House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

FAAE • NUMBER 011 • 1st SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

● (1535)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): I call to order this meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), study on Canada's role in complex international interventions that involve multiple foreign policy instruments focusing on Canada's efforts in Haiti.

As we continue our study on Haiti, today, in the first section of our meeting, we will hear from SOS Children's Villages Canada: Boyd McBride, the national director; and Stefan Paquette, the director of overseas programs.

We will also hear from the Canadian Foundation for the Americas. John W. Graham is here. He is the president of the board of directors.

We look forward to your comments and observations.

We normally open this with 10 or 15 minutes of time that's given to our guests, and then we will go into a period of questions, where every member is given five minutes, which includes the question and the answer. So we want to be concise in our questions.

Welcome here. The time is yours.

Mr. Boyd McBride (National Director, SOS Children's Villages Canada): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and committee members. I appreciate the opportunity to address you on the subject of Haiti and its broader implications for Canada's foreign policies.

Stefan Paquette and I are here representing SOS Children's Villages, as you've indicated, Mr. Chair.

SOS is the world's largest orphan-serving charity, and SOS Children's Villages Canada is a small element in the larger international organization. I'd like to introduce you to my organization and its work in Haiti, and then offer some observations on the evolving relationship we see between Haiti and Canada.

SOS Children's Villages was founded in western Europe after World War II, as a result of the very large numbers of orphaned children there—orphans of war. Now we operate in 132 countries around the world, including Haiti. We have continued to focus in all of our work on children at risk, primarily those who have literally nothing and no one to turn to. Sadly, I'd have to say we're busier than ever.

We do what the development community often refers to as poverty alleviation work, community development work—or what we often call family strengthening—from our social centres and from what we call our villages, or clusters of homes in which orphaned and abandoned children grow up. But we also operate kindergartens, schools, vocational training centres, medical centres, a range of facilities focused on helping to develop, what we like to think of as, whole children. So it's not just a feeding program or an emergency response, but a commitment to developing whole young adults. We had about 800,000 beneficiaries around the world last year.

If I can turn your attention to Haiti now, we know that Haiti is a troubled country. John and I were just talking about the kinds of struggles the country has faced over many years now. We hope that the recent election of René Préval will provide some of the much-needed stability that our organization, and every other NGO working in Haiti, would benefit from.

We've been working in Haiti since 1979, so we're well rooted in the country. We're staffed locally and we're run as a local non-governmental organization. In Haiti we operate two SOS villages, half a dozen schools, two youth facilities, four poverty alleviation programs, or a range of activity, all of which I think you'd be very proud to be involved with.

The crisis of the last few years has eroded government's ability to work effectively in that country. We've experienced that crisis firsthand; SOS Haiti had one staff member kidnapped and two of our vehicles stolen just last year.

The kind of situation that now exists in Haiti has prompted us as an organization to shift our focus slightly—not from serving children at risk, but shifting to what we're now calling poverty alleviation programming, outside of our traditional village operations. So some of it is community outreach work at its finest. We also work on education—the vocational training—and other necessary services to help young Haitians grow up and be able to make a contribution back to their communities.

I have four key points I'd like to make before we break into questions. The first is that we believe Canada must continue to take an active role in that country. I sense that our new government in Canada is very much committed to that. Canada has claimed a long-standing special relationship with Haiti, and there are all kinds of reasons for that: economic, political, geographical, and even linguistic links. Today we've got a very large Haitian community in Canada, adding to the notion of links between our countries.

We also understand and support the fact that the Canadian government is now playing a lead role in this pilot testing. I don't know a lot about this, but the pilot testing of the OECD's "Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States" could be very exciting for Haiti, and I think for all of us, as we watch it develop.

The second point I'd like to make is that we believe Haiti represents really a wonderful opportunity for Canada to do several things: to model a new integrated model of support and involvement; to demonstrate its commitment to enhancing living standards in our own western hemisphere, serving the poorest citizens of the poorest country in our own backyard; an opportunity to acknowledge that it's going to take time and a serious long-term commitment to achieve meaningful results.

There will be no silver bullet in this, and there will certainly be no quick fixes. We're very much aware of that, with our many years of involvement in the country.

It's also, and finally, an opportunity to work together with other interested nation states, multilateral agencies, and international NGOs such as my own. The Canadian government, even in a small country like Haiti, can't possibly be expected to bring to the table all the resources necessary to achieve the kind of success and development we would all like to see.

My third point is that to seize what I see as this golden opportunity, I think our current Parliament and our new government are going to have to do a couple of things. We're going to have to see the many departments and agencies of our government that can contribute to this challenge commit themselves to really working together. I don't think it's going to work if we end up with silos and fiefdoms. We can't have unilateral decisions by a particular group or agency of government.

The second thing the government, I believe, will have to do is continue to bring more resources to the table and look at creative ways to encourage other nations, NGOs, multilateral funders, to step up too, to leverage the resources the Canadian government generously commits.

Good government-to-government programs aren't going to be enough. I don't think good governance and security programs are going to be enough—absolutely necessary, but not sufficient. We're going to need more, and a lot more, grassroots community development work in Haiti. Organizations such as l'Association villages d'enfants SOS Haïti is just one of many organizations that are going to have to find a lot more support if we're going to achieve what I think many of us would like to see in that country.

We're going to have to also develop, in partnership with the Government of Haiti and other interested parties, a collective, and I think it's going to have to be an inspiring vision of just what it is we would like to see five or ten years out in that country. If we can set a vision and then commit the resources to achieving that vision, we will probably have a great deal more success than with ad hoc measures.

My final point—I said I had four—was that SOS Children's Villages is eager to do more community development work in Haiti with families at risk there. Some people call it poverty alleviation. We call it family strengthening, but essentially it's funding and technical support for the work our organization has been doing and will continue to do for many more years.

We at SOS Canada are prepared to step into this, working within our international federation, if we can work in partnership with the Canadian government. I think there's a wonderful opportunity there.

Our focus in Haiti and in 131 other countries around the world has historically been on at-risk children and youth, and that will remain our focus in Haiti over the next 25 and 50 years.

Those are my opening remarks, and I hope Stefan and I are in a position to answer questions or perhaps encourage some discussion amongst you.

● (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. McBride.

Mr. Graham has a presentation.

Mr. John Graham (President, Board of Directors, Canadian Foundation for the Americas): Thank you.

As Boyd said, we were talking at the outset about the panorama perspective of Haiti. I first visited Haiti over 40 years ago at the time of "Papa Doc" Duvalier. I've been back on and off for different reasons over the years. With just a few bumps upward, it hasn't been a very happy 40 years, and it hasn't been a happy 50 years. In many ways, conditions have actually slid over that time.

One of the periods of bright expectations was the election of Jean-Bertrand Aristide, some 15 years ago. Those hopes were quickly extinguished, and once again we're into a period of expectations. Fortunately there are some—a few—success stories, but even a few success stories in Haiti is something that is unusual and gives us cause for gentle rejoicing.

In welcome contrast to this long period of frustration, Canada has had some success in efforts to support redevelopment in Haiti. The most notable successes were in December 2004, at the Montreal conference with the Haitian diaspora, and also in September 2005, at a meeting at Meech Lake, chaired by former Prime Minister Joe Clark, with Enrique Iglesias, the former president of the Inter-American Development Bank President, Robert Greenhill, the president of CIDA, and a number of members of the Haitian private sector. Both of these Canadian-led initiatives opened new areas of support for the redevelopment of Haiti by strengthening the role of non-traditional actors.

The biggest success of late has been the elections. The importance of these elections was driven home by the recent visit of the newly elected president, René Préval. Haitians from all over the Haitian political spectrum came to an event with Mr. Préval. Some were invited; some were not, which usually happens. What was unusual about this was that they were not hurling insults at each other.

In the past, high-profile events on Haiti have almost invariably been marked either by mass boycotts or protests. This did not happen with the Préval visit, and that is an important indicator that something has been accomplished and an opportunity now presents itself. With a legitimately elected government, with reasonably widespread popular support and support among donors, the conditions are finally in place to make some progress in rebuilding. The window of opportunity is there, but it is fragile and can shut very easily.

I'd like to turn now to the present situation in Haiti and several key issues.

Haiti is—and this is almost a cliché—at a critical juncture. Successful elections and the inauguration of a new government have created this extraordinary window of opportunity, in addition to raising these expectations and also expectations among hundreds of thousands of Haitians in the diaspora in Canada and other countries. For the first time in over a decade, there is a glimmer of light at the end of this dark Haitian tunnel. There is a similar feeling among donors. Yet all of this can fall apart easily if action is not taken to link the electoral success to tangible, visible improvements in the material conditions of life in Haiti.

● (1545)

The next four months of the Préval administration are critical. Over this period, it is essential that the Haitians observe visible improvement. If this doesn't occur, critics of the new president will be able to feed off public disillusionment and the country will fall back again, and as that happens, an enormous amount of investment money, ours included, will have been lost, as a lot of our money has been lost over the past 20 years in efforts over that period to rebuild Haiti.

We have a choice: to do what is necessary to move things forward, or allow things to slip backwards. The first is a challenge to leadership and the process-driven wheels of donor bureaucracy; the cost of slipping back is, of course, increased instability and further Haitian suffering.

Many things are needed. The first thing is visible improvement, a large-scale public works project to generate employment to show that there is movement and to give people a stake in the success of a new government. The challenge was present during the transition government of Gérald Latortue, yet the international community and the interim government failed to do what was necessary, failed to create a public works program that would create employment.

The result was that large parts of the population saw life either staying stagnant or actually moving backwards. With no sign of economic improvement, no new employment, no widespread high-impact attention paid to areas such as the slums of Cité Soleil, large segments of the population became alienated from the process of rebuilding and from the visions of rebuilding a political, social, and economic basis.

A large-scale public works program is, of course, not rocket science. In Haiti, there is no shortage of projects that would fill that role: road repair, port clearance, garbage removal, housing. The problem has been, in part, with the international community—it cannot all be laid at the door of the international community, but part of it certainly can—and donors who view such an undertaking as part and parcel of a normal aid delivery business and not as it should be seen, as an emergency intervention.

The situation in Haiti is that critical. We cannot afford to wait for the usual process of aid systems to grind out their well-structured, properly bid programs. We need shovels in the ground now. We have to do what it takes to make this happen. These results will need political leadership to provide the diktat, the political cover, to allow donors to end-run the normal disbursement rules. It will also require political courage.

An emergency public works campaign will inevitably suffer from some abuses. You cannot do this in a country like Haiti—you can't always do it here—without some scandal being attached, and if you do it quickly, that's going to happen even more so. But that is a risk that in this situation it is necessary to take.

Beyond the public works, there are two other items that are of urgent and critical importance. The first is that the new government not be overwhelmed with demands from every donor's wish list. It's essential that human capital resources of the government be improved to allow it to succeed in a few critical areas.

The second is that it is necessary that the security and judicial services be brought up to at least a minimum competency. This will require a higher level of support and intervention than is currently envisaged.

On the first point, the unprecedented opportunity—well, almost unprecedented; we had that opportunity with the first election of Aristide, and we have it again—has prompted an outpouring of expectation and exuberance from NGOs, aid agencies, and Haitians. When that happens, there is a danger that this will overwhelm the new government and lead to unrealized and unrealistic expectations.

● (1550)

The new government does not have the resource capacity to carry out the basic normal functions of government, let alone tackle the complex, critical challenges that are beyond and in addition to those normal functions.

Tough choices will have to be made. The new government has indicated that it will make education a priority. Other top priorities, as indicated, will have to be security and job creation. This means that the environment, trade negotiations, and other priorities will have to, for the time being, sit on the sidelines—not the sort of thing that Boyd is talking about. That certainly should not sit on the sidelines.

There are models for doing this through recruiting from diaspora. There's a very good model that is now being employed with the Afghan diaspora under the auspices of the International Organization for Migration, which might possibly serve as a model.

I mentioned security, which is absolutely basic. Only by improving security will investment return, which will promote that job creation and will lower the tensions and promote greater well-being.

Donors will have to look at the changing composition of the United Nations forces in Haiti. The forces, when they were first put together, were assembled in haste, and to some extent inappropriately for the mission they faced. Instead of riot control in general military forces, there is an obvious and pressing need for military or police SWAT units with skills training, experience, and capacity to conduct hard urban interventions.

In addition, the United Nations mission needs authority to collect signals intelligence. The lack of signals intelligence dramatically raises the risk for UN forces and civilians when operations are conducted in densely populated urban areas.

Last summer I had a number of conversations with RCMP officers about exactly that point in Haiti.

Reformulating of both the police and the quality of the Haitian judicial system are equally important. There is a causal link between corruption and low salaries, and it is unlikely that we will see improvements in Haitian security and judicial institutions until salaries are improved.

Improvement of salaries, of course, would have to be commensurate with what the Government of Haiti will be able to afford. They should be commensurate, but the reality is that they won't, which means that given the limited resources of the Haitian government, international donors may have to pick up the tab for a portion of this expense for some time into the future.

If these steps are not taken, then we do not have a real basis for optimism. Rebuilding a fragile or failed state is neither easy nor cheap in financial or political terms, yet in the past that is the manner in which we have tried to contribute to the rebuilding of Haiti. In terms of financial contributions, a significant share of the burden is borne by the Haitian diaspora. It's interesting that the diaspora spends something like four to six times as much a year as do the international donors.

There is an opportunity, and I hope we will have the determination to seize and run with that opportunity.

Thank you very much.

There are a few other bright spots in the Haitian constellation at the moment that I could mention, if you would like me to do that.

● (1555)

The Chair: We are always looking forward to bright spots, especially with Haiti because we haven't had too many of them. Maybe some of those will be brought out during the questioning.

We'll move to the first round of questions.

Mr. Patry, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Graham.

First of all, we always appreciate the work FOCAL is doing, and your analysis. If you have any analysis right now concerning Haiti, the committee would be very pleased to have it.

Monsieur Paquette and Mr. McBride, you talked about SOS and what you're doing over there, but you also mentioned in your statement that you're eager to do more work. I know you are worldwide, but I didn't know that you were present in Haiti. I've been in Haiti many times. We met with NGOs, with the former Prime Minister.

You talk about eradication. It's a question of both eradication of poverty and, as was touched on by Mr. Graham, visible improvement. What would be important in regard to visible improvement?

If you talk about infrastructure, a lot of infrastructure was done in Haiti, and there was in a certain sense abuse, as you mentioned, corruption. I mean, you build a street, and a year or two years afterward, the street is no longer there. There are so many reasons—it was not properly built, things like this. You talk about education and many things like that.

What is the priority? I think your NGOs are very good with kids. You see orphan kids. What's the priority for kids over there? Is it just to take care of them? Is it education?

It's quite important for us to understand, because you cannot focus on every field. If you're going too wide, as you said.... You mentioned that all the nations need to work together.

Do you work with some other NGOs in the field, or are you working alone? Where are you? You talked about half a dozen schools. Are you in Port-au-Prince? Are you in Cité Soleil? Are you in Jacmel? I don't know, you see. I just want to understand a little bit more about you.

My question for Mr. Graham is, what is most important right now? Is it to bring electricity to Port-au-Prince? People need to see changes, but what changes? Do we need to see people cleaning the streets? They say they're going to create some jobs. There are so many things to be done, it could be like starting from the beginning over there.

But for you, what's the first thing that needs to be done in the next four months? As you mentioned, you don't want to go back to insecurity, to having the real opposition come from the street, as opposed to in the government.

● (1600)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Patry.

There are two questions.

Mr. McBride, then Mr. Graham.

Mr. Boyd McBride: Thank you.

Stefan and I together will try to respond to your question.

We've been operational in Haiti for many years. We do there, as we do in almost every other country in which we work, cooperate with local community groups as well as other international NGOs.

Stefan might be able to say a little more about the actual locations of some of our facilities.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stefan Paquette (Director, Overseas Programs, SOS Children's Villages Canada): We're located in two places: in Port-au-Prince, near Santos, and Cap-Haïtien. There you find children's villages, schools and community centres.

Now I want to answer your first question, which concerned needs. In a crisis, the biggest challenge is to meet basic needs, for equipment, food, health and safety. Those have to be met immediately while other investments are being made.

[*English*]

Mr. John Graham: You ask all sorts of good questions. What's first?

It's impossible to separate job creation from security. You absolutely need to spend resources on building security, building training, building a police force that has some credibility, not only in the Port-au-Prince area but also further out, where there is less control.

At the same time, it's job creation. This was a great failure over the period of the interim government, and it was a failure that attaches blame both to the interim government and to some extent to the donor community. There were not the massive jobs.

The parallel is a little strange, but there is a model for this in the Depression years in the United States, with President Roosevelt, the Tennessee Valley Authority. It was the enormous amount of labour that was required in those developments that put money in pockets, that put food in mouths. And that is not happening. Also, there's going to be a psychological impact, which is important. People can actually see that earth is being moved—to quote from this, that “shovels are on the ground”.

I don't have the knowledge to say whether it should be dredging ports, building more roads, or clearing out slum areas and building more housing; there are people much better placed to provide that. But it is the need to start public works that involve a lot of basic manual labour.

● (1605)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Graham.

Madame Lalonde, cinq minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Thank you very much. Thank you, everyone.

In the past month, another 10 officers of the Haitian national police have been killed in the performance of their duties, some in Cité Soleil.

In my view, Minister Alexis' speech to the nation was filled with promises... Based on the information we have, interim funding will be granted until the donors' meeting, and the president and prime minister will subsequently be given about one year to present a more substantial investment plan. The prime minister is talking about an appeasement policy, in particular about creating jobs for people in the shanty towns—they're the clients of the so-called "Aristide" fringe and are therefore very poor—and for the country dwellers. They want to deal with these two groups, but will that plan be enough to do that?

My next question is for Mr. McBride, because he was the first person to talk clearly about a new integrated support and commitment model. You said that a lot of NGOs and government organizations would have to commit to working together in order to achieve results.

NGOs and government organizations have held preparatory meetings. Are you referring to those meetings? Can you get me more information on the subject because I'm somewhat troubled by that? In the past, development plans had been prepared by people who are now called colonizers. We have to be careful about the way we want to help people. You have to start by getting a clear idea of the terrain, possibilities and priorities, and by relying on civil society, the country dwellers and other local stakeholders. Are you referring to a kind of socio-economic good will invasion?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lalonde.

Mr. Paquette, you have a minute and a half.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stefan Paquette: When you want to talk about development integration, you can go back to Canada's International Policy Statement, which discusses development, diplomacy, defence and trade. That entails an integrated approach.

I'll be brief because time is limited. One of civil society's concerns was that there was a lack of integration of the agents of civil society. And yet civil society is recognized as playing a very important role, not only in development, but also in security. If people are earning wages and are able to feed their children, they won't be inclined to commit violent acts or acts that might compromise the security of the country in question.

I'd like to emphasize the fact that civil society has to integrate the voices of people in the community. By what mechanisms should that be done? I can't suggest any to you. It's a process that has to be done by Haitians, for Haitians. Only in that way can things work. We can encourage the process. That's hard to do, but it's being done. If we impose our intentions, even if they're good, they'll of course come from the outside. Haitians know what they want. We must give them the resources.

With your permission, I'd like to raise another point. We're not talking enough about human capital and women. Give each woman a little money in the form of micro-credit, and you'll see that will make an enormous difference. We must attach more importance to women because they are the pillars of the families.

● (1610)

[*English*]

Mr. Boyd McBride: Well, I would only add that in the suggestions or proposals we were making we focused on the need, as we saw it, for the Canadian government and its various agencies and departments to be working together. But I certainly accept your suggestion or your critique, if it's that, that non-governmental organizations also need to be working together and to coordinate their efforts, and that they will be more effective if they do that.

I think it's fair to reinforce Stefan's point—and in fact, your point—that we must start with where we are in Haiti. We must work with indigenous Haitian community groups. It just happens to be that one of those is the SOS association in Haiti, but there are many others. If those are partnered effectively with Canadian NGOs capable of providing added value—not just funds, but technical assistance and the like—we can see a great deal more success

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McBride.

To Mr. Van Loan, please, for five minutes.

Mr. Peter Van Loan (York—Simcoe, CPC): My question is for Mr. Graham.

What we're largely trying to do with this study is to draw lessons from Canada's past interventions. We've had a track record of lack of success, or failures, in Haiti. We felt that would not necessarily be a bad thing, because you can often learn a lot more from you failures and your mistakes than you learn from when you do things right. But as we've gone through this, we've been a little bit frustrated because we've been having trouble drawing out lessons.

I've been beginning to muse out loud that perhaps what we should have done was a comparative study of the Dominican Republic versus Haiti. The former has a lot of similar past roots but has turned out to be very successful, and the other not so much so.

You have some personal experience in the Dominican Republic; you were the principal international mediator there in their post-election crisis in 1994, so you've got some understanding. So you can be my comparative study of why there is the difference between the Dominican Republic's success and the lack of success in Haiti. What can we draw from the lessons between the two?

Mr. John Graham: The first time I travelled from Santa Domingo, which was called Ciudad Trujillo in those days—as the dictator had named it after himself—to Port-au-Prince, I had the sensation that I was moving from one planet to another. It's the same island, but they are so different.

There is not a great deal that can be learned from the relative success of the Dominican Republic and that can be applied to Haiti. Haiti was damned by history from the beginning, and has never really recovered from that. Having defeated the army of Napoleon—and, I think, the brother-in-law of Napoleon, who was a general—the Haitians were then subject to crippling reparations by the French. In addition to that, the American government, which was still a slave government at that time, imposed sanctions and said there could be no trade with Haiti. That prohibition went on until the beginning of the 20th century. So they got off to an absolutely appalling start and never really recovered from it, in the course of which, starting with the French, their forests were cut down, so that every time it rains, what little is left of the soil washes down into the Caribbean.

Unfortunately, it's not a terribly helpful comparison, but they are together, and they can do things together that can be productive. Now, the Dominican Republic is in some ways doing quite well; there is a lot of investment money. Some of that would like to move into Haiti to take advantage, in relative terms, of the cheap labour, and that would be advantageous for Haiti in getting more industry moving. That means there has to be more roads or more connections. The road system in Haiti, as I'm sure you know, is mostly non-existent, and where it does exist, it is absolutely appalling—except for the run from Port-au-Prince through to one part of the Dominican border.

So you need more roads to make these industries work and to have industries in the north that can move goods into the Dominican Republic. You also need to clear out the ports; there is not a single harbour in Haiti that can take vessels with the normal draft of commercial cargo ships.

● (1615)

Mr. Peter Van Loan: We've heard that Haiti needs lots of things. I've heard you edging around the notion that some things are more important than others. Could you lay out three or four top priorities for attention, perhaps because the problem—and you can tell me if you disagree with this—is that there are too many efforts on too many fronts, and we should focus on just a few things. If so, what would these be?

Those are propositions I throw out to you for your comment.

Mr. John Graham: I guess I'm repeating myself, but one of them is certainly security. Nothing is going to happen unless there's greater confidence that you can go to work and get back from work, that you can send your kids to school and the kids will come back from school—and that there is a school. Education is one absolute priority, along with security, and the other is jobs or employment. The sorts of jobs that are there are part time, or jobs that maintain impoverishment or don't allow people to climb out of impoverishment.

Just to endorse what Stefan and Boyd were saying, I think that when you're looking for projects that will produce employment, you obviously want to consult the Haitians. The Haitians need to say whether it's going to be roads or whether it's going to be slum clearance; they should be involved in making that choice.

To repeat a little of what I was saying in my presentation, the other issue is that donors have to move more quickly. In this room, everybody is aware of accountability, and in our case, everybody is wrapped in layers and layers of asbestos to make sure that they're okay in whatever operation.... This takes a lot of time. There is not time for the kind of accountability we would want, by our standards—which I think, even for us, are exaggerated, because they are slowing down government operations. In Haiti, the donor community needs the courage to take some risks to move money quickly. That is what has not been happening, and that is what needs to happen.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Graham.

Ms. McDonough, five minutes, please.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'm very pleased to hear several references to the importance of really ensuring that what is being acted upon is a Haitian-based consensus. There's nothing more dangerous than someone who goes to a country for four or five days and comes back thinking they understand it.

I had the opportunity, with some of my colleagues, to be in Haiti just prior to Préval's inauguration. What I found deeply disturbing, frankly, was not only the history to which you've made some reference, but also an almost artificial sense of an NGO civil society that seemed to be on a very short leash, and some of it quite obviously created by external or exogenous forces. And you had the sense that if Haiti just didn't quite move in lockstep with, I think, largely American notions of what that should be, probably the leash would be yanked, or any funding would be cut off.

I have so many questions.

The desperate need for material improvement—I mean genuine improvement in the quality of life, which means jobs, which means infrastructure—seems to be something that's quite easily agreed upon. The question is how to make that happen in a rapid enough way that it can actually create some successes before people become very disillusioned.

I was surprised to hear—I believe it was Mr. Graham who said it—that perhaps some of the environmental priorities would have to wait, because one of the things that seemed quite persuasive to me, anyway, in hearing what was needed, was the desperate need for environmental remediation. In fact, I think it was one of our own military officers who made quite a stark statement that even if you could ensure the security, unless we can move rapidly to deal with all of this erosion resulting from the deforestation and the tremendous problems of safe water and waste management, and so on, basically you're creating an unsustainable society that simply cannot survive, let alone thrive.

The second priority that there was some mention of is roads. It seems pretty obvious that there is a serious problem about even moving produce to markets domestically, let alone internationally, unless that is addressed.

And the third priority was something you referred to, which is the low salaries for police officers. We were hearing again and again about literally no salaries for months and months. The suggestion was made again and again that unless that was remedied almost immediately, there is no possibility of putting an end either to the corruption within the security forces, or to the various thefts, muggings, kidnappings, and so on, because people are starving and their families are starving.

I wonder if you could comment on those three priorities, which seem pretty evident. What are the roadblocks? What can Canada do to try to help with whatever processes need to get under way to actually produce some kinds of results?

Three simple questions....

● (1620)

Mr. John Graham: I certainly agree with you about the issues of deforestation and erosion. This has been going on since, as I say, the French started cutting down an immense tropical forest that had been there. It looks like an interminable, vicious circle. You put some money into one area and you don't have enough to deal with the other simultaneously essential areas.

I wouldn't pretend to offer a really satisfactory answer to these questions, but a partial answer is to work with some of the few building blocks in Haiti that are still standing.

One of them is that the NGO network is in fact large, to a degree, as you suggested. I won't get into this, because Stefan and Boyd can speak to it much better than I can. It's sustained from outside, but it's still quite important. It's where there are educated people, it's where there are cells of development, and a network of these in the country.

The other is the Haitian private sector. As I mentioned, my organization, FOCAL, had a meeting last fall, chaired by Mr. Clark, that brought a selected number of about 18 Haitian entrepreneurs to a meeting at Meech Lake. Meech Lake was great, because their cell phones didn't work, and they didn't want to go outside because they were afraid of being eaten by bears. So they stayed in the room, and it was a very productive conference, and it pointed toward some productive areas.

One issue is that the public service of Haiti is, as you are aware, in ruin. It's small, what there is is deeply penetrated by corruption, of course it's underpaid, and it's basically incompetent. It cannot manage a lot of the basic services that need to be managed. One way you can help that is by creating bridges between some parts—the still standing parts—of the public service and the Haitian private sector so that they can work together—it could be electrical programs, it could be road programs, it could be health programs. Some of the Haitian private sector are already involved in a number of these in a philanthropic way. I think that is one route.

The other is really to persuade the donor organizations to move much more quickly than they have moved. The international donor pace is snail-like. They have to get funds moving, and as I say, they must take some risks with the movement of those funds. Not all of that money is going to go to the workman with a shovel in his hand.

● (1625)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Graham.

Unfortunately, we're at the close of the time we had allocated to this portion of the study. We would have liked a little more time to ask you a few questions.

I thank all of you for being very honest in your presentations, I wish you could be a little more...I don't know how to word this, I wish we could be a little more optimistic about the whole picture of Haiti, but I do thank you for your honesty. In some ways we're moving backwards. Sometimes our deliveries have not been the most successful.

Mr. Graham, one thing you suggested: I wouldn't mind if you wrote a letter or an answer to the committee. You talked about scandal, that in Haiti it's almost expected; it's almost a risk we have to take.

In this committee we're trying to take a look at the most effective routes or methodologies of aid delivery. If it's been abused at the other end, we'd like to hear about that, because we want to focus on better delivery. That's what I think all parties want—we want better delivery; we want a success story at the end of the day. In five years we don't want to be sitting down saying, you know what, we're at the same place we were in 1999, or in 2006.

I thank you for your presentations today. We will suspend for one minute, and then we'll welcome our new guests.

I ask the committee to stay close to your desks, because we don't want to lose time in asking you to reconvene.

We suspend.

● (1629)

(Pause)

● (1634)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

We want to continue on our study of Haiti. Our witnesses in the next segment of our meeting are from the World University Service of Canada. We have Michel Tapiero, manager, Americas and Middle East programs; Elena Alvarado, senior program officer.

Also, we have, from the Regroupement des organismes canado-haïtiens pour le développement, the vice-president to the board of directors, Vernick Barthélus, and Eric Faustin, director general.

I invite your opening statements. For any mispronunciations of titles, names, or positions, I apologize.

Welcome. We want to give you an opportunity to speak, and there will be questions coming from our colleagues here from all parties. A ten-minute presentation would be perfect, but the time is yours.

Thank you.

● (1635)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Elena Alvarado (Senior Program Officer, America and Caraibes, World University Service of Canada): My name is Elena Alvarado, and I'm the senior program officer of the voluntary cooperation program in Haiti.

The post-secondary sector is one component of the voluntary cooperation program. Our four partners are: CECI, which works with civil society organizations; SACO, which works in development in the economic sector; the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation; and the Paul Gérin-Lajoie Foundation, which works in basic education. The World University Service of Canada works in all post-secondary areas, including universities and occupational training institutes.

The program started up one year ago, in June 2005, and it will last three years, until June 2008. We deal with the post-secondary education sector. I'm going to provide you with some background. First, there is little coordination between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and universities. Under the Constitution, the State University of Haiti has completely independent control over the university's system. The Constitution dates back to 1987. There are more than 50 private universities in Port-au-Prince, and, in most cases, there is no coordination or cooperation among them.

The National Institute for Occupational Training is the agency responsible for overseeing occupational training, but there are many occupational training institutions of all kinds and levels of quality.

What needs did we identify in our analysis of the post-secondary situation? First, there is a real need for infrastructure: laboratories, teaching equipment, up-to-date technical equipment, etc. There is none in most of the teaching centres in Haiti. The other identified needs in which we can act through the Voluntary Cooperation Program are management needs and everything pertaining to normative and functional coordination between the Ministry of Education's Post-Secondary Education and Research Branch and the universities.

Within the institutions themselves, within the universities and occupational training institutes, we identified administrative and operational needs. For example, there is no registrar's office, human resources office or accounting or computer systems. They are absent or deficient.

In general, there is a lack of management tools, strategic planning, performance and evaluation, as well as serious management and administration deficiencies in administrators. It should also be said that the situation is very uneven. They're quite advanced in some cases, less so in others. So the action plan will come later.

We've also identified teaching pedagogy needs. Most teachers are professionals, who have received no pedagogical training in teaching techniques or program and course preparation. At the occupational training institutes, where there is also a serious equipment and material shortage, teachers need to update their high tech knowledge.

Who are our Haitian partners? First, there is the Post-Secondary Education and Research Branch of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports. It's not the entire ministry, just the branch.

● (1640)

The universities are the State University of Haiti, Quiskeya University, Notre Dame University in Jacmel, Notre Dame University in Port-au-Prince and the National Conference of Presidents of Private Universities. This last organization is an agency that is beginning to bring together university presidents and to focus on training and skills for its members.

In the occupational training sector, our partners are the National Occupational Training Institute, which regulates all occupational training, the Canada-Haiti Institute for Occupational Training, Saint-Gérard Technical College and Claver Technical College. We work through voluntary advisers, and we have to place 29 volunteer advisors over 155 months of work.

Our intervention strategy is first pitched at a macro level: support cooperation between the universities and the Post-Secondary Education and Research Branch of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports in order to implement the recommendations of the National Education and Training Plan. We're going to play a role in communication, negotiation, conciliation and conflict resolution skills training.

At the intermediate level, we're going to support governance within the institutions: training, follow-up and planning and management advice for senior executives and the administration of the universities and occupational training institutes.

There are specific and ad hoc training needs in teaching and technical training for teachers. Our method is as follows: training for trainers; assistance and support, follow-up and advice; evaluation of implementation and results, or RBM, which is used by CIDA; cross-cutting approach; a participatory approach involving partners and diaspora. A number of our voluntary advisers are part of the Haitian diaspora. They are university professors who have worked for a long time in Canada and who would like to return home and do something for their country. We also seek to build consensus among the institutions in Haiti, and we engage in public education and commitment through partnerships with Canadian institutions, in particular universities and CEGEPs. We also engage in action-research. This is intervention in a crisis context over three years, and we conduct rigorous follow-up to that intervention. Our documentation on the intervention is available to anyone who wishes to consult it. It will be used for training in international cooperation in Canadian universities. We're also very much involved in the environment.

In 2005, we had to ask ourselves what we were going to do. The context was one of crisis and insecurity. We couldn't send volunteer advisors to Haiti. What was the alternative? Were we going to build partnerships with universities and occupational training institutions in Canada so that Haitians could come to Canada? Were we going to focus our action in the Jacmel region, a calmer area outside the capital?

Fortunately, things have calmed down this year. Based on our analysis of the situation and in view of the many needs and the scarcity of resources in the post-secondary sector in Haiti, we have designed an effective cross-cutting intervention plan under which long-term volunteer advisors will conduct an analysis of more specific needs in their area of expertise for the targeted partners. The long-term volunteer advisors will ensure implementation of the plans and recommendations of the short-term volunteer advisors for the transfer of knowledge through advice, assistance and support to partners. The short-term volunteer advisors have a very specific, very advanced assignment.

We now have sectoral team leaders. These are long-term volunteer advisors in the field. We have a communications advisor and a support advisor at the university in Jacmel. A teaching advisor will soon be leaving, and there is a planning and management advisor. We've already prepared a number of documents and are making a number of observations.

What risk mitigation strategies are we using?

● (1645)

In particular, in view of the political and social instability, we're going to limit agreements and actions. If ever things become more difficult, we'll move people from Port-au-Prince to other provinces in order to provide training. We're engaged in knowledge transfer, and voluntary advisors must evaluate its long-term affects, as well as the results achieved in the course of our intervention. We also have to comply with the agreements.

Now that I have the opportunity, I'd like to tell you that, currently in Haiti, we find that all the country's structures have been dismantled. In some sectors, they are completely dismantled. However, the Haitian people want to put order in the chaos. The new government is preparing a structuring plan. I believe that supporting the plan that the Haitians are developing could be an international cooperation initiative.

In addition, we have to organize international cooperation. A number of us are engaged in activities, but no one has given any cues or guidelines to date. I believe efforts are being made and that discussions in that direction have begun. However, we'll have to focus more on that issue.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Michel Tapiero (Manager, Americas and Middle East Programs, World University Service of Canada): This is what's called a sectoral approach. All cooperants meet in order to avoid duplicating their actions.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We'll go to our next presenters, Monsieur Faustin and Monsieur Barthélus, for 10 minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eric Faustin (Director General, Regroupement des organismes canado-haïtiens pour le développement): Thank you. It's a great pleasure for me to address the committee on behalf of ROCAHD. I'm here today with Mr. Barthélus, who is the Vice-Chair of ROCAHD's board of directors.

What is ROCAHD? It's a coalition of Canada-Haiti organizations that has been in existence under that name since 1994, but was founded in 1987 under the name of the Fonds délégués AQOCI-Haïti. ROCAHD represents 47 organizations, including 36 Canada-Haiti international cooperation organizations and 11 Canadian and Quebec organizations.

ROCAHD's priorities are community health, economic development, occupational training and literacy. In recent years, we have supported numerous projects: a midwife training project, a training project for Jacmel hotel staff and a training project for illiterate young mothers from an isolated place, in Port-de-Paix. I should also mention the construction of wells in the Fossé-Naboth region, construction of latrines in Jacmel, the creation of a micro-credit circle, chicken farming, goat farming, coffee production and reforestation activities. These projects reach a lot of people—approximately 30,000—and help them survive and improve their living conditions.

The members of ROCAHD in Canada are all multipliers. They come from various regions of the country, they know the situation in their region and they can propose projects designed to improve the living conditions of those people.

We've been supported by CIDA since 1987, and we've been a diligent partner in that time.

Since ROCAHD is a development NGO, we're mainly going to talk about development, but we're also interested in security in Haiti. Security is a fundamental concern, and the climate of insecurity that has reigned in Haiti in the past three years has slowed the country's development and ROCAHD's development projects. I learned earlier that the education cooperation projects were also affected by that climate of insecurity.

Canada and, more particularly, the United States send Haitian criminals operating in their countries back to Haiti. When they arrive in Haiti, those criminals are considered graduate students of crime. They vitalize the criminal world. They are, in a way, leaders who facilitate communications with Canadian criminals. A good way to help Haiti would be to declare a moratorium on the deportation of criminals because, for the moment, the country isn't able to manage the situation. Until Haiti is in a position to do so, we shouldn't deport these criminals.

It is the prerogative of a sovereign state like Canada to deport undesirables, but a moratorium would be appropriate in the circumstances. Haiti's judicial and correctional system should be reinforced so that it can shoulder its responsibilities. If we deport people, we should at least put them in prison and, if necessary, expand prison capacity.

We must invest in efforts to reinforce Haiti's institutions, but those efforts should exclude initiatives that are not the subject of a consensus within Haitian society.

To date, a large part of the assistance provided in recent years has been allocated to stabilizing the situation in Haiti—sending experts and police officers, establishing MINUSTAH—but we should invest more in re-enforcing Haiti's institutions so that they are able to take over when the time comes.

● (1650)

I want to take this opportunity to hail the ultimate sacrifice of Canadian police officer Mark Bourque, who died in Haiti in the context of the efforts to stabilize that country.

Now I'm going to talk about development. CIDA documents show that investments of more than $700 million have been made in international aid since 1968, most of which was specifically intended to deal with crises. In the past two years, Canada has made a commitment to allocate more than $180 million to the Interim Cooperation Framework in response to transition and stabilization needs identified by the interim government.

Today, Haiti remains the least developed country in this hemisphere, with more than 70 per cent of its population living below the poverty line. Fifty per cent of the Haitian population is still illiterate, and only 1 per cent of the country's area is still wooded.

Canada's aid is important for Haiti. ROCAHD appreciates Canada's aid in improving the situation in Haiti. Some $3.6 million persons in Haiti are able to work, and 70 per cent of them are unemployed or underemployed, or still work in the informal sector.

Considering the development indicators in Haiti and the very pronounced shortcomings in meeting basic human needs, ROCAHD thinks Canada's aid to Haiti should continue to involve the organizations of civil society in Haiti and Canada that are engaged in cooperation in order to meet health, education and economic development needs.

It is essential that Canada's aid to Haiti be used, on the one hand, to reinforce the domestic capabilities of Haitian government institutions so that they can more effectively carry out their mission and, on the other hand, to strengthen the organizations of civil society, which are agents of development among the Haitian population.

As regards security, while we agree that it is important to reinforce Haiti's public institutions in this sector, we recommend that the essential portion of aid in this sector be directed toward increasing the number of police officers and judges and improving their training so that they can perform their duties.

As for development, ROCAHD believes that, given the social development indicators in Haiti—illiteracy, unemployment, health, deforestation, water access, availability of energy resources and gender equality—it is essential that the essential portion of Canada's aid to Haiti be directed toward improving the situation of the Haitian people. These needs can be taken into account by government programs, of course, but also by activities in the community sector. The Haitian community sector is very large and can, to a large degree, meet the basic human needs of the Haitian population. We should support that sector so that it continues to do this work.

It is impossible for the Haitian government, and for the Haitian private sector, to take charge of everything there is to do in Haiti. Whether it be projects for reforestation, soil conservation, water access, the establishment of cooperatives for the production and processing of farm and stock farm products, we think that we at ROCAHD can help carry them out. We could do more, if we received more contributions from CIDA and if our Canada-Haiti associations could receive a larger cost-share ratio.

● (1655)

Thank you for inviting us to testify before the committee. We'll be able to provide more details in our answers to the questions that follow.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for being here.

We'll go into the questioning round.

First, for five minutes, is Monsieur Patry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Bernard Patry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, madam and gentlemen. It's very interesting to hear from you. I'm going to move to the questions right away, since we have five minutes for questions and answers. So I'll shorten by preamble in order to get some answers.

Ms. Alvarado, you and your group are very ambitious, and that's great. I'd like you to tell me about the state of the universities.

For more than 40 years, there's been a certain exodus of people from the universities, both in the medical field, where I come from, and other fields. Do you think it's possible to send advisors to Haiti to move young people on from the primary to the secondary level? We know that you have roughly the same system as France. Do you think we can really move forward with the universities in Haiti? We know they are mainly private universities.

My second question is for Mr. Faustin. The ROCAHD group is doing an excellent job. You're doing a lot of community work and I think that's very important.

There's a lot of talk about security in Port-au-Prince, but I'd like to know your opinion on the situation outside Port-au-Prince. Witnesses have told us that visible projects should be introduced, or else things will fall back into a climate of insecurity, particularly in the streets, a situation that would really be contrary to President Préval's objectives.

You referred to micro-credit. Développement international Desjardins is very much involved in Haiti. There are more than 60 bank centres where micro-credit is provided, which is excellent. Is micro-credit working well where you come from? Can you move forward with that? In my opinion it's little things that are highly visible. When people get a little credit, they can create their own jobs, and I think that's important.

Are there any regions outside Port-au-Prince where a well could be built, thus making people's lives easier? That enables people to realize that their government is doing something for them.

I'd like to have your opinion, particularly on the regions located outside Port-au-Prince.

● (1700)

Mrs. Elena Alvarado: First, with regard to the skills at Haitian universities, we found ourselves with some great thinkers. There are a lot of skills at Haitian universities from a human resources standpoint.

It should also be said that a number of professors, from Laval University, UQAM and the University of Montreal, for example, are travelling back and forth. They're already cooperating with Haitian universities on a volunteer basis. They are very much involved in our program, since we ask them for their opinion before we intervene. There are even people from the Ministry of Education and the universities—there's one public university, and the others are private—who are far ahead on the way the system should be structured.

It's true there is a major gap at the secondary level. No international cooperation organization is supporting secondary education, which is really causing a serious problem. A lot of investments have been made in basic education, and they are a bit scattered around the country. Various programs apply in various regions of the country. Sometimes there is no coordination among them.

There's also an infrastructure problem, more so at that State University of Haiti, which has no campus. All the faculties are scattered around the city of Port-au-Prince. The infrastructure is very uneven. There is Quisqueya University, for example, which is very well organized, but is nevertheless our partner, because it wants to improve the skills of the people in who work there.

I'll stop there, Mr. Chairman.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Alvarado.

Monsieur Faustin.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eric Faustin: Thank you.

ROCAHD's projects are being rolled out across Haiti, including Port-au-Prince. The well projects are being carried out in the mountains, in the suburbs of Jacmel and at Fossé-Naboth, in the department of Artibonite. Those wells will supply more than 15,000 people with drinking water.

We have a micro-credit project in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince, in the region of Kenscoff and Fermat. There's one in Jacmel as well, in cooperation with the La Konbit Social Centre at Jacmel. We also have a rotating credit project related to stock farming. It involves the farmers of Sainte-Suzanne, in northeastern Haiti, on the central plateau, in Cobanal and Aquin. In these projects, we grant credit to farmers, but this is for chickens. For example, we offer a woman a dozen chickens and a rooster. She guarantees that, the following year, she will repay the credit that she has received to another family. We started this project with 300 people, but we expect to reach 3,000 over a period of 5 to 10 years.

We've also just implemented a goat farming project. We deal with community groups in the field and a group specializing in veterinary medicine applied to stock farming called VETERIMED. This organization was recently given an award by Chili for the community work it's doing in the area of stock farming, especially for its milk production. These people produce milk and raise rabbits. We've financed these stock farming operations, which have enabled farmers to improve their living conditions.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. Thank you. We're running a little late on our questions. They were going about seven minutes.

Madame Bourgeois.

● (1705)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Madam, gentlemen, good afternoon. Listening to you speak earlier, I thought that poverty and inequality, among other factors, gave rise to violence, insecurity and political instability.

Mr. Faustin, if I understood correctly, you're a member of a group that is subsidized by CIDA. Your activities are therefore subsidized by Canada. However, Ms. Shamsie, a researcher who appeared before the committee, told us that Canada had been somewhat mistaken in previous years in attaching greater importance to Haiti's economic development than to its agricultural needs. She said that, in 2005, Ottawa had decided to stop giving priority to agriculture in the context of its foreign aid programs.

I see you've nevertheless attached importance to stock farming. Is agriculture a priority for you?

Mr. Eric Faustin: Absolutely. Haiti is a fundamentally agricultural country, and the country's dependence on agriculture is impoverishing the country-dwelling population. For us, it's essential that we support reforestation, agricultural production and stock farming projects. That's the best way to reach the largest number of people possible and to enable them to improve their living conditions.

We have projects that support coffee production in Sainte-Suzanne. For a long time now, that area has been devoted to coffee production. By supporting the people in that region, we want not only to give the area plant coverage, but also to help increase coffee production. Even in the case of goat and rabbit farming, some of the projects consist in developing pieces of land for agricultural production purposes in order to meet the needs of the animals.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Are they engaged in agricultural production for commercial purposes or for their own consumption?

Mr. Eric Faustin: It's for their own consumption, but they sell part of it.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: One speaker who preceded you said that women were a poorly used strength in Haiti. Do you have any plans to make better use of the strength these women represent?

Mr. Eric Faustin: Absolutely. One of the components of ROCAHD's work is the promotion of gender equity. Some of our projects are specifically aimed at women. The merchant micro-credit project is strictly aimed at women. As you are no doubt aware, approximately 72 in every 1,000 women dies in childbirth for lack of medical care. Merely training midwives and enabling them to assist women in childbirth helps this population improve its living conditions.

We've given our support for the training of young mothers at two locations in Haiti: Port-de-Paix, which is in the northwest part of the country and Les Cayes, which is in the south. These projects are essentially aimed at women. We assist and support them and give them training. In the context of SOFA, training is intended for midwives and seamstresses. The idea is simply to enable them to work in both the formal and informal sectors.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois: Thank you.

My question is also for Ms. Alvarado and her companion. Are putting people to work so they can eat, send their children or young people to school, keeping people busy and making the country a little safer objectives that are suitable to you in the event the committee prepares a report?

● (1710)

Mrs. Elena Alvarado: First, I want to talk about women. I'm new to the country, but I'm not new to international cooperation or to this issue. I haven't done any studies on the subject, but I realize that Haitian society has remained standing for so long because of women and their work. They are the backbone of the country, but they don't take part in decision-making, except that of the female Minister of Health in the foreign government. There are no women deans, presidents and so on.

Apart from that, action must be sustained. Education can't be provided through three-year projects. We need to carry out long-term projects and expand the horizons. We won't get the job done with ad hoc action. Nor will we get it done by competing for resources. So we have to combine our efforts and follow master plans. That's my opinion.

Mr. Michel Tapiero: We shouldn't delude ourselves: our university and post-secondary governance program represents $7 million over three years, allocated among four NGOs. For the secondary level, we're talking about $1.2 million over three years. We can do the impossible, but we can't work miracles.

Mr. Vernick Barthélus (Vice President , Board of Directors, Regroupement des organismes canado-haïtiens pour le développement): We spoke about women, and I would like to point out that ROCAHD is still asking people who submit projects what role women have played in their preparation and what their role will be in their implementation. We ask how many women there are in their organization. Based on those answers, we determine, among other things, whether the projects submitted are acceptable.

Mrs. Elena Alvarado: Thank you for clarifying those four points.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. Thank you. You're well over time, but I couldn't have cut you off any sooner. They might have thought we didn't want to hear all the good things the women are doing in Haiti, and we do.

We're going to go to Mr. Goldring for five minutes, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you, *mesdames et messieurs*.

Mr. Faustin, what would your annual budget be, and has it been consistent for a number of years? And for how many years back has your organization been funded by CIDA, and what would that funding be today on an annual basis?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eric Faustin: Our organization has been receiving funding from CIDA since 1987, when it was called the Fonds délégués AQOCI-Haïti. At the time, CIDA funding represented $700,000 a year. The cost-sharing ratio was 9 to 1. That was the period following the fall of Duvalier. The situation was considered catastrophic enough to justify support for Canada-Haiti agencies wishing to help Haiti.

As regards the contribution we're currently receiving from CIDA, we have a three-year agreement, which has been extended. That organization pays us $300,000 a year, and our matching ratio is 3 to 1. In 1987, when an organization like that of Mr. Barthélus wanted to carry out a project and provided $10,000 for that purpose, it received a matching amount that could help it carry out a $100,000 project. Today, that same $10,000 contribution could help carry out a $40,000 project. So conditions have been tightened.

As a result, Canada-Haiti organizations are less able to intervene. However, they do their best with what they have.

● (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Goldring: As I understand it, then, it's a ratio of 10:100. The community raises $10 to receive $100 of aid.

Mr. Eric Faustin: It was; in 1987 the ratio was one for nine. Now it's a ratio of one for three, in such a way that a Haitian Canadian organization that wants to support a project in Haiti has to work harder to find more money and to give a lower level of help to Haiti.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I'm not sure whether this is in your mandate at all, but you identified that there are 3.4 million Haitians, two-thirds of whom are underemployed or unemployed.

You've been working in training and development on mini and micro projects. Obviously, with mini and micro projects, and service industry types of projects too, to capture and to recover and fully employ the fully one-third of Haitians who need employment, it would have to go to the private and industrial sectors. There has been some movement there, with companies such as Gildan Activewear, with 4,000 to 5,000 jobs.

Would you care to comment on whether your organization is doing anything to encourage the private sector, and whether CIDA funding should be considering that civil development can only proceed when it necessitates business development?

In other words, there is a discussion in other committees too whether some effort shouldn't be given towards part of this funding that develops the economy and develops a micro industry also being utilized to encourage major industry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Eric Faustin: I'm going to answer in French because I'm more comfortable in that language.

The private sector's effort must indubitably be considered. However, every effort must be made to find all available resources in order to improve employment conditions in Haiti. The Haitian private sector is one of those resources, but the informal sector, for the moment, still offers the largest number of jobs. That's what has enabled the Haitian economy and the population to survive. Whether or not these are farming jobs, ROCAHD wants to ensure that, in giving aid to Haiti, we're not exclusively helping the private sector to the detriment of the community sector.

[*English*]

Mrs. Elena Alvarado: Can I briefly add something, please?

[*Translation*]

We're talking about the private sector, and I can tell you that businesses almost completely disappeared in Haiti during the years of insecurity and violence. They were ravaged. Most of the infrastructure is now obsolete. Reinvestment is necessary in that area. For example, there are engineers who are working as drivers.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Goldring: But Gildan is growing. It's one company that is growing.

Mrs. Elena Alvarado: Yes. It's a good thing. But now, for the moment, it's only....

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Madame McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Very briefly, I'm trying to get a better understanding

[*Translation*]

of the Regroupement des organismes canado-haïtiens pour le développement.

[*English*]

I'm trying to get an understanding of whether we're talking here about separate NGOs that have grouped together under an umbrella, and whether there is a governance structure for those organizations that is Haitian-based, or whether there is a Canadian basis for that structure. That's my first question.

Rather than maybe spending a lot of time of the committee, if you had some background information you might provide us with that, so we can get a sense of both the scope of the projects and the size of the projects, the numbers of people employed, and so on. I'm interested in trying to understand as well what the profile is in terms of Haitians in the diaspora here in Canada involved in this enterprise and who have returned, or are in the process of returning, versus Haitians who haven't left the country.

That leads me to a related question. You hear a lot of talk about the importance of assistance from the diaspora. I'm wondering if you can give us some understanding of whether there are any tensions around that, whether there is any sense in which people who have left the country—perhaps during some of these very difficult times—and had an opportunity to develop businesses, or pursue education, or whatever, are now in the position of being encouraged to come back to assume possibly leadership positions in educational institutions, in various enterprises, whether they're non-governmental or business-related. And I want to know whether this is a source of any frictions and tensions or whether there is really quite a welcoming and congenial kind of partnership that surrounds the kinds of projects you're both describing.

● (1720)

Mr. Eric Faustin: There are two questions.

First, ROCAHD is an umbrella organization. Within this umbrella organization you will find associations of doctors, of nurses, and of engineers, teachers associations, and a lot of local associations, people from different parts of Haiti who regroup themselves and want to involve themselves in projects in their own areas, where they come from, on a community basis.

There is a list of Haitian groups in Canada that was compiled by CSE International in 2004. They listed about 120 Haitian organizations in Canada. Most of them are locally oriented. They want to help Haitian people in Canada. About 60 of them want to get involved in development projects in Haiti.

Within those 60 organizations, we regroup 36 of them. That means ROCAHD is mainstream, where you'll find most Haitian Canadian organizations that want to help in Haiti. That's the first thing.

As to the second question, how Haitian people welcome or what's their relationship with the diaspora, there is a mixed reaction. The diaspora is helping Haiti. All over the world, it is helping Haiti at the level of $1.3 billion a year. Without that help, Haiti would crumble—period. People want to rent a house, send their kids to school, buy food, and pay the electricity bill. They count on relatives who are in Canada, or the States, or France, or all over the world as well, to help them to afford to live on a day-to-day basis.

Still, even in the constitution of Haiti, it's closed. It excludes Haitian people who have taken citizenship in another country. Haitian Canadians cannot be elected at any level in Haiti. So there is a mixed reaction.

If you want to go back to Haiti to create a business to help people, they will welcome you with open arms, but if you want to get involved in politics, they kind of judge you as illegitimate since you have been away from the country. There is a mixed reaction.

● (1725)

Mrs. Elena Alvarado: There are around 2 million Haitians outside of Haiti, and there is a

[*Translation*]

Haitian Minister of Foreign Affairs. For example, a number of our voluntary advisors are Haitian. I believe they're well received in most cases. However, they are permanent residents. They don't have Canadian citizenship.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

I want to thank both organizations, both groups, for coming here today.

Just very quickly, though, I would like to ask a question.

You mentioned that your three-year agreement with CIDA had been extended. When does it expire?

Mr. Eric Faustin: It should expire on June 30 of this year. We are expecting a prolongation, an extension to December, because we are in a process of organizational review to try to focus on what are the best opportunities for development and what are the best opportunities for us to work in Haiti. We are in the process of evaluation, before we submit a program to CIDA for the next three years.

The Chair: You also mentioned in your testimony that Canada has deported criminals to Haiti, individuals who have been charged, sentenced, and deported. Do you have the number of criminals who have been sent to Haiti from Canada?

Mr. Eric Faustin: I don't have the figures up to now. I called the Haitian consulate yesterday to get the exact figures. But before I worked in international development, I used to work in a Haitian community centre, and at that time, the figure was about 800 criminals who were targeted to be sent back to Haiti from Canada.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: That happens every year?

[*English*]

Mr. Eric Faustin: No, a total figure of 800 people.

I've been away from the community centre since 1999, and I don't have the up-to-date figures now.

The Chair: But you're saying it's not in Haiti's best interest to have them sent to Haiti.

Mr. Eric Faustin: Right now, no, because they don't have the capacity to deal with that. Those criminals are considered as the blue collar criminals in Haiti. They know how it works.

The Chair: Thank you so much for being here.

We will suspend for a minute or two and have committee members stay. We have a couple of motions to deal with and a little committee business.

● (1729)

(Pause)

● (1732)

The Chair: Let's bring this back to order.

I intend that this meeting not take very long. We did want to do some committee business. There are basically three things on your agenda for committee business. The first is notices of motion from Madame Lalonde; the second is the report from the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, which is our steering committee. The clerk instructs me that we could probably go in camera on the third thing. It deals with the proposed budget for potential travel, which may be only wishful thinking on the part of some in a minority government.

Madame Lalonde, you have brought two motions forward. Would you address your motions, please?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Chairman, as regards the one on the weapons trade, we could wait until next Tuesday. Then we'll be hearing from the representatives of OXFAM. We could ask them all the questions we want. Does that suit you?

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. We can put the motions off until Tuesday. We'll deal with the other in the second report.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Then let's adopt it.

[*English*]

The Chair: So next Tuesday we'll look at the notices of motion.

The second part of the committee business deals with the subcommittee on agenda and procedure, the steering committee....

Oh, you want to do the second motion.

Madame Lalonde, to speak to the second motion.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Mr. Chairman, I introduced this motion in the wake of the report we worked on. If you remember, we hoped to have a unanimous position and to secure the cooperation of both parties.

At the time, we had discussed the fact that Canada was giving direct aid to Ethiopia, but giving nothing to Eritrea. However, Lloyd Axworthy, who has never been my idol and who was no longer a member of the Liberal Party, had been appointed by Kofi Annan as the intermediary between Eritrea and Ethiopia to try to have Ethiopia accept the border established by a UN committee. By its signature, Ethiopia had originally agreed to respect the border. Lloyd Axworthy had tried to intervene, but was unable to do so. He mentioned to this committee—I read it in his report— that he found it strange that CIDA provided direct aid to that country, without pointing out to its representatives that Ethiopia had undertaken to respect the borders. At the time, I tried to have that added to the motion, but we did not agree on that point.

Today, I know that Mr. Obhrai will be introducing an amendment, because I was unaware of one piece of information. He told me that Canada was no longer providing direct aid to Ethiopia, like Great Britain and other countries, in view of the democratic and other problems that Ethiopia has experienced. Aid is going through the United Nations, but no longer through Ethiopia. He will therefore read an amendment to the motion with which I agree. However, the motion calls for the committee to ask Canada to provide more assistance to Eritrea, not directly, but through the World Food Program.

That would complete the motion because we've discussed it on a number of occasions. We wanted the motion to reflect the idea of helping both countries come to an agreement and to treat them fairly. That was the spirit in which we intended it.

● (1735)

[*English*]

The Chair: This is a friendly amendment?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: Can we hear the friendly amendment? Then if we want some discussion on that, that's fine, but we'll hear the friendly amendment.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Before I go on to that amendment, I agree with Madame Lalonde. A lot of things have happened; there have been talks going on. So taking into account that the intent of the main motion has not changed much, as Madame Lalonde has said, we send this message: In addition to the seventh report of May 17, 2005, the committee recommends the government give effect to this report and continue suspension of general budget support to Ethiopia, as did other donor countries.

The rest is fine, except I think Canada should continue giving aid to Eritrea.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Currently, very little aid is given to Eritrea. One per cent of the World Food Program comes from Canada. That's why I wrote this in my motion: "...suggests to government that it assist Eritrea, one of the poorest countries in the world."

[*English*]

The Chair: All right.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: That's good; I accept the expression "to assist more".

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm going to ask our clerk to read the motion as amended, unless somebody else has...it would be nice to hear the motion first, as amended, and then if we want discussion....

The Clerk of the Committee: It reads:

> That the Committee, in addition to the 7th report of May 17, 2005, recommends that the Government gives effect to this report and continue suspension of general budget support to Ethiopia, as did other donor countries like Great Britain, until the political situation improves to the satisfaction of the UN Security Council; and, suggests to government that it continue to assist—

Mr. Deepak Obhrai: If you want “continue”, it's fine.

A voice: That it “further” assist....

The Clerk: “Further” assist? Okay.

● (1740)

The Chair: Does anyone else have anything on this motion?

(Motion agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

The Chair: That concludes the motions. Let's move into the second report of the subcommittee on agenda and procedure. We have the report from the steering committee.

I don't think there's any need to go in camera on this, is there? Do you have a copy of your report there?

Your subcommittee met on Tuesday, June 13, to consider the business of the committee and agreed to make the following recommendations.

1. That representatives of Oxfam Quebec be invited to appear before this committee on Tuesday, June 20, 2006.

They will be here on Tuesday, June 20.

2. That representatives of Rights and Democracy be invited to appear before the committee in relation to the study on Haiti, on Tuesday, June 20, 2006.

They are unable to attend at that time. They're meeting with the minister then.

3. That Robert Greenhill, president of CIDA, be invited to appear before the committee on June 21, 2006, from 3:30 to 4:30.

He was with the minister the last time, but some felt it might be beneficial to have him return.

4. That the committee meet to discuss future business on June 21, 2006, from 4:30 to 5:30.

5. That the committee refer requests to appear before the committee from Falun Gong and the Vietnamese Canadian Federation to the Subcommittee on International Human Rights.

6. That the clerk of the committee be authorized to distribute the previous committee's report on HIV/AIDS from 2004 to all committee members.

7. That within the outlines of a future study on democratic development, the clerk, in consultation with the chair, prepare draft budgets on behalf of the committee respecting the committee's proposed travel to the United States and to Europe, and that the chair be authorized to present the said budget to the budget committee of the Liaison Committee.

I want to ask those who were part of the steering committee, does this fairly satisfy their understanding of the report from the steering committee?

Mr. Peter Van Loan: I think it's fair. I was just going to ask the clerk or the researcher to ensure that in advance of Mr. Greenhill's appearance we get a copy of the report—

A voice: It's coming. I think it's still in—

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Is it still being translated?

It's so that everybody has a copy of that old CIDA report and also that Mr. Greenhill knows this is one of the things we're hoping he'll talk about.

A voice: *[Inaudible—Editor]*

Mr. Peter Van Loan: Okay. That wasn't reflected here. It doesn't need to be reflected here, but I wanted to make sure it was happening.

The Chair: Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: As regards the second point, which concerns Rights and Democracy, we said that the work that had been done was truly remarkable. Can they really not send someone, since there are a number of them?

The Clerk: When I contacted them, they told me they had a meeting with the minister.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Is it being held at the same time?

The Clerk: It will be held from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. They can't change the time.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madame Lalonde was leaving for the Wednesday, so I don't know....

A voice: *[Inaudible—Editor]*

The Chair: But then you wouldn't be here for it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: It didn't bother me to be here. I prefer you here rather than insist on being present. It's really worth the trouble. We could reverse it. Perhaps Mr. Greenhill could come.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Patry

Mr. Bernard Patry: Can we perhaps just delete “on Tuesday, June 20”, and try to get an accommodation? If they cannot come at four o'clock because they are meeting the minister, and I think it's important that they meet the minister for budget purposes, I think that's key for them.... If it's not possible, we could have a discussion with them during lunch; we could have something like this on a Tuesday.

We'll leave it in your hands. Just delete “June 20”. It could be on any date until the 21st.

● (1745)

The Chair: Can the committee give me instruction on the future business of June 21? We have a full hour there for future business. There will be some discussion in regard to the fall, but would...?

Mr. Peter Van Loan: My understanding of the purpose of that was to discuss the draft in terms of direction for the researcher on the report, and there's certainly more than enough to keep us busy for an hour.

The Chair: Okay, so what I'm suggesting here is this. That is a Wednesday, the 21st? So what would happen if we—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Could Mr. Greenhill come on Tuesday?

The Clerk: I contacted his office, but I haven't yet received an answer. I can change dates.

[*English*]

Mr. Bernard Patry: Just do your best.

The Chair: We'll try to fix it. We're pressed for time because we only have two days, the 20th and the 21st.

Mr. Bernard Patry: Don't put June 21 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. If they come at four o'clock to five o'clock, it doesn't matter. Don't get stuck on an hour; just do what you can do. We're all agreed.

The Chair: As far as guidance is concerned, what about on the 21st having a committee meeting working dinner from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.? We might have to get some budget people in there, to bring in some sandwiches. Is that going to suffice?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: All right, so that's done—just the way I like it.

Then we will try to get Rights and Democracy back.

So that is the report from the steering committee. Agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: It is carried.

The third and final item is the budget. I have asked our clerk to prepare...you have two budgets to start with. There have been two budgets passed.

We've been asked to go in camera. Let's break for 10 seconds and go in camera.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :
http://www.parl.gc.ca
