could import what Norway was doing, we'd be fine here. Ours is a complicated place, with a complicated population and a complicated political system. We need to be drawing examples from all around the world.

• (1600)

Mr. Michael Savage: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Madame Bonsant.

[Translation]

Ms. France Bonsant (Compton—Stanstead, BQ): Good afternoon.

Next week, the Beijing+10 conference will be held in New York. The first conference of this nature was held 10 years ago, in 1995.

Could you tell me, in view of your experience travelling in many countries, where Canada stands in the world, as to the way the GBA is implemented? Are we behind other countries, ahead of them or just average? Is one of these answers the good one?

[English]

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Well, we're certainly ahead in talking a lot about it. And I don't mean that to be as facetious as it might sound. We've made considerable progress in developing analytic tools. I think we're recognized internationally as leaders in training and in developing effective training programs. I think we lag seriously behind in the area of budgeting. If we were to talk about what is the central issue on the international agenda around gender mainstreaming, it is what's called gender-responsive budgeting, and I don't think Canada has made effective progress there at all.

Again, there is this gap between Canada's very strong reputation internationally as a defender and promoter of gender equality, but that's different from saying, "And what are we doing at the level of policy?" That's what I mean by gap.

[Translation]

Ms. France Bonsant: Does that mean that we are not so bad, that there are countries which are in a worse or a better position than we are?

[English]

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Yes, of course.

[Translation]

Ms. France Bonsant: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. France Bonsant: Do we have a little bit of time left?

[English]

The Chair: You have a little more time, yes.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: We realize that we are equal in terms of rights, but certainly not in concrete terms. It is really difficult to be equal in fact, and I think the purpose of this committee is to have a look at this.

But you are telling us that we should involve high-level champions to finally mainstream gender-based analysis, and to mainstream it in the budget process, where it really counts.

How can we involve these high-level champions? Did you notice examples in other countries?

[English]

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I'd be a very wealthy consultant if I'd figured that out.

One champion, actually, and some people might disagree with me on this, has been the president of the World Bank. During his time in office, James Wolfensohn has offered a great deal of leadership in the area of gender mainstreaming. Apparently, that derived in part from the fact that he attended the Beijing conference in 1995 and recognized that this was an area that was of great significance in terms of international development.

That said, the World Bank is arguing for progress on gender mainstreaming from a different set of arguments than I might make myself. They're looking for how to ensure that market economies emerge effectively. They're arguing on an efficiency and an effectiveness argument, whereas my own position might be to argue for the importance of gender mainstreaming along social justice lines.

Be that as it may, he has been someone who has been instrumental in an incredibly important international institution in furthering work attention to gender mainstreaming.

As to how we do it here at home, I guess I could say that those of you who are active in your own political parties are an important vehicle for perhaps getting the attention of senior officials who need to become part of the solution.

•(1605)

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I don't know if you're familiar with the work that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been doing. The federation has been doing a substantial amount of work over the last couple of years around trying to increase women's involvement in political processes. It's not just around being elected; it's around how women get involved and engaged in the decision-making. They've identified a whole number of barriers to women becoming involved. Some of it's timing, some of it's not understanding the administrative process, some of it's just the unfriendliness of the very formal processes.

I wondered if you'd come across other models that talked about effective involvement of women in decision-making. I know you alluded to things like the crash course, and parallel processes, but I wondered if there were other concrete things you saw that really opened up the doors for women to be involved.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: I don't have with me the name of the group, but there is a group that's active here in Ottawa at the level of municipal government. It's been doing some interesting work in terms of developing workbooks on how to facilitate women's involvement in the process, and have followed, for example, the city budgetary process. It's had some significant success, I'd say, in terms of mobilizing women to at least pay attention to what's happening at the level of City of Ottawa and then to start to make inroads there.

I recently received an excellent facilitator's workbook with a series of exercises, role plays, and things like that to help women develop both the skills and the confidence to involve themselves in those kinds of processes. But you're right, it's not just about....

Obviously, having women involved in the decision-making process is important, but I have to say that my experience internationally says that the involvement of supportive male champions is equally critical. One of the reasons, I think, that gender mainstreaming has been taken up with such gusto in some of the post-Soviet countries is the realization that gender analysis can be beneficial to men as well. In Canada we tend to collapse gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming into really thinking about how it can prove women's rights. That's not necessarily the model that's used everywhere. In a post-Soviet context, one could argue around things like men's life expectancy, pension issues, and occupational health and safety, for example, that the impact of transition has been even more devastating on them.

The idea that gender mainstreaming could improve their lives certainly generates a lot of enthusiasm and interest. It's about buy-in, I suppose. If both men and women feel that better policy-making can improve their own lives, it's a much easier path toward making change.

Ms. Jean Crowder: One of the people in my constituency works with a group called Safer Futures. It's funded by Justice, I think. It's a very good program. What they talk about is that as we make communities safer for women and children, we make them safer for everyone. If we use an example like employment insurance, it's not just women who are disadvantaged by the part-time seasonal requirements; men who work part time seasonally are also disadvantaged.

•(1610)

Prof. Pauline Rankin: That's another example of the gap between Canada's international work and what happens at home. Certainly CIDA's approach has been to support projects where gender equality is understood as improving the lives of men and women, and to look at the way in which power is divided among women and men and social roles are constructed.

Again, I often find myself in the position where I'm talking about how gender mainstreaming will be able to improve the lives of men in whatever country, and then people ask me: How is it applied to men's lives at home? Why do you still call your national machinery Status of Women instead of Status of Gender?

Also complicating the whole process is the fact that the terminology is applied in different ways in different places.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Torsney.

Hon. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): Well, as the PS for CIDA, I'm glad to see it getting so many kudos.

I guess the challenge you talk about...and you've mentioned some of the emerging African countries, emerging in terms of their economies. They have a much easier time in setting up something new that's equal. You know, when we talk about the South African constitution, it's gender-equal in terms of the representation of men and women. In this place, we're still struggling to get political parties to even put on their agenda a certain number of candidates that are women.

You say that the business community is doing a good job, but I'd argue the opposite. Pick up Monday's *National Post* business section. Yes, there's a nice young woman on the front, and yes, there's one other woman in a group shot, but of the entire 25 pictures of people—I think it was about capital markets—there were just those two women.

So in many sectors, we're not seeing women in the business community rising to the top areas. The car thing is great, because there were two women presidents of Canadian car companies, Ford and GM. Guess what? GPS and all those new modern technologies were there because they figured they needed to sell to women—and then the guys thought they were kind of cool to have in their cars.

You were talking about the World Bank; Wolfensohn's done a great job. They've done it because they're using some of the language on investment. You want to have more successful entrepreneurs? Better make sure women are in your entrepreneurial class.

I haven't seen them lately, but the Canadian documents for our support of the World Bank are all about the role of women, because it works, and there was probably heavy influence from CIDA. I guess the challenge, too, is that maybe...

Don't get me wrong, I'm all for increasing the number of gender-based analysis processes. I think that's an amazing recommendation we could make, that every master's of public administration course in Canada should have a core subject in gender-based analysis, so that we do start having young people who enter the workplace and civil services, at the provincial and federal levels, educated. But if we

only look at whether the process was there or whether the outcomes were there, that's a bit of a challenge too.

The seniors initiative isn't listed as being a women's initiative in the budget, yet we're going to see more women benefit from the increase in GIS that's coming faster. We're going to see more women in the 240,000 Canadian seniors who are taken off the tax rolls. They're the poorer seniors, and they end up being seniors longer. So it isn't listed as a women's initiative, but it in fact is a women's initiative.

So how do we manage to give ourselves encouragement and credit for the things that are in fact occurring, and how do we continue to create the champions? Maybe it's that we need to use some of the language so that the boys do buy in.

Finally, in terms of anecdotes, I recall being vice-chair of finance, and they were going to schedule a meeting on Hallowe'en night. I was saying, "No, guys, you all have young kids, don't you want to get home?" And it was like, "Oh, that's a really good idea. Who would have thought?" I don't have children; I'm not going anywhere on Hallowe'en. They don't even know how to improve their own lives, these poor guys.

So maybe we need to be doing something about family-friendly environments, and that will have an outcome.

•(1615)

Prof. Pauline Rankin: You covered a lot of territory in that comment.

I want to go back and clarify what I said about the private sector. I'm not championing the private sector as a leader in gender equality. What I said was that we have some interesting examples of how corporations see the value of gender-targeted marketing or whatever.

Just to clarify that, it's interesting to me that the private sector understands that you can improve the bottom line by taking gender into account. Unfortunately, government is having a hard time understanding that it can improve the bottom line by taking gender into account, too.

I agree with everything you said. It is important to figure out how people can understand that gender analysis can improve not only the country but also their own personal lives. Making the link between better families and a better country is really important.

We haven't talked a lot about results, but as I did say in my opening comments, which I know I raced through because I wanted to get them all in, we have to be more focused on results. Where there are places where there have been policy outcomes that were subjected to gender analysis...and we'll see what happens with Citizenship's initiatives. Where it works, we want to publicize it. We want to make sure that people understand that this is the difference that has happened.

The New Zealand guide on gender-based analysis offers a specific example of what happens if you have a pension scheme that doesn't take gender into account and what happens if you do. It works through every stage of the policy process to demonstrate to policy-makers what is the value added and what are the shortcomings if you leave gender out.

I don't believe, in the manuals that were developed here, when gender analysis started to be adopted by governments, we had those kinds of good, concrete case studies to show people what happens when you do it and what happens if you don't. I know that Status of Women is working on case studies. Those can be really valuable to demonstrate to people, in concrete terms, what it means to add a gender analysis to your policy process.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: In terms of outcomes, it's perhaps anecdotal, but it was interesting that Australia apparently has done gender analysis. I hear from young women engineers that you would never want to work there as an engineer, as a female engineer, because it apparently has an incredibly sexist workplace. And yet I don't think that kind of stuff generally occurs in a Canadian engineering firm, for instance.

So they may have some process, but they don't have an outcome.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Yes. The case of Australia is an interesting tale, because, as I said before, it was a pioneer in women's budgeting in the mid-eighties, but when governments changed and the wind of neo-liberalism took over Australian politics, the budgetary process went back to being non-gendered. They have more recently closed their women's bureaucracy.

At one point, the Australian national machinery for women was accepted worldwide as the strongest. It was lodged within the Office of the Prime Minister. It was incredibly effective. But again, as governments changed, that machinery was dismantled.

So it goes back to the one point I did make, that a stable—well-funded, I will say—government machinery for women that has some clout rather than just being in an advisory capacity is really important to make sure that this gender mainstreaming occurs effectively throughout.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any other questions? I think everybody has had at least one round.

Do you have one more, Mrs. Yelich?

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: I just want to make a comment about Citizenship, seeing that you brought it up. We had a presentation about gender analysis. I found that pretty soon we were talking about racial profiling, so I don't know....

I guess, as you said, it's very hard to define gender analysis. I wonder if perhaps we're asking for too much in a country like Canada, so big and diverse. I find we start analyzing things by regions and by races, and then also in immigration we started talking about racial profiling.

How can we call that gender analysis, and how can we stay on track with gender analysis, then? That's when Status of Women was here and they gave a presentation.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: Just for clarification, it wasn't...it was the security bill.

•(1620)

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Right.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: The law was about security, and in this current security environment, people were commenting that it

appeared that there was more focus on certain races than others. But I don't think immigration—

The Chair: Let me just ask Ms. Rankin to comment, please—

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Still, the presentation was about gender-based analysis.

The Chair: It was gender-based analysis as it applied to the security act. It was a workshop.

I don't know whether you've read the blues on it, Ms. Rankin, or not.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: No.

The Chair: Oh, right; I'm sorry, it was in camera.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: Then let's hope you haven't read them.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Yes.

The Chair: Go ahead and comment.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: You pose a question that is relevant to not just this committee; I think it's a question that's debated very hotly within women's organizations—that is, whether or not gender analysis is the right form of analysis or if we should be moving to some kind of an integrated analysis that picks up gender, race, age, sexual orientation.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: [*Inaudible*]...when you said “family”. You brought in the family, how men, if they lost their jobs through unemployment, weren't able to support their families. Sometimes I think we probably are trying to oversimplify it by calling it gender analysis. Really, we should be analyzing legislation as it impacts on our citizens.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: My only concern is that what we've seen....

Take Britain, for example. They used to have a women's equality unit and they are now moving to an equality unit, where they're going to try to put everything together in one national machinery that will look at all those issues of difference together.

I don't want women's voices to be lost in that process, though. My concern is that when we start to collapse all the different kinds of differences together, and treat this in monolithic way, the reality of women's lives gets lost. I'm concerned that if we say, at one point in the policy process, we'll just look at all the differences—we'll look at age, we'll look at region, we'll look at gender, we'll look at race—then every time we put all those kinds of differences together we'll lose some nuance, lose attention to what people's lives are actually like.

Some people would argue that the move to gender analysis has homogenized things—you know, women versus men, so women are just a single category. My concern is that if we then pile on all those other kinds of differences into one lens, we lose a lot of the precision of policy that might come from separating out those differences.

Now, it's easy for me to say that as an academic. It's much harder to implement as a policy-maker. But I think it is important that the fact that Canadian women continue to be discriminated against in a variety of ways doesn't get lost in a discussion of how we build more sophisticated gender mainstreaming tools.

The Chair: Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: This isn't a question, I just want to clarify something.

When I was talking about the two references in the budget to women, one of them was the GIS, where women were specifically targeted as being one of the beneficiaries of that. That was one of the mentions. The other mention was around small business.

Those were the two times in the budget that women were mentioned.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: *[Inaudible]*

Ms. Jean Crowder: Yes, there are other impacts in the budget on women's lives. It's just that I don't think it was subjected to the gender analysis.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: I know; it didn't get mentioned.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I mean, absent from the budget was the request this committee put forward around increased funding to Status of Women for women's programs. Heritage got additional funds, but not for women.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: We'll continue to work on that.

The Chair: Ms. Rankin, let me just say thank you. I think you've brought together today many days of testimony both on this issue and prior to beginning the gender-based analysis study. We heard some of that from the groups that came forward, and you sort of brought it all together and synthesized it in a way that was really very clear and lucid.

I can't thank you enough, and we may call on you again.

Prof. Pauline Rankin: Thank you. It was my pleasure.

The Chair: We are adjourned.

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