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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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● (0905)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): *Bonjour, mes collègues.* Good morning. Welcome to the 43rd meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. It's Thursday, March 1.

Today we are going to have a number of testimonials. A number of witnesses will appear and give us briefings on the issue of cluster bombs. We passed a motion—unanimously, I believe—dealing with cluster bombs a number of weeks ago, so we are very thankful to the group for appearing here today.

In our first hour we'll hear from Steve Goose, the executive director of Human Rights Watch, Arms Division; Paul Hannon, the executive director of Mines Action Canada; Simon Conway, director of Landmine Action in the U.K.; and Isabelle Daoust, an international humanitarian law advisor from the Canadian Red Cross.

We look forward to your testimony as this committee meets. We will give you the opportunity for opening comments; try to keep them close to 10 minutes. Then we'll proceed into a round of questioning.

We'll begin with Mr. Hannon.

Mr. Paul Hannon (Executive Director, Mines Action Canada): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you, members, for inviting us. It's both a pleasure and a privilege for us to speak to you.

I represent Mines Action Canada, a coalition of 40 Canadian NGOs that work on victim-activated weapons. Probably the best known of those would be land mines. We worked very much with parliamentarians and our government on the Ottawa treaty, implementing that treaty, but we also work on other weapons that cause problems to civilian populations. Munitions cluster bombs are one of those.

This week across Canada it's the eighth annual Canadian Landmine Awareness Week. Events commemorate the success and acknowledge the success of the Ottawa treaty, but also recommit Canadians to finishing the job we have begun on land mines.

Today, March 1, as part of that week, is a day of action on cluster bombs—cluster munitions—both here in Ottawa and in other cities across the country. I and my colleagues, Simon Conway and Steve Goose, have just returned from Oslo, where 46 countries, including our own, signed on to a declaration agreeing to come up with a new treaty within two years to prohibit cluster bombs that cause unacceptable harm to civilian populations.

We're happy to report back to you on that and answer any questions you may have, in particular because you passed a very important motion here, and we greatly appreciate that. It was very helpful to our efforts, and I think it's very helpful for Canada. I note that Canada has basically already committed to two of the five things in that motion.

We are, of course, here to see if we can push that forward and get all five of those things implemented, but we will be very happy to answer any questions after our introductory remarks, either to provide you with facts that you may need or to provide our perspective on the road forward and what's needed in terms of the treaty development and in terms of Canada's activities.

You've already introduced our colleagues. I'll introduce each of them in a little more detail as we start and then let them speak for a few minutes to you.

First is Simon Conway. He's from Landmine Action, a British organization that does mine clearance research and advocacy. It's probably the pre-eminent organization in the country. Simon himself is an ex-British soldier and a former de-miner, so he brings quite a broad perspective to this issue. He has been to most of the countries affected by clusters, most recently Lebanon, and his organization last week released a very important study on Kosovo.

I'm going to turn it over to Simon to give you a few words.

Mr. Simon Conway (Director, Landmine Action (UK)): I thought I would start with a quote from January of this year, from Afghanistan. A NATO spokesman, a British military officer, Brigadier Richard Nugee, said, "The single thing that we have done wrong and we are striving extremely hard to improve on [in 2007] is killing innocent civilians."

It seems to me that highlights one of the pitfalls of modern warfare and also the point that modern warfare has changed. This is where the responsibility to protect civilians clashes up against a requirement to achieve a military objective and where we need to consider whether our weapons systems are appropriate for our objective.

I'll just very briefly describe what a cluster munition is. A cluster munition has two parts. You have the container and then the submunitions inside it—very much like peas in a pod. The container might be an air-drop bomb, it might be a rocket, or it might be an artillery shell. You may have scores, sometimes hundreds, of individual explosive submunitions inside each container.

The submunitions themselves usually have a small amount of explosives. Most submunitions are about the size of a fist or a D-cell battery. They contain explosives. Usually there's a fragmentation sheath around them that will turn into shrapnel. Invariably there's a copper cone that inverts on detonation and creates a molten slug of metal that is supposed to pierce armour. So the idea is that it will pierce through a tank and then rattle around inside.

Often, also particularly with the air-drop ones, you have an incendiary in them, usually zirconium. That will turn into fire. So the effects, usually, of a submunition exploding are blast, fragmentation, shrapnel, molten metal, and fire. As I said, you may have scores, hundreds, of these inside an individual rocket.

Let me give you an example. The multiple-launch rocket system is a track platform that fires rockets. It can fire 12 rockets and each rocket will have inside it 644 little submunitions. That means that at a press of a button, a multiple-launch rocket system will deliver 7,728 of these individual submunitions over an area the size of a square kilometre.

When I was in the military, when I was training just before the Gulf War, we used to call these grid-square removal machines. That filled me with a certain euphoria as a training soldier. I consider now, in the battles that we fight, whether it is really appropriate to use a weapons system that will carpet bomb or certainly saturate an area the size of a square kilometre.

In most of these weapons systems, when the individual containers break open and disperse, the peas from the pod will spread over an area of two to four soccer pitches. That may be okay in an open scenario, but in an urban area or in a populated area, that will spread unexploded submunitions over a wide area.

That's what they are.

What were they designed for? In essence, cluster munitions were designed for use against large, armoured infantry formations, predominantly the Warsaw Pact coming across the central European plain. We were fighting a last-ditch defence of democracy. That's what I dug in on the German plains for. We were, if I may put it crudely, going to throw everything but the kitchen sink at them in an effort to delay the progress of our enemy.

In those circumstances, I suppose you could say we didn't have the luxury to consider whether these weapons were particularly accurate or whether they worked as intended. That war, what is called industrial war—and I would refer to General Rupert Smith's book *The Utility of Force*, which was recently published—didn't happen and we don't fight those kinds of wars now. The wars we fight now are what General Rupert Smith calls wars amongst the people. We are fighting in populated areas, in urban areas. We are not fighting a defensive war against massive armoured columns coming at us. We are intervening in other countries. We are intervening on humanitarian grounds. We are intervening to prevent imminent threat to us. We are fighting for the will of the people in those circumstances. We are trying to win hearts and minds.

● (0910)

Now, if by our choice of weapons systems we kill large numbers of civilians, and as a result we antagonize the local population and we create a strong national and international public reaction.... The classic example of this is Lebanon recently. What possible purpose was served by massive bombardment, something like 4 million submunitions dropped on a heavily populated area of southern Lebanon, with a consequent huge public and international reaction?

I wouldn't single out Lebanon, though, as being exclusive. If you look back, there was the use of cluster munitions in Iraq in 2003, the attack on al-Hilla, which was documented by Human Rights Watch, where hundreds of civilians were injured when cluster munitions were used by U.S. forces in a populated area. In March 2003, the U.K. dropped 98,000 individual submunitions in and around Basra, killing people in their homes, killing children in their homes. Now, what possible military objective is achieved by doing that?

Because if you do this, if you create large numbers of civilian casualties, if you create this public reaction, you are unlikely to achieve your political goals.

Finally, on a point about the military utility of these weapons—and our report on Kosovo has just come out—these weapons really have never actually worked as intended. We dropped about 235,000 submunitions—this is the U.S., the U.K., and the Netherlands—on Kosovo in May and June of 1999. According to the NATO strike data that we've been analyzing, of strikes on mobile targets—this is mass groups of tanks—out of 269 individual strikes in which multiple canisters, the tens of thousands of submunitions, were used, less than 75 of those strikes, less than 30%, actually achieved any damage on the targets.

I was in Kosovo in June 1999, and we just didn't see any tanks. Now, they had a couple of days to move stuff out, but they really didn't have enough time to move out huge columns of damaged vehicles. There really wasn't the scale of damage. I've heard General Sir Hugh Beech of the Institute of Strategic Studies, another British military officer, say that we may have destroyed as few as 30 items of military equipment with the 78,000 that were dropped by the U.K. Out of that 234,000, about 78,000 of them were dropped by the U.K., and we may have destroyed as few as 30 items of military equipment.

It is very unclear to me where these weapons have really been a force decider, where they have...and this is something to push ministries of defence on, to justify themselves.

Then, finally, the other issue is simply that they're unreliable; they fail in huge numbers. I first saw this in Kosovo in June 1999, where we saw large numbers of unexploded cluster bombs. I've seen it in Southeast Asia. I've seen it in places like Eritrea—

● (0915)

The Chair: I'll just interrupt you for a moment, so we can get an idea on the timing.

Mr. Goose, you have a presentation, as well as Madam Daoust?

Mr. Simon Conway: I'll finish up now.

My key argument is that the nature of warfare has changed, and we fight something else now. We fight something called war amongst the people, and the weapons systems that we choose should reflect that. They need to be more discriminatory. They need to be smarter. And if we use weapons systems that kill large numbers of civilians at the time of the attack and for years afterwards, then we will not achieve our political goals.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Conway.

Ms. Daoust.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Isabelle Daoust (International Humanitarian Law Advisor, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Canadian Red Cross): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll speak in French, with your permission.

Obviously, like my colleagues here present, the Red Cross as a whole is very much concerned by the legal problems and the humanitarian consequences of cluster munitions. Today I would like to send a message to parliamentarians and the government. It is the message of the Red Cross, which last year issued a call to all governments concerning the following three points.

The first point is to put an end to the use of cluster munitions, which are inaccurate and unreliable. The second point is to prohibit the use of those munitions against military objectives, if those military objectives are located in inhabited areas. The third point of the Red Cross's call is to eliminate stocks of these munitions, which are inaccurate and unreliable and, pending the destruction of those stocks, to prohibit their transfer.

Mr. Chair, I would like to explain to you how we have come to these conclusions. First, we relied on legal bases and, second, on the humanitarian consequences that we have observed in the field.

Our analysis is based on international humanitarian law. When I say international humanitarian law, I refer mainly to the four Geneva Conventions and to the two additional protocols, which contain all the rules applicable in armed conflicts and which specifically contain rules related to the conduct of hostilities. Consequently, we're talking about weapons that are already governed by law, by specific and general rules. I'd like to cite a few of those rules to you.

The first is the rule of distinction, which requires that combatants in the field draw a distinction between civilians and military personnel. The second is the rule of prohibition against indiscriminate attacks. The third rule is the rule of proportionality, that is to say that attacks that can be expected to cause loss of human lives among the civilian population must not be excessive relative to the actual military advantage that is sought to be achieved. Another important rule is the rule of precautions that combatants must take before launching attacks. There is also a rule concerning protection of the environment, that is to say that it is prohibited to use weapons that might cause serious, lasting, extensive damage to the environment, and which are designed for that purpose. Lastly, there is a rule concerning superfluous injury, that is to say that it is prohibited to use weapons that are likely to cause superfluous injury among civilians or combatants.

I want to clarify one point. When international humanitarian law was negotiated, following the Second World War, all military imperatives were clearly taken into consideration at the same time as humanitarian requirements. This is a law that therefore seeks to establish a balance between these two tensions. Each of the rules that were developed is designed to strike a balance between military imperatives and humanitarian requirements.

Our concerns are that these weapons do not meet the rules that I have just cited, either in their use or in the specific characteristics thereof.

My second point obviously concerns humanitarian consequences. The Red Cross is present in various conflicts in more than 80 countries around the world. Since the late 1990s, our delegates in the field have obviously been able to document the very serious humanitarian impact of these weapons in situations such as those in Laos, Afghanistan, Iraq, Southern Lebanon, Kosovo, and I could name many more.

What is shocking for us is that civilians are already suffering enough in these conflicts. With this kind of weapon, we're still seeing human losses, injuries, deaths, particularly among children, 10, 20 or 30 years after the conflict. So we have legal concerns about compliance with the law, but especially about humanitarian concerns associated with the consequences of the use of these weapons.

I believe I'll stop there, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much.

● (0920)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Daoust.

Mr. Goose.

Mr. Steve Goose (Executive Director, Arms Division, Human Rights Watch): I tend to speak extemporaneously, but it was my understanding that for translation purposes you like to have written statements. So I prepared one, and I will read just part of it, if we're concerned about time.

We do very much appreciate this committee's recognition of the importance of this cluster munition issue. Indeed, we're at a special moment in time when governments and civil society are once again coming together, in response to a humanitarian imperative, to create a treaty that will save countless lives in the future.

This happened successfully with the anti-personnel land mine crisis 10 years ago. It can happen again now with respect to deadly cluster munitions, if the political will is there, if governments can again show courage and compassion, and if dubious military interests are not allowed to take precedence over well-documented humanitarian concerns.

Perhaps Canada above all other nations should be at the forefront of this endeavour to eradicate inaccurate and unreliable cluster munitions. It was Canada's vision, commitment, and caring that largely brought about the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty. It has largely been Canada's ongoing dedication and hard work for the past decade that made this treaty such a success.

Canada's leadership is needed again, but thus far Canada has been slow to respond, indeed reluctant to respond to that call. We were pleased that Canada attended the just concluded Oslo conference on cluster munitions and that it joined 45 other nations in supporting a declaration committing to the conclusion of a new treaty in 2008—a very rapid deadline—that prohibits cluster munitions, which cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

Canada was absent from a similar, although weaker, declaration last November in the Convention on Conventional Weapons, the CCW. Given Canada's absence from that declaration, this was a significant development in Oslo.

We were also pleased with the announcement that Canada will destroy the remainder of its existing stockpile of cluster munitions, its 155mm artillery projectiles with submunitions.

But there's much more that Canada can do. The best place to start, as this committee has already demonstrated, would be to announce, effective immediately, a moratorium on use, production, import, or export of cluster munitions until a new treaty is concluded.

Austria made such an announcement in Oslo last week. Apparently the Canadian Forces have never used cluster munitions, but it's worth noting that one Canadian company, Bristol Aerospace Limited, lists among its products an unguided, air-to-surface rocket cluster munition, the CRV7, which is a 70mm rocket that contains M73 submunitions.

Internationally it's important that Canada not just join the new process launched in Oslo, as a somewhat reluctant latecomer; Canada should play a leading role, in part because it's the right thing to do at the national level, and because it's consistent with Canada's strong position on humanitarian affairs and its pioneering efforts to emphasize human security. It's also because of the effect that Canada's leadership will have internationally. Because of the Ottawa process on landmines and Canada's sustained leadership there, the country has developed great expertise and experience relevant to promoting this cluster munition initiative outside of the CCW.

Canada has the reputation and the respect that can bring many other countries into a new process. We have much concern that if Canada does not fully embrace this effort to combat dangerous cluster munitions, many other countries will stay away, concluding that if it is not important for Canada, the guardian of the land mine treaty, it cannot be important for them either.

We've been concerned with some comments, which the government has made, that seem to indicate they still want to take a go-slow approach and put some emphasis on the CCW as the most viable forum for addressing cluster munitions, in part because some of the major users and stockpilers of the weapon, such as the U.S., Russia, and China, are part of the CCW but not yet part of this outside process.

This is, at the least, an ironic approach in that the Ottawa process on mines arose from the failure of the CCW to deal adequately with anti-personnel mines, just as this new process on clusters comes on the heels of CCW failure to deal with the issue.

There should be no pretense that the CCW can deal urgently or effectively with cluster munitions.

In questions, I'd be happy to elaborate many reasons why the CCW will not produce on this issue and an outside process can.

● (0925)

Canada has also given indications that it is putting some faith into a technical fix for the cluster munition problem, with talk of future acquisition of cluster munitions with low failure rates. This will not work. Simon has pointed out already the degree to which those who claim failure rates don't meet those rates. Lebanon very clearly demonstrated that submunitions with low failure rates in pristine testing conditions don't come close to meeting those specifications when used in combat conditions. This failure rate approach also doesn't deal with the other half of the problem with cluster munitions, which is their indiscriminate wide area effect. Failure rates won't help that.

When cluster munitions are used, they're used irresponsibly, whether it's in Lebanon in 2006, Iraq in 2003, Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002, Kosovo in 1999, or going all the way back to Southeast Asia in the 1960s and 1970s. They're used irresponsibly even by some of the nations that profess to scrupulously adhere to international humanitarian law. They are used in huge numbers. They are used in populated areas. Old, outdated models are used even when new models are available. Despite any good intentions, in actual combat, cluster munitions—these weapons with such inherently dangerous characteristics—are used irresponsibly.

I've heard that there is special concern here about the impact a prohibition on cluster munitions may have on Canadian soldiers serving in Afghanistan. We were talking about this last night. It's hard for us to envision what the military requirement for cluster munitions would be in Afghanistan at this moment. But more to the point, we know what happened when the U.S. used clusters there in 2001 and 2002. Human Rights Watch went in and did an investigative mission for just over a week, and we identified more than 100 civilians who had been killed by cluster munitions. Many more, undoubtedly, were injured, and there were undoubtedly many more whom we weren't able to locate.

Cluster munitions caused more civilian casualties in Iraq in 2003 and in Kosovo in 1999 than any other weapons system. The unacceptable risks to civilians are clear.

Simon talked about the degree to which the military utility of clusters has been overstated. There's also an issue related to the military dangers of cluster munitions. Cluster munitions undeniably hinder the mobility of your own armed forces and endanger your own troops. We have an action report from the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division following its fighting in Iraq in 2003, which called cluster munitions “losers”— their word, not mine—and said that they were a relic of the Cold War. More than 80 U.S. soldiers were killed by U. S. submunition duds in the 1991 Gulf War. That's U.S. submunitions killing U.S. soldiers.

In the two dozen or so countries where cluster munitions have been used, they've been used with horrific effect. But in truth, this is a humanitarian disaster still waiting to happen. We count about 75 countries that stockpile the weapon and 34 that produce. There are millions and millions of cluster munitions already in stock that contain billions of submunitions. If these billions of submunitions get transferred, shipped around to new countries, including possibly to non-state actors—we recently documented the use of cluster munitions by Hezbollah—and if they get used, or even if a small portion gets used, this would make the landmine prices pale in comparison.

But if we act urgently, we can avert this new crisis. A treaty that prohibits cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm would be one of the most significant steps that governments could take to protect civilians from the effects of armed conflict and the aftermath of armed conflict. Public outrage at cluster munitions is already strong and is growing every day. It's time for Canada to move to the forefront of those nations committed to ending the suffering caused by cluster munitions.

Thank you.

● (0930)

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we go to our first round of questions, I just want to quickly ask something. I haven't really heard—and I've listened intently—a really clear definition of how big a bomb.... I know the difference between a bomb and a grenade. I don't know if you tried to define it. How big is it before we refer to it as a cluster bomb? Something like a grenade launcher—that wouldn't be a bomb yet, would it?

Mr. Simon Conway: Probably the smallest cluster bombs we find are artillery shells that might contain, on average, somewhere between about 40 and 60 individual explosive submunitions.

The Chair: Do you mean that something inside this rocket or bomb is an explosive device in itself, not just shrapnel that gets projected out?

Mr. Simon Conway: If you imagine the pea in the pod, the pod is the container. That might be a shell or a rocket or an aircraft bomb. That breaks open and lots of peas fall out. Each of those peas is a submunition, an explosive item in its own right, with its own shrapnel sheath and its own explosive and fuse.

The Chair: Good. I think it's good to get that on the record as a clear indication.... I know Ms. Daoust referred to the definition in humanitarian law of a cluster bomb, but I just wanted to get that on the record.

You said that 75 countries probably have these and 34 produce them. Is that correct? Is there a list?

All I've heard, to be quite frank, is that the United States, Canada, and Great Britain have these. But there are 75 countries, and they're here on this list?

A voice: Yes.

The Chair: Okay, thank you.

We'll go to Mr. Eyking.

Hon. Mark Eyking (Sydney—Victoria, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It's great to see the group here this morning. Canada has been I think a leader in land mines and demining.

I'm from Cape Breton, where we have a group as well. Paul, you're probably aware of them. It's Canadian International Demining Corps, an NGO. They remind me of what they're doing and what they want. They are doing a big job with the dogs. And you probably know Irving Schwartz.

I guess this is why you're in front of our committee, because we're hoping that Canada can also take a lead on cluster bombs.

I have three questions. The first one you have alluded to already, but are we using them in our Canadian army? And if we stopped using them, would that have a major effect on the way we do our military exercises? Would that leave us with disadvantage out there in any exercises we're doing? Also in the opening statement, you mentioned there were five recommendations. I think you said we are following three of them and there are two that we're not doing, or that we're doing two or three. Can you allude a bit to those?

Mr. Paul Hannon: I can answer all of those questions, I think.

Canada has never used cluster munitions. To our knowledge, we've never tested them. If we implement a moratorium, and we conclude a treaty that will protect civilians from those that cause harm, this will not affect our military capability at all. We haven't used them yet, and we have a very capable military force. Whether it's for peacekeeping or combat, this should not impinge on them whatsoever.

In terms of the recommendations this committee passed in its motion, there were five points. The first was that Canada join the 26 countries that were leading the efforts. Well, that's now up to 46 after Oslo, and Canada did join. We're appreciative of that. Of course, we'd like to see Canada be in the small leadership group of that and really move this forward. As Steve said, we have a lot of experience and expertise from the land mines issue. We know how to leverage our resources extremely well and very effectively to help build international alliances and coalitions, and to move forward.

The second thing that Canada is meeting in terms of your motion is to complete destruction of the cluster munitions in our stockpile. In Oslo our representatives from Canada did clearly state that Canada is in the process of destroying the remaining stockpile it has. The Minister of National Defence has written to one of our members indicating that they have no plans to acquire new clusters.

So we think the second point in your motion, about a moratorium, is a logical conclusion from that. We have agreed that we're going to negotiate a treaty within two years. We're destroying our stockpile, and we have no plans to buy new clusters. We think it's totally logical that we would support a moratorium and that Canada would implement one while that treaty negotiation is going on. It would be both illogical and irresponsible for us to acquire any cluster munitions while those negotiations were going on. We could buy something that could be illegal after the negotiations. Then we'd put ourselves in quite a quandary, and unnecessarily so. So it's perfectly logical to us that Canada would join a moratorium. That would really help move this issue forward.

One of the other points in your motion that we think is very important for Canada to consider is that we need policy coherence. The organization you mentioned, the Canadian International Demining Corps, is now working in Lebanon with Canadian money to help provide risk education to the civilian population there on the areas they shouldn't go in; they are now contaminated with cluster munitions. Many of those areas have already been cleared of landmines. So now the international community is going in and re-clearing an area that's already been cleared; we're spending money to either clear that or to protect and warn civilians of the dangers of that area, and at the same time we do not have any policies that prohibit the use of weapons that cause that problem.

If we don't have policies like an international treaty and strong national legislation, we are going to have the disaster that Steve Goose alluded to, because there are billions of these in the stockpiles in the world. And they're not useful in modern warfare.

● (0935)

The Chair: You have another minute, Mr. Eyking.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Okay.

Most of the countries or states you have listed here are in NATO, or the majority look to be in NATO. What's the sense coming out of Brussels on this? Where are they at with this? Do they have a policy or statement?

In other words, what are the vibes coming out of NATO and Brussels on cluster bombs, and where do they want to go?

The Chair: A very quick answer.

Mr. Steve Goose: There is no unified position on cluster munitions within NATO. However, the majority of members of NATO are part of this group of 46 nations that committed to a new treaty within a two-year period of time. On this issue they will have to devise some approach that will allow them to continue to operate, much in the way they did with anti-personnel mines. Now only one member of NATO is not a member of the Mine Ban Treaty.

The Chair: Mr. Patry, very quickly.

[*Translation*]

M. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Hannon, you didn't answer the second question from my colleague Mr. Eyking, and that was with regard to the motion. You, or perhaps Mr. Goose, said there were just two or three of the five recommendations that Canada said they would fulfill for the moment. What are those two or three recommendations?

Mr. Paul Hannon: My apologies. The two that I think Canada is responding to in your motion are to join the 26 countries, which are now 46, and to complete the destruction of the stockpiles. Those two are in process. The three that aren't are the moratorium, the policy coherence on clearance and use, and the ratification of protocol V.

● (0940)

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): Good morning. Thank you for the work you're doing. It is a job as admirable as it is necessary, because we observe not only that wars are terrible, but also that post-war situations become true nightmares for civilians. We've long had a number of examples, and, more recently, in Afghanistan. Radio-Canada reported that civilians populations and soldiers in that country were coping with fields mined by the Russians in 1980, which are still dangerous today.

First, would a convention require countries that have previously used fragmentation bombs to provide the maps of their bombardments? From what I understand, eliminating these bombs in the field is different when you have a plan.

Second, what process is planned? We're going to exercise pressure so that Canada is part of it. Can you give us the stages leading the signing of the convention?

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Goose: On your first question, it may be a little early to predict precisely what will be in a treaty, but there was much discussion in Oslo about the need for this to be a comprehensive treaty that has an integrated approach and will, like the Mine Ban Treaty, deal with clearance issues, responsibility for clearance, transparency, and victim assistance. So I feel certain that the problem you're pointing to will be addressed in some fashion in a new treaty.

The other encouraging thing about Oslo, in addition to the fact that so many countries came and committed to a deadline for a new treaty, was that a process was also agreed to that will serve as negotiating sessions leading to the treaty. The first of those will occur in Lima, Peru, in May. Then there will be follow-on sessions in Austria, likely New Zealand, as well as Ireland.

Canada needs to get out front at the early stages of this, so the next key date by which they need to have moved their policy even further along—hopefully in a major leap forward—will be the meeting in Lima, Peru. So there's a timeframe established here.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: What is the date?

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Goose: It's May 23 to 25 this year. We're moving very quickly on this, as the humanitarian imperative demands.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: There were a lot of fragmentation bombs and antipersonnel mines in Kosovo. A lot of money was invested to clean up the country. Do those bombs still pose a problem? Can you also name for us the countries that are fighting to remove mines from lands that otherwise could be cultivated or inhabited?

[*English*]

Mr. Steve Goose: Do you want to take that one?

Mr. Simon Conway: Kosovo had probably the single-largest humanitarian intervention immediately after the conflict. Something like $30 million U.S. has been spent on clearance predominantly of cluster munitions. They are still clearing cluster munitions in Kosovo today. They're finding them where they were buried underground. They're being turned up by farmers plowing them up. They're finding them hanging in trees where people are going out to forage or gather wood or where they're going out for picnics.

The casualty rates have fallen, but huge amounts of money have been spent, and it's a small area. It's very problematic. Nowhere else has really experienced that level of funding for clearance, although a lot of money has been spent in places like Afghanistan and Cambodia.

As a former de-miner, the other point I would make is that, from the beginning of my job, we never distinguished between mines and other unexploded ordnance, or between cluster bombs. We cleared whatever was there that was posing a threat to the local population. We found ourselves clearing cluster munitions in Kosovo, we found ourselves clearing mines in Sri Lanka, and we found ourselves clearing cluster munitions in Eritrea. It depended on whatever was there. It was called mine action, but it involved the clearance of a range of items.

Clearing cluster munitions is difficult. They often have very sensitive fuses. You can't move them. You find them in unexpected places. You find huge numbers of them. These factors present a particular, specific problem for clearance agencies.

In June 1999 in Kosovo, I was present when two British Army officers died when they moved cluster bombs that had been found near a school in a place called Glogovac. We spent the morning trying to persuade them not to move them, but they ignored us, as is often the case, and they died.

As Steve was saying, 80 U.S. soldiers were killed by cluster bombs immediately after the first Gulf War. They killed more U.S. soldiers than the Iraqis did.

● (0945)

Mr. Steve Goose: Could I add one small comment, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Yes, very small.

Mr. Steve Goose: It is unlikely that a new treaty on cluster munitions would require any new expenditures for clearance on the part of Canada, even though it likely would have a provision about assistance with clearance. That's because Canada is already engaged in funding that kind of activity.

You don't distinguish between munitions. You don't go into a field and just remove anti-personnel mines because of an anti-personnel mine treaty; you go into the field and remove everything. Canada would just need to continue the activities that it's already engaged in with regard to clearance activities.

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

We'll go to Mr. Goldring and Mr. Storseth, on a split.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you very much.

Certainly, unexploded munitions have been a difficulty. We know there are sheep mowing the grass at Vimy Ridge because of the danger from unexploded munitions from the First World War.

Your comment was that Canada has never used them, but we see a change in our military now where it is becoming more and more involved. We have tanks in theatre. So to say that Canada never will I think would be a decision of the military itself as to whether or not there's an expediency to saving military lives when it comes to using the munitions. This is always, I suppose, the argument about it.

On the comments about the cluster munitions and their hazard, there was a comment that this was mainly about the civilian risk subsequent to the bombing. You mentioned the failure rate on them. Are there also included in there not only the failure rate of the ones that are still there but a concern for the delayed action munitions too?

Just as a final comment before we hear the answer and I turn it over to my colleague, certainly they're useful for much more than just the civilian areas. My understanding is that they're useful for carpet bombing of airports prior to actions, and in many other scenarios. The newer cluster bombs from the United States are getting more and more intelligent. They actually come down and target multiple locations at the same time. So there is an evolution in their design.

But I'd like to know about the reliability of the number of actual failed ones by percentage, and what percentage of those might be delayed action.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Maybe we'll take Mr. Storseth's question, and then you can just answer both of them, if you keep track of what Mr. Goldring has asked.

Mr. Storseth, very quickly.

Mr. Brian Storseth (Westlock—St. Paul, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I'll try to make this brief.

I think the key to the argument, as Mr. Conway has put it forward, is that these munitions don't necessarily just target the military combatants. They target civilians for weeks, months, and even years afterwards, as I understand it.

I saw in your report—and it's an excellent report—the community of Nabatiya. One of the pieces of unexploded ordnance that was there actually had a date stamped on it of 1974. Is that a typical thing that we would find in theatre and in use, especially in Lebanon?

There's another question I have that I really think we need to have answered. From your experience, Mr. Conway, what kind of equipment are we talking about? What is needed to solve this problem of clearing unexploded ordnance, as it is obviously a little bit more difficult? Definitely different issues arise, from what we've seen with the land mines that were in Lebanon already. Do we have any idea of the death rate that has occurred in the civilian population in Lebanon since?

● (0950)

The Chair: Since the end of the...?

Mr. Brian Storseth: Since the end of the conflict.

The Chair: All right, let's begin with Mr. Goldring's question, whichever one of you wants to take that.

Mr. Conway.

Mr. Simon Conway: If I could look at the U.K. very briefly, we are in essence moving away from the use of cluster munitions. Our air-dropped submunitions, which spread 147 of these over an area the size of about two to four football pitches, are being replaced with something called Brimstone, which is a targeted unitary warhead. The thinking is that if there are some tanks or there is a group of vehicles, it is better, and in the long run cheaper, to use what may be individually more expensive—a unitary, targeted piece of equipment that will take out that tank—rather than just throwing a bunch of unguided stuff that will saturate the area.

There is a movement within militaries—and we have plenty of ministry of defence documents that we've received through freedom of information requests that indicate this—to move away from these kinds of saturation weapons and toward much more precise, individually targeted weapons. So I think we're going to see these weapons go out of service anyway. We are, in essence, riding the crest of the wave.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Are they still clusters?

Mr. Simon Conway: In this case, these are individually targeted, so they're not clustered.

This is an issue for a definition that will come out during the process. If you want to go down that way, it is possible to exclude certain types of smart munitions from the definition itself.

The Chair: And you would be in favour of that?

Mr. Simon Conway: I'm not an advocate for the purchase of new weapons systems. That's not what I'm here for. In general, though, I think weapons systems should be smart and discriminatory, by which I mean guided. If there is a weapons system that can identify and lock onto a particular military vehicle due to some kind of algorithm and due to, let's say, the heat signature or whatever else, if that does not cause unacceptable humanitarian harm—and the big issues are whether or not it causes unacceptable humanitarian harm and whether or not you can use it in such a way that you protect civilians—then I don't have a problem with that. I can't speak for the entire NGO community on that, though.

The Chair: Thank you.

And Mr. Storseth's answer...?

Mr. Simon Conway: We've heard arguments about how they will blow up if you put in self-destruct cluster munitions, and that you don't have a problem with clearance afterwards. What we've found in southern Lebanon is huge numbers of cluster bombs with self-destructs on them that didn't work.

Technical fixes, the kinds of actions you can take to try to improve these munitions, are very problematic. Often these weapons are tested in circumstances in which, of course, they always work in pristine testing areas. What we're finding in the field, after combat, is huge failure rates. The UN is talking about a 40% failure rate. I find that difficult to believe on one level, but that may mean there are something like a million unexploded submunitions littering southern Lebanon. A significant proportion of those will be fitted with self-destructs that did not work.

Mr. Brian Storseth: What kind of direction are you asking for or do you need to resolve the issue? They're already there. I'm talking about what kind of money and what kind of equipment you're looking at to actually—

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Storseth.

Go ahead.

Mr. Simon Conway: The simple answer to that is funding, really. To be honest, the training is there. We know how to clear cluster munitions. It's problematic and it's dangerous, but with sufficient funding.... There is a lot of money going in there from a number of different countries, so I think they can be cleared.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Conway.

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for being here today, and thank you for the very major role that I know each of your organizations played in making Canada and Canadians proud 10 years ago with the land mines treaty. And even though there are a lot of people out there wondering what happened to Canada's independent foreign policy, thank you for demonstrating that we can indeed work across party lines, as we've done at this committee, and with NGOs, in a solid partnership, to move forward on such a monumental challenge as that of banning cluster munitions in today's world.

I can't help but think that it may have been about a year ago today that we had an all-party breakfast on Parliament Hill with this issue before us, and pretty significantly, the Afghanistan ambassador appeared to speak in support of the campaign you were launching for the banning of cluster munitions at that time. So there has been some progress.

I want to ask a couple of questions that you may or may not know the answers to in detail or have time to elaborate on, but perhaps you could agree to share the information with the committee.

The first is in the context of Afghanistan today. I know that your research showed, 2001 to 2002, that there were 100 civilian deaths directly attributable and identifiable as a result of cluster munitions. But is it your understanding that cluster munitions are still being used in Afghanistan? If so, by which countries and in which parts of Afghanistan?

Secondly, there has been some concern expressed by some members of Parliament, although I'm happy to say nobody around this table at the moment, that we really need to hear from those who would advocate within Canada the continued use of cluster bombs. I'm wondering if you can help identify who such people might be, because I think probably we should know who they are and we should hear from them to know what is being said.

Thirdly, you spoke about the fact that the majority of European countries, I think, were among the signators, the 46 signators, in Oslo last week. Can you identify which countries who are NATO members were not among the signators?

Finally, my question is on the next step that you are advocating, which seems very reasonable—we should put our money where our mouth is; we should demonstrate that our words are followed by actions. Can you suggest what the cost to Canada is to take that next step of declaring a moratorium? Is there any downside that one can imagine, or is that the next logical step that you hope we can provide leadership for, helping to make happen by working together?

● (0955)

Mr. Paul Hannon: Yes, I will try to get back to you on the specific answers. I don't think we have time to get into depth on Afghanistan.

For those who advocate for, I suppose it would be odd for me to be identifying them for you, but we certainly have heard lots of military experts over the last six years in the CCW. None of them really made particularly strong cases for the use of the weapon; they were just trying to prevent us from presenting our cases that there were humanitarian concerns with the weapon. I'm sure our government officials in Foreign Affairs or National Defence could identify people.

I would suggest that if you do have them here, you should ask them what proof they have that these weapons are effective and what proof they have that they do what they claim they will do and how they will use them in modern warfare. I think that will respond to some of your questions, because we've not seen it. There are claims, and usually from manufacturers, but we've not seen any proof that they actually achieve the military objective they're supposed to achieve and that they do what they're supposed to do. But we do have lots of proof that they don't do what they're supposed to do and that they harm an awful lot, tens of thousands, of civilians and affect communities around the world.

We'll get you the list of the NATO countries that weren't there or didn't sign on.

Yes, I think the next logical step is for Canada to declare a moratorium. I don't see a cost in that. The immediate cost for Canada to play a role, as Steve has suggested, is basically some travel and resources in Foreign Affairs to go to conferences, do bilaterals, do the clever and creative diplomatic work that they've done on the landmine stream. They know how to do it.

Mr. Simon Conway: That may be a long-term saving, because if we don't act now we may well see these weapons proliferate further than they have. I saw Hezbollah using cluster munitions in southern Lebanon just last year. They had been sold by the Chinese to Iran, and Iran had supplied them to Hezbollah. We're now seeing non-state actors using cluster munitions. We may well see them being sold to other nations.

We could have a huge problem that would cost us a huge amount of money to clear up. Countries like Canada will inevitably be the ones that pay for clearing them up because they have done such a good job of paying to clear up land mines. Do you want to face that cost? It may be better to act now. It will save you money in the longer term.

● (1000)

Mr. Steve Goose: I have some relevant information on Afghanistan. We made Freedom of Information Act requests about U.S. use of cluster munitions in recent years, and the response came back that they had used them on a couple of occasions in Iraq after 2003. They used them very heavily in 2003 in the so-called major fighting. They've used them a couple of times since, but they told us the U.S. had not used them in Afghanistan since 2002.

We know there has been some speculation about the Netherlands having used them. Dutch officials tell us they have not.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that information, and thank you for being here today. It certainly has been a bit of an education, as well as a follow-up to the motion we had.

We will suspend for a few moments to allow you the opportunity to leave the table, and for our next guests to appear.

● (Pause) ●

● (1005)

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order.

We're coming to a conclusion on our study on democratic development. We have a very limited number of witnesses left to hear.

We are very pleased today to have with us the President of the Canadian International Development Agency, Robert Greenhill. Welcome. It's good to see you again. We also have Adair Heuchan, acting director general from the Office for Democratic Governance. We're pleased to have you with us. You have given us a short document here on CIDA and their Office for Democratic Governance.

You have been here many times and know how this committee operates. You can make some opening comments. Then if we have time for questions, we would appreciate that.

Welcome. We look forward to what you have to say.

Mr. Robert Greenhill (President, Canadian International Development Agency): Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to discuss this important issue, which is that of democratic governance and the role that we can play to help the government in this regard.

[*English*]

I would also like to start off by thanking the members for taking the time as a group to come to the meeting held by the Democracy Council. I think it was an excellent day, and by your presence you underlined the importance this committee is collectively playing in this important issue. It was recognized and appreciated by the people present.

As CIDA's minister, the Honourable Josée Verner, expressed to you when she testified to your committee back in October, democratic development is a core area of focus for our agency. And for us, democratic development means democratic governance. It means freedom and democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and accountable public institutions.

By freedom and democracy, we mean democracy based upon strong electoral, legislative, and party institutions rooted in a supportive democratic culture, including an active civil society and a vibrant free media. By rule of law, we mean fair and effective laws, accessible and timely legal institutions, and an impartial judiciary. Human rights for all can be achieved through strong human rights institutions and mechanisms that support civil society to fulfill its role in human rights education and accountability. Accountable public institutions are critical to manage the economy and public funds and to deliver key social services, such as health and education, effectively and without corruption.

Our commitment to supporting democratic governance has grown since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Today, CIDA makes the largest investment of any Canadian organization in democratic governance in developing countries, working closely with many other Canadian organizations and government ministries, because we recognize that open, democratic, and accountable systems of governance that promote human rights and the rule of law are essential to achieving long-term economic and social development and poverty reduction.

When Canada's new government came into power a year ago, democratic government was accentuated as an integral aspect of our work at CIDA. Now there is an increasing focus on promoting freedom and democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and accountable institutions in all of our country programming. In fact, for our major country programs, it is the only compulsory sector of focus. Different country programs can focus on other issues, whether they be health or education or private sector development, etc., but every one of our major country programs must have the element of democratic governance as a compulsory sector of intervention.

The handout you have in front of you illustrates a list of projects that CIDA has undertaken in the field in cooperation with other Canadian and international partners.

CIDA's decision to establish the Office for Democratic Governance last year represents a critical component of our determination to enhance CIDA and the Government of Canada's efforts to promote democratic governance around the world.

I've been asked to speak a little bit today on the origin and nature and role of the Office for Democratic Governance.

The office is designed to build on CIDA's capacity for effective practice of democratic governance and to serve as a focal point through which the agency can actively engage the community of Canadian and international experts, institutions, and other government departments whose work focuses on democratic governance. It's important to note that our role is to facilitate, coordinate, and accelerate, but certainly not to monopolize, Canada's democratic governance assistance. Many other government departments are very involved; many other key Canadian institutions, including NGO institutions, are actively involved, in collaboration with local partners in the developing countries.

Why was this office created? For many years, many Canadians have been active in this area of work and have made historic contributions, for example, Canada's role in ending apartheid and building democratic governance in South Africa. Yet until recently, there was no home to coordinate and synthesize Canada's role in advancing democratic governance. There was a lack of a strong and consolidated knowledge base, so although there was an impressive list of projects, it wasn't clear there was an impressive institutional understanding and comprehension coming out of all of these different projects. And there was no central organization charged with building and supporting Canadian capacity inside and outside government and no way to access the best expertise quickly.

Canada Corps, launched in 2004, represented an initial attempt to fill this vacuum, but as structured, the organization was saddled with a multiple mandate that went beyond good governance to include youth mobilization as well as public engagement. Canada Corps had some success in mobilizing Canadian volunteers and youth, yet it became clear over time that in order to maximize Canada's value-added, a more concentrated effort to promote democratic governance was needed.

● (1010)

With the mobilization of youth and volunteers already well-established in the Canadian partnership branch, which sends literally thousands of Canadians abroad through volunteer programs already every year, and public engagement deemed best placed within the communications function of the agency, it was evident that the real need was for an enhanced and comprehensive focus on democratic governance.

That is why on October 30, 2006, Minister Verner created the Office for Democratic Governance. This new organization's goal is to promote state-of-the-art thinking on democratic governance, to actively engage in the sharing of best practices and lessons learned across Canada and internationally, and to conduct innovative programming that complements existing work done by other branches within CIDA and other organizations within and outside of the government. Our goal is that this office will ultimately enhance the capacity of CIDA and the Government of Canada to deliver effective, timely, and equitable democratic governance programming in a way that promotes greater coherence and coordination among Canadian actors.

In terms of what's happened over the less than one year that it's been in place, the office has actively promoted freedom and democracy by providing critical support to electoral processes in many challenging venues. In the last 12 months, the office has deployed 290 Canadian election observers to observe 10 elections around the world, including those in Haiti, the West Bank and Gaza, and, most recently, the Democratic Republic of Congo. To accomplish this, the office has worked closely with other CIDA programming branches, as well as with other government departments, including Elections Canada, DFAIT, and DND.

The office has established a new practice of convening election task forces to respond in a coordinated manner to requests for election observation support, and it delivers new security training to election observers. The office has also fostered enhanced relationships with regional organizations such as the Organization of American States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. In so doing, we've actually taken an issue of electoral engagement and not only increased the quantity of Canada's engagement significantly over the last year, in cooperation with Elections Canada and other institutions, but considerably enhanced the quality of our engagement.

We're also working in cooperation with other Canadian and international organizations, through the Office for Democratic Governance, to contribute to developing political systems that are more open, transparent, and accountable. As you saw through the Democracy Council, which the Office of Democratic Governance co-chairs, we've collaborated closely with DFAIT, with IDRC, and with other arm's-length Canadian organizations to create fora to engage the community of practice in democracy promotion.

Another element in which the Office of Democratic Governance, together with the rest of CIDA, is involved is in the explicit creation of a space and a role for southern civil society in development and democratic discourse in the south. One of the points Minister Verner made recently is our intention to work with other international partners to explicitly recognize the role of civil society and southern civil society in donor harmonization, to ensure that as we become more coordinated, working with other donors and with the governments of developing countries, we explicitly recognize and support the role of a civil society, and particularly southern civil society, in these debates.

● (1015)

[*Translation*]

The promotion of the rule of law in developing countries is also one of the areas where Canada can provide decisive assistance. Canada can be proud of its civil and common law experts. To optimize Canada's contribution, the Office for Democratic Governance recently completed a study that provides a picture of the Canadian institutions working in the area of the rule of law. That study, which was conducted in close cooperation with CIDA's geographic branches and with the institutions of the Canadian justice sector, will serve as a basis for an inclusive approach to rule of law programming. This approach will make it possible to advance Canada's foreign policy objectives, improve harmonization with other donors and meet the needs of the partner countries.

For example, the Office for Democratic Governance is making it possible to advance matters in Ghana, where we are working in close cooperation with local stakeholders to improve the skills and knowledge of legal services personnel. Again in Ghana, the offices are working with more than 200 journalists, editors and other representatives of the media world to develop their skills in talking about specific human rights issues.

We are also working specifically on the issue of human rights, and particularly on the way to measure human rights progress and impact. With the assistance provided by the Office for Democratic Governance in Metagora, an OECD pilot project designed to create a system that will be used to measure the state of democracy, human rights and governance, the Office is also helping to establish specific, relevant and effective indicators for developing programming based on evidence in the human rights sector.

We are working in close cooperation with Equitas and the universities of Montreal and McGill. The Office is also working to increase the ability of Indonesia's Department of Justice and Human Rights to protect human rights in the regions affected by the tsunami.

As regards the responsibility of public institutions, the Office has previously cooperated in improving the coherence and coordination of those institutions. It has established framework agreements with two globally renowned Canadian entities that are experts in governance, that is to say Statistics Canada and the Office of the Auditor General of Canada. Those framework agreements are assisting in bringing Canadian expertise in statistics management and audit to bear, which promotes a comprehensive approach and a more ambitious vision of Canada's contribution in favour of accountability in developing countries.

One of the Office's roles is to work with CIDA's program branches to promote democratic governance in a coherent manner. The Office has contributed to the development of programming frameworks for countries such as Tanzania, Honduras, Bolivia and the Ukraine. It has also cooperated with the geographic branches of Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras and Pakistan in testing a governance indicator project. These indicators provide specific and appropriate data on which we can rely to develop effective programming.

In a collaborative learning perspective, the Office has combined its strengths with those of the Centre for International Governance Innovation, or CIGI, in Waterloo, to create a knowledge exchange gateway for all stakeholders involved in democratic governance. This virtual governance village will attract the international community's attention to Canada's pool of knowledge, expertise and leadership in the field of democratic governance promotion. It will improve the ability of decision-makers and practitioners to create policies and programs in developing countries based on evidence, and will facilitate the integration of that knowledge and innovative and effective practices.

[*English*]

Going forward in the future, over the next year the office will work hard to enhance the capacity of CIDA and partner institutions through innovative funding and capacity development initiatives. One example of this is the deployments for democratic development mechanism, a multi-million-dollar initiative that will help CIDA recruit and deploy the best and brightest Canadian expertise in democratic governance and respond quickly to needs on the ground.

Right now, what happens is if within CIDA or another government department we identify a need from a country on a certain expertise...if a country comes to us and says they'd really like help in reforming their office of the auditor general, or they'd really like to establish an improvement in this or that area, actually calling upon and deploying that Canadian expertise can be cumbersome and lengthy. By having a democratic deployment mechanism, we'll be working with a Canadian partner—and this has actually gone out now through a request for proposal and through a competitive bid—to be able to quickly draw upon and provide the best thinking and the best Canadian expertise in these different areas of democratic governance.

In promotion of freedom and democracy, the office will proactively support governments committed to democracy beyond the election event by shifting electoral assistance from a focus on the election as a one-day event to a more comprehensive and longer-term electoral cycle, including aspects such as transition of power and transparent media and reinforcing electoral commissions.

One of the office's key initiatives will be to coordinate the implementation of an enhanced anti-corruption strategy for the agency. Supporting accountability, transparency, and fairness is a core principle of Canada's new government and is critical to CIDA's aid effectiveness. As part of this implementation strategy, the Office for Democratic Governance will provide broad-based approaches to anti-corruption programming.

To be clear, we've had for years a very strong and effective focus on dealing with corruption within specific projects or programs that CIDA is involved in. What we want to do is go beyond that to actually help governments engage in broader, government-wide approaches to dealing with corruption, accountability, and transparency in a much more systematic way.

Finally, in the rule of law, the office will build upon the recommendations coming out of the study I just mentioned to help develop a strategic framework for rule of law programming, working with key Canadian institutions in this field. We also intend to develop a framework arrangement with the Department of Justice and facilitate the establishment of a rule of law community of practice with enhanced coordination and collaboration among the actors.

In conclusion, we expect and hope the Office for Democratic Governance will play a leading role in facilitating successful, innovative, coherent, and results-oriented democratic governance programming for CIDA, the Government of Canada, and the greater Canadian community of practice.

The Office of Democratic Governance will be at the forefront of our efforts to fight corruption. It will develop mechanisms that will allow the Government of Canada to access and deploy the best Canadian expertise quickly and effectively, and it will serve as a hub through which we support the community of Canadian and international experts.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to highlight the contributions of CIDA through the Office of Democratic Governance to this global challenge of democratic development. I'm personally very encouraged and thankful that you've undertaken this study, and I welcome the careful consideration and fresh perspective that your study will bring to the work we do in this area.

I wish you the best in this area, and I look forward to answering your questions now and to reading your recommendations in the near future.

Thank you very much.

● (1020)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Greenhill.

Just before we get into the questions, I have a document here that we can't seem to find on your website. It's called “Canada's Aid Program, January 29, 2007”. Would it be possible for this committee to get a copy of this document in both official languages?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Absolutely.

The Chair: All right.

Can you just very quickly tell me how much CIDA will spend in total on democratic governance? We all recognize the great work CIDA does, but the most frustrating thing is when I cannot put a figure on expenditures. Can you give me an idea, in the current 2006-07 fiscal year?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: For 2005-06, the number will be $375 million.

For 2006-07, that number will increase. In terms of the specific number—

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: For 2007-2008.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: We don't yet have those statistics because that will depend on the minister's decision, but we can clearly say that it is constantly increasing. So it will be more than the $375 million I mentioned for 2005-2006.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right.

Let's go to Mr. Patry, please.

Mr. Bernard Patry: *Merci beaucoup*. I will share my time with my colleague, Borys.

● (1025)

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much, Mr. Greenhill and Ms. Heuchan.

In January, the committee received a documentary note on the Bureau for Democratic Governance from CIDA. Those documentary notes from CIDA state that this new office will have the special mandate of improving aid effectiveness.

On December 4, Ms. Diane Éthier of the University of Montreal appeared before this committee and stated that CIDA was not really evaluating effectiveness.

My first question is very simple. Will responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of CIDA's democratic governance programs be assigned to the Office for Democratic Governance?

As for my second question, this morning I note in the documents that you have provided to us, the very impressive list of your democratic governance partners.

Where does the process for awarding contracts for the democratic development deployment mechanism stand?

[*English*]

I will ask my colleague to ask his question. This way, we're going to get all the answers in one shot. He's going to ask the question first.

The Chair: Yes, he'll ask a second question, and then you can respond.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj (Etobicoke Centre, Lib.): What I'd like to jump into is the reshuffling. It appears that this has been a reshuffling of existing and ongoing programs. Is there an intention to get directly involved—as opposed to indirectly, through outside agencies—in this sort of work? What percentage of the projects in the past year, for instance, were engaged in directly?

You also talked of Canada Corps and the mobilization of youth and volunteers. There was a very successful project, their inaugural project, which was the electoral observer mission in Ukraine, which involved diaspora communities. Notwithstanding all the reservations and worries of the department, it was a tremendous success, precisely because of that factor.

Nowhere in the documents do I see mention of direct engagement of this tremendous reservoir of human knowledge that we have in Canada. It's a unique advantage we have over other countries in the democratic governance work that we could be doing abroad.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Thank you for your questions. There are quite a few; I'll try to answer them all.

We ensure aid effectiveness at two or three levels. First, the team provides close follow-up to each of our projects. Second, in the context of the program, we conduct evaluations, often country-wide, and they are public. Third, the agency has criteria. For example, there's the percentage of aid granted and the percentage of our projects that have succeeded. That gives us an aid effectiveness measure in the context of these specific projects.

If we consider the effectiveness of aid for democratic development, we can also see very specific things in the field. For example, actions have succeeded very well in Haiti. For the first time in 200 years, Haitians have had municipal, legislative and presidential elections that have succeeded. We've also given three million Haitians identification cards providing them with some access to services for the first time in their lives.

In Afghanistan, where Canada spent $30 million to support the 2005 elections, we've seen that those elections in fact were held. If my memory serves me, 63 % of the population voted, including a number of women never previously equalled in an election in Afghanistan.

Future evaluations of specific projects are the responsibility of the departments that do them. Furthermore, we have a department responsible for evaluation and audit. After putting a new emphasis on accounting, we'll also have a chief audit executive, who will conduct audits for me on specific programs in order to ensure that the money is being well spent and producing results. As I said, we can directly see results, especially in the case of elections.

As regards the processes, they vary. Sometimes we work with multilateral organizations such as the organization of American states, the OAS, on some projects. On others, we call for competitive bids, for example for the Democratic Development Deployment Mechanism. This results in competitive bids from a number of persons who have expressed interest.

● (1030)

[*English*]

On the question of the role of the Office for Democratic Governance versus reshuffling, the intent of the office is explicitly to provide additional funds to the already large amounts of money we're investing in CIDA and across the government for democratic governance.

More than just the additional funds, the intent is to improve the quality of what we're doing in two ways. One is by supporting innovative programming such as some of the elections programming being done and this democratic deployment mechanism. The second way we can add value is by being the place to bring this all together. Far too often in the past our projects have been across different geographies and departments without being brought together. This is to provide a home for thinking, reflection, and coordination.

So in addition to the specific dollar amount, the quality and coordination of our engagement in democratic governance will go up significantly.

Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj: Can you give us the specific dollar amount?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: The amount we have budgeted for this year is $40 million, in addition to what we are doing through the—

The Chair: Due to the time, maybe you could answer in writing some of the other questions he posed.

Madam Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I'm going to share my time with Mr. Carrier.

First, Mr. Greenhill, can you give us the text that you read? That would be useful. Since it's already in both languages, that won't pose a problem.

In the Estimates made public on January 27, I searched in vain for the words “democratic development”. Reference is made a number of times to development, but never to democratic development. What does the addition of the words “democratic development” mean, and how can we refer to it?

Second, I'd like to ask one of the questions that has been prepared for us. If the sectoral allocations are the same as in the 29 January document on Canada's Aid Program, 21 % of CIDA's current aid spending will continue towards democratic governance. On that basis, CIDA would spend $640 million on democratic governance in the next fiscal year.

Could you confirm that figure of $640 million for us?

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lalonde.

Monsieur Greenhill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Robert Greenhill: We'll be pleased to provide you with a copy of the text.

As we operate by institution and by geographic location, you won't see the words “democratic development”, but you will find the democratic governance target. As that's already in the traditional CIDA structure, it also includes the measures that we must take to assist in resolving conflicts and things of that kind. These funds are thus allocated to governance of one of CIDA's sectors. The same is not true with democratic governance.

We're going to provide the committee with an analysis showing the amounts that will be allocated to the democratic governance of those sectors.

● (1035)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Greenhill.

Mr. Carrier, you have three minutes.

Mr. Robert Carrier (Alfred-Pellan, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is the first time I've sat on the Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, and I find this quite interesting, particularly since I belong to the Canada-Africa Parliamentary Association. So there's a certain link.

Your brochure shows your various action components. I see it's a very broad and very good mandate, except that you surely can't intervene in all countries at the same time and in the same way. How do you determine your action targets? Are they defined in part by the Department of Foreign Affairs, or are you entirely free to determine them and do you then submit them to the minister? Do you inform the minister responsible of the results of your efforts respecting the various action targets determined, so that democratic actions can subsequently be taken?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Thank you. Those are essential questions, particularly regarding democratic governance.

At CIDA, we focus our resources more on certain countries. To decide where and how we are going to act with regard to democratic governance, we take two factors into account. First, we must clarify Canada's desire to get involved, whether it be in elections in the Ukraine, Afghanistan or Haiti. This is about development, but also about a positive commitment for Canada.

Second, we talk with the partner countries, either with their governments, or with members of civil society. We increasingly try to take initiatives that are consistent with the needs expressed by these developing countries. For example, we're currently working with people from Mali to set up the first auditor general's office in Francophone Africa. This is a specific request from the Mali government, which sees this as a way to increase its transparency and to enhance its fight against corruption.

The decision to get involved in Haiti in recent years clearly came from the Government of Canada. As regards where and how we were going to work, that was discussed with Haitian authorities. We provided support for the electoral commission. The Parliamentary Centre is now helping to train parliamentarians. We also trained media and human rights groups following discussions with members of civil society.

We provide feedback on specific projects so as to determine what worked and what did not. We also think we are able to summarize, in the context of discussions, the lessons learned with the Office for Democratic Governance. The objective is to ensure we always use the best programs in the context of these efforts.

It is clear that democratic governance is a more complex, more difficult and more delicate matter in education and other difficult sectors than in other areas. That is why we considered establishing an office devoted to those matters. That's essential for us to become stronger in those areas.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Greenhill.

We'll go to the government side.

On the funding, yesterday the main estimates part II were released, They showed that the budget for CIDA in 2007-08 will be $3,049,000,000. You said the funding for democratic development is roughly $375 million, but in this document it shows democratic governance at 21% of your budget, which is $650 million. That is a substantive increase. Does that amount seem right to you?

How much does CIDA's spending on democratic governance account for the total package of what the Canadian government...? Is there some group out there that gathers these figures and says how much of the democratic development purse CIDA has, how much Foreign Affairs has, and how much other departments have?

● (1040)

Mr. Robert Greenhill: The $375 million refers to 2005-06, so compared to 2007-08—

The Chair: So there is a 61% increase?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: The sectoral breakdown includes elements to do with conflict resolution, and so on, that don't fit into the democratic governance area but are traditionally put under the rubric of governance more broadly defined.

The Chair: In this document it shows democratic governance as 21% of your budget.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: I will ensure we get the precise numbers and provide an analysis of some of the activities done by other departments that fall under this rubric.

If we take the Global Peace and Security Fund and its increasing role in security sector reform, justice, and rule of law in some fragile states, they are also going to have an important contribution to make. That is why the Democracy Council is co-chaired by both Foreign Affairs and ourselves.

If the question is whether we can get a clear understanding on a going-forward basis of how much the Government of Canada is committing to this issue, we'll work with Foreign Affairs to put together in short order a layout of those numbers for this committee.

The Chair: I would appreciate that, especially the short order deal. You are probably our last witnesses on this, and for this report some of this information is very pertinent.

Mr. Goldring, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Mr. Greenhill, looking at your reports here, my questioning is along the same line. You certainly have identified and laid out the basic structuring of this democratic governance, and there seems to be some question as to exactly how much is being allocated to that function and to that organization. Would it be possible—it would be helpful to us—to have more of a flow chart of the actual divisions that this organization is actively working in or planning to be working in? In other words, has it gone to the level of being structured?

You had mentioned earlier that you've already gone out to tender on certain aspects of this. If you have gone out to tender on it, obviously you would have a more in-depth structure that has been already designed to be able to do that. If you're going out to tender, are you specifying what you wish in this tender or are you looking for proposals from others?

The reason I'm questioning that is we have been spending considerable time on this committee on this report, and I'm wondering how this report itself, with its recommendations that are expected to accompany the report, will fit into your overall strategy and planning, and whether that will have an impact that may be varying it in the future. It would be helpful to us now to have some idea structure-wise on how you envision that democratic governance to go forward, with a dollar tag estimate tagged to it too.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Greenhill.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: We'll provide that—in terms of how the structure is done and the ideas we have. The Office for Democratic Governance is about 30 to 40 people to help coordinate within CIDA many of the activities that are taking place across different geographic branches and other organs of government. We can lay that out.

On the specific issue in terms of going to tender, that is for what's called a deployment mechanism, which will be a Canadian partner chosen through competitive bid that will be coordinating with sources of expertise across Canada. Then if somebody says they need to get somebody who knows about reforming of the Auditor General's Office, or they need someone who can help them with judicial reform or other issues, we will have a mechanism in place to be able to identify and put the right people in the field very quickly. That's how this specific deployment mechanism would work.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Again in your literature you've already identified your partner organizations, and they're all well identified. Have you gone through a search, a seeking process, to seek these before you identified them here?

● (1045)

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Yes. This was done based on the experience of the last five or so years in terms of what had been the Canadian international partners that had worked with CIDA on this. What we did in this specific request for proposals is it was publicly put out on the system and people were invited to submit bids. Clearly, one of the criteria was expertise and knowledge in the field.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Then I would question on that level my colleague's comments about the diaspora. Certainly on the level of the Ukraine and Eastern Europe, there is a lot of intelligence here in this country that can be utilized, as well as the Caribbean diaspora, to be engaged in a certain fashion. Yet I don't see them being identified here, nor other diasporas of other regions in the world, as having any important significance, enough to be able to be identified.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: In fact, the diaspora communities play an important role. The Ukrainian elections are one. In terms of the whole issue around Haiti and the interim government, we actually had a couple of meetings with the diaspora communities as well. In Afghanistan the diaspora communities are playing an important role, but often actually within these organizations.... CARE Canada had an Afghan Canadian playing a critical role there. Rights & Democracy actually has diaspora members involved in human rights programming, so there are actually diasporas here.

This list is simply historical record. I wouldn't be at all surprised... if we have this list in a year or two years, you may actually find diaspora organizations actively involved through this programming. But you can be assured that diaspora communities and individuals are already very actively involved across this area.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Perhaps for our own information on your flow chart you could indicate the access for the diaspora communities, so that the various communities that have interest in helping can be more readily directed.

Do I have a little time?

The Chair: Yes, you do.

Mr. Peter Goldring: On your report here, too, you identified many countries you're working in, but it has Haiti only under "Freedom and Democracy". Is Haiti under another file because of its circumstances? I would certainly think there's accountability of public institutions, rule of law, and human rights concerns there too. That would be under this new group, too, would it?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Yes, you're absolutely right, because this is an illustrative list; this isn't a complete list. In fact, in terms of programs we've been involved in, we've been very involved in the elections and freedom issues.

We've been very involved in human rights, particularly the human rights of Haitians on the border with the Dominican Republic, and we do specific programming there. We've been very involved in the rule of law issue, reforming of the Haitian national police, and judicial reform. So in fact, you're absolutely right, we can show examples of where we're doing this in Haiti right now.

As I mentioned, this is a sample; this isn't a comprehensive list of our projects.

Mr. Peter Goldring: We're giving substantial support in those areas.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: It is, and that's a great example of where we see democratic governance as being absolutely fundamental to our programming in the country.

The Chair: You have another minute, but I'll take it. Thanks, Mr. Goldring.

If it is $600-some million on democratic development, how much of that would be included as ODA-able? How much of that huge pocket would go into that category? All of it?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Virtually all of it. In fact, I believe that historically it's been 100%. I see no reason why that wouldn't be.

The Chair: Thank you. That's exactly what I want to hear.

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here before the committee today.

This is useful information you've supplied, and it's a bit overwhelming, but I'd like to explore a little bit what you see as the interface and the interconnectedness between what you've called the democratic governance initiatives through CIDA and poverty reduction and sustainable development.

You can't visit countries, as I've had the privilege to do—Afghanistan, Haiti, Kenya in the last year—and not understand why democratic governance is incredibly important. But you also can't visit those countries without being utterly stunned by the degrading, devastating poverty and the consequences of climate change.

So I have two quick questions, and then I'd like to give you the opportunity to elaborate somewhat. You were a very eloquent, persuasive, passionate spokesperson before this committee just before you took over as President of CIDA for why Canada should move as quickly and dramatically as possible to 0.7%, which is the minimum international standard for ODA. I'm wondering how you see that today in relation to the democratic development initiatives.

Secondly, I'm wondering if you can clarify something. The Canada Climate Change Development Fund, which was in existence, dealing with both the causes and consequences of climate change—this is now number one on the Canadian mind. Is that program continuing? There was some suggestion that it was going to expire in 2005. Is that program continuing in its original form, or is there a new format for it?

Can you elaborate a little bit on what you see as the interaction among these three elements that you've spelled out here? One worries about the diminishing focus on poverty reduction and the role that ODA plays in that, and the virtual absence of any, at least from the public's point of view, sense of what is happening with respect to CIDA's commitment to sustainable development initiatives, particularly around Kyoto commitments and so on.

● (1050)

The Chair: Thank you, Madam McDonough.

Mr. Greenhill.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Sure.

First of all, the interconnection is between democratic governance development and environment. What is clear is that they are all so tightly interconnected. Depending on the country, you may wish to focus on one more than another. If you have a reasonably well-functioning state, you may be able to focus considerable efforts on the poverty reduction agenda. In other cases, you may realize that a poverty reduction agenda will have to go through NGOs rather than through the state, while you're trying to build democratic institutions, and that the sustainability of poverty reduction is going to be limited by the state of democratic institutions. That's clearly been the case of Haiti historically. Both those factors have a huge impact on environment, because when people are in misery, when land title is not clear.... So when you have poverty, poor governance, poor oversight, what actually suffers tremendously? It's the environment, because you have massive degradation taking place. Haiti is a great example of that.

Trying to deal with the environmental crisis in Haiti and with the desertification that is taking place there because of the cutting down of the cover of the trees will be impossible to achieve without working on both the democratic governance and working on poverty alleviation. So in the case of Haiti, we won't have succeeded until there's stability in all three of those areas. But clearly, democratic development is *sine qua non*—it's an absolute necessity—for development and environmental projects in Haiti to be sustainable.

In terms of the 0.7%, I think the decisions on the levels are decisions for governments and ministers, not for deputies. My role is to ensure that the aid that is provided is used as effectively as possible within the policy outlines of the government. I would note that the new government has in fact committed to 8% growth until 2010, and it has also this week announced $200 million of additional funding for Afghanistan.

In terms of the Canada Climate Change Development Fund, it was launched in 2000 for a period of five years. In 2006, it was extended for a year. That program and actually other programs to ensure we can be effective in supporting a responsible approach to the environment are presently under review. Clearly, environment is one of our sectors of priority. We're going to be assessing that fund as well as other alternatives to ensure we can do more on the environment.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I have two quick questions. What would that 8% increase from now until 2010 bring us to, in terms of our level of ODA? And secondly, are you saying the fund expired but there are programs within CIDA that are continuing on climate change...?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: There were a number of programs in CIDA, not just on climate change but on environment more broadly. The fund itself is actually being assessed and reviewed in terms of that.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: But has the fund continued through to this point?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: The fund right now was extended until 2006. The decision of whether to do future extensions of the fund—

● (1055)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: So it expired? When was that?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: It expired at the end of 2006-07.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam McDonough.

Very quickly, before we get into the second round, Mr. Khan has a question, and I don't know if anyone else does. Mr. Goldring does, maybe.

Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC): I'll ask a question, sir, and let you answer.

My interest is Afghanistan. An awful lot of work has gone in. I'd like to comment on the success or failure rate as we talk about democratic governance being essential to poverty reduction. How has the CIDA involvement in Afghanistan, with $30 million and other aid reported there, helped? And what will the impact of the $200 million increase be?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Thank you very much.

Afghanistan is a great example of where democracy and development go hand in hand. Clearly there are the specific examples of freedom and democracy through the $30 million in support for the elections and the work we're doing to improve the judiciary—work that the Global Peace and Security Fund is doing on that.

But perhaps one of the most telling examples of how they come together in Afghanistan would be the community development councils. Through the national solidarity program, the Government of Canada, together with the Afghan government and other donors, has helped to actually reinstall a system of local government. People, through secret ballots, elect community council representatives who are then actually given access to funds, through a transparent process, to provide infrastructure support that they decide is important for them, whether it's wells, whether it's irrigation systems, whether it's schools, whether it's generators, or whether it's municipal sewing centres. In so doing, the community itself has to not only, through these elected representatives, identify the projects, they have to put in at least 10% of the value of the projects themselves. Often it's 30% or more. So they literally own these projects.

These projects have proven to be extremely powerful ways of encouraging development at the rural level. There are 16,000 villages that have community development councils. So over half the rural population of Afghanistan is now touched by these. Some 21,000 projects have been started and 9,000 have been completed. In Kandahar province alone there are over 400.

What's important is that these are some of the most powerful ways of getting development into the hands of the local population. It's also one of the most powerful ways of promoting democracy.

Actually, Mr. Chair, one of the issues, or challenges, we have when we come up with these numbers is that for national solidarity program development or democracy—it's actually both—when we're actually coding that for you, it'll probably turn up under rural development. But really, it's a very powerful means of making democratic governance real at a local level as well.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Greenhill.

I'm going to give Mr. Goldring just under a minute. So talk quickly.

Mr. Peter Goldring: I'll talk quickly.

I'll start with Mr. Greenhill. Democratic development also affects and impacts poverty reduction as well as environment and the rule of law, and it must be a challenge to somehow separate out those files when you're giving your budget estimates at year end, because it all begins with democratic development.

I have just a quick question on one thing that I don't see here. I'd like your opinion on public education, because that certainly would be an important aspect in Haiti, as well as in many other countries. What is your viewpoint on how important public education is to democratic development?

Mr. Robert Greenhill: Just for clarification, do you mean public education on issues of democracy, or basic education?

Mr. Peter Goldring: I mean issues of democracy at the public school level.

Mr. Robert Greenhill: It's extremely important, in terms of both curricula and civic education in schools, but also in terms of using media, particularly radios, to help educate populations, which in many cases have never voted before in their lives, as to what elections are all about. It is also important to educate the media about the role a responsible media plays during an election process. Both in Afghanistan and in Haiti, in fact, an explicit part of our programming, with and through the media, was to engage in broader public education on democratic processes.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Greenhill. Thank you for being here.

That concludes our meeting today.

We are adjourned.

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