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—
Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

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• (0900)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): We're continuing with our study of gender budgeting. We have with us from Imagine Canada, Madam Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz, president and chief executive officer. We also have Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell, who is an independent development consultant and a gender consultant. On video conference, from Laval University, we have Madame Louise Langevin, professor of law.

Madame Langevin, would you like to start first? It's a 10-minute presentation, and then we'll do questions and answers after all the panellists have finished.

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz (President and Chief Executive Officer, Imagine Canada): Madam Chair, the three of us suggested that I would start since I am chair of the group, if you don't mind.

The Chair: Sure, that's no problem.

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: Then my two colleagues will comment.

The Chair: That's absolutely fine with us.

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: Good morning, honourable members. Thank you for inviting us to present to you.

I am here in the capacity of having been chair of an expert panel on accountability mechanisms for gender equality. We want to thank you. Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell and Louise Langevin, who is on the screen, were members of the expert panel with me in the fall of 2005.

We've been reading with interest the proceedings on gender budgeting. I thought that before we answered your questions and had a discussion with you, it would be worthwhile to explain the work we did and put our work into the context of what you've been doing recently.

First of all, I'd like to make clear to the committee that I am not an expert on gender budgets. My colleague Dorianne has had more experience with them and can perhaps answer specific questions about gender budgets.

I was asked in 2005 by the minister then responsible for the status of women to chair an expert panel on accountability mechanisms for gender equality. Our mandate was to study accountability and provide advice on strengthening gender equality in Canada, taking into account the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, relevant jurisprudence in other countries, as well as the April 2005 report of

the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, titled "Gender-based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success".

Here is our report, which I believe has been made available to this committee. There are a few points I'd like to make about the report that are relevant to your current discussions.

First, the subject of gender budgeting was not a focus of our study; rather, we saw gender budgeting as one form of accountability mechanism that was part of a broader system whereby a government in power could achieve its policy goals. We felt that the broader system was also extremely important and needed to put things like gender budgeting into context.

Gender budgeting, like other gender-based analyses, is only a tool and not the final outcome. The key assumption in our report was that any form of accountability mechanism can only be effective within an environment that starts with a political will to achieve certain substantive outcomes. And it's the party in power that decides what those substantive outcomes should be.

Second, we recommended that the overall desired high-level outcome should be substantive equality, which we defined on page 13 of our report as women having "the conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to national political, economic, social and cultural development, and to benefit from the results".

Third, we took a two-pronged approach to our recommendations. Looking at accountability mechanisms inside government in 2005, we felt that a good starting point would be to address existing government policy and administrative tools. We also saw legislation regarding gender-based analysis as a potential second step, but we recognized, as you well know, that legislation was a longer process and we felt that things needed to be done right away. However, we explored the nature of a legislative solution at a very high level and made some suggestions in our report.

In looking at policy and administrative measures, on which we urged immediate action, we gave examples of key instruments that could be used to signal the government's priorities and outcomes it wished to achieve. For example, we recognize that there are key instruments of government, such as the Speech from the Throne—part of an overall policy-setting system—that articulate how a government in power will specifically choose to tackle issues related to substantive equality.

Another significant instrument in any government policy-making process is the federal budget. It was for this reason that we recommended that the Department of Finance set an example by undertaking gender-based analysis on a least one part of the 2006 budget. Based on our conversations with Department of Finance officials at the time, we felt that introducing such analysis would require changes in attitudes inside the department, the learning of new competencies—analysts inside the department would have to be trained—and alterations to work methods. For those reasons we suggested a relatively go-slow approach, and that they start with only one part of the budget at the time.

● (0905)

We've since been told by the staff at the Status of Women office that in fact there has been an attempt to introduce gender-based analysis more broadly, and I'm sure you've heard from the Department of Finance.

Finally—and I'll ask my colleague Dorianne to comment more on this—we also emphasize not only the importance of work going on inside government, but the importance of reaching out to stakeholders so that citizens are engaged and participating in the solutions.

I'll invite Dorianne and Louise to make any opening comments they wish to make, and then we look forward to answering your questions.

Dorianne.

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell (Independent Development Consultant and Gender Consultant, As an Individual): Honourable members, thank you for your invitation. It's a real privilege to be here, as it was to be a member of the expert group.

With that privilege goes a lot of responsibility, so I felt very responsible to try to keep in touch with what has been going on. It has been very heartening to see that some of our recommendations are indeed being acted on. We can't say that we did it, but we hope we were contributors to the process, part of the partnership of change.

I thought that this morning I would concentrate a little more on gender budgets and reiterate some of what we said in our annex H of this report, and perhaps expand a little on it. When I expand a little on it, I'm expanding from my personal experience, not from the work that we did in the expert group.

I had been, many years ago, Canada's director for setting up the women in development program, now the gender program, at the Commonwealth Secretariat, and I took a lot of the initial steps that have led us to gender budgeting, particularly in Commonwealth countries, so I'll try to share a little bit of that. When I answer questions, it will be from that perspective. As well, as a consultant, I have worked in countries where we've been trying to do gender budgeting.

First of all, this is just a reminder that even though you've been talking to many groups that talk about women's budgets, what we recommended was not a women's budget that was separate from a men's budget, but a budget that was analyzed in a way that allowed people to identify the potential impact of any measure on both men

and women and the equality of men and women. If we remember that gender is not really a shielded way of saying women and men, it's a comparative analytic tool. It's relational. What we want to look at is what happens to men, what happens to women, and within that, what happens to old men and young men and old women and young women and little girls and little boys. It's a tool for identifying what happens to people and where you might be able to introduce change. So when you speak to the groups that talk about women's budgeting, I think in Canada we're doing something a little different.

Also, as Georgina has said, we felt that the Speech from the Throne and the budget exercise annually were two of the most important central policy planks in the way we govern ourselves, in the way we allocate resources, so we wanted to make certain the tracking of those resources was adequate. What we're seeing now is that gender-based budgeting is really being used as a tool to lift the blinkers from people's eyes so they can understand that tracking, so that the gender-based analysis is a tool for gender budgeting. We don't have to introduce a whole new system. The system's already there; it's just a case of anchoring it very specifically.

So I think we've actually made quite a few very good steps, and I congratulate you on the work you've been doing to keep the flame alive, and also on the very hard work that Status of Women is doing with gender-based budgeting and serving the departments in that way.

The second point I wanted to make relates to gender-based analysis. We have made a comment saying that technical knowledge is so important. I was very interested to see Treasury Board come to you and say, "Well, we now have a Treasury Board boot camp where we put people through this", and this is exactly what we were talking about.

Gender analysis, gender-based analysis, is not something that comes from the moon. It's not rocket science, but it does need to be grounded in some technical competence. It looks as though there is, anchored within our government systems, at least an attempt to try to gain that technical competence.

● (0910)

One of the things we talked about, which you will have seen emerging from your discussions with a variety of players on gender budgeting around the world, is that, for instance, the Scottish women's group and the groups in San Francisco and in a number of other areas are non-governmental organizations. We had made a very strong recommendation about supporting the voluntary sector and about the need for creating a partnership with civil society, because it's vital for monitoring and it's vital for accountability. In the end, the accountability of any government is to the people, and civil society is the people.

It's very important that this partnership be enhanced and that organizations be enabled to make the kind of insightful—critical sometimes, but usually helpful—comments about the direction. The end-user of services and goods and anything else you want to deliver in the budget should be able to feed back whether or not it's actually reaching.... Have we done a good job? Have we not done a good job? I think that would be very important.

If you're going to do that, research is very important. I noticed when I looked at the Status of Women budget that a lot of their research capacity has been cut. There seems to have been a decrease in the amount of research funds that are available—and I think probably not just from Status of Women—to bring civil society evidence-based data back to the table, back to you so that you can reflect on it. That gap may give problems in terms of ultimate accountability. I think it's something that needs to be looked at.

I know that Status of Women had been doing some research on gender equality indicators, and I would urge that this is very important. You need those indicators to set up a ranking system so that you know what you're doing. You may know where you want to go, but it gives you an idea of where the potential impact needs to be. Those indicators will also help you identify whether you're there. I would urge a lot of support for the creation, with various departments, of the relevant gender equality indicators, depending on what end policy requires those to be.

Although we can see that the central agencies—Treasury Board, Finance, and the Privy Council—have begun to take on board some of the concerns and recommendations we made, there is one area that's still very important, and globally it's still the central issue, and that is political will. In terms of accountability, somewhere in the PMO there needs to be a responsive mechanism, something that we feel comes out saying, “This is what's important, and we want to make sure all of you recognize that this is important.” We notice that we haven't seen anything in the Speech from the Throne that says gender equality is important.

Political support, although it's there within the bureaucracy and it's there systemically, I think also needs to be signalled from the highest levels, and I really haven't seen that yet. It's one of the issues that are being discussed globally. The world is asking how we entrap political will. It's all very well for us to effect the systems to bring about change, but that has to be partnered at the top.

● (0915)

The Chair: Ms. Campbell, could you wrap up, because we have other witnesses coming at 10 o'clock?

Ms. Dorienne Rowan-Campbell: Yes, that's it. I'm finished right now. Those were the key areas.

The Chair: You're done? Okay.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Langevin, you have 10 minutes.

[*English*]

Professor Louise Langevin (Professor of Law, Laval University): I'll make my presentation in French. I think it will be easier for me and faster.

[*Translation*]

I wish to thank members of your committee for this opportunity to testify before you today. I wish to say that your work is very important for the status of women in Canada. Canada is a role model on the subject of the status of women in the world.

I have read part of the testimony you heard recently on gender-based budgets. It appears to me that little has changed since November 2005, when I, along with two of my colleagues, spoke to

you about GBAs, gender-based analyses. Status of Women Canada, since last July, has expressed openness to the issue of GBAs. I am delighted about this. I am not an expert on gender-based budgets, although I understand what purpose they serve and how we establish them.

I wish to remind members of the committee of what everyone already knows. Since 1982, Canada has been a signatory of the CEDAW, convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women. This country has signed other documents to protect fundamental rights. Canada entrenched the Charter of Rights in its Constitution. Among protected fundamental rights are equality rights, and equality between men and women. It is certainly a fundamental value within Canadian society. The Canadian government, therefore, has made legal commitments with respect to equality for all Canadians.

By systematically refusing to undertake gender-based analysis and adopting gender-based budgets, the Canadian government is breaking its own commitments. Since 1978, Canada has been trying to incorporate GBAs, which is a form of management. Since the 1995 World Conference on Women held in Beijing, Canada has made firm commitments. However, after 13 years, results are late in coming. This is why in our 2005 report, we recommended legislation obliging departments and agencies to adopt GBAs, and set specific targets.

In closing, I wish to mention that Laval University will host the international women of the Francophonie conference next September. The theme is funding women's equality within francophone countries. It is rather paradoxical that women from the countries of the Francophonie will be meeting in Quebec City in September to talk about GBAs, gender-based budgets, and funding mechanisms involving the status of women in Canada; our country is seen as a model, and yet we are moving backwards. It is troubling to see that Canada is regressing in this area. That is exactly why your work is so important at this point in time.

Thank you.

● (0920)

[*English*]

The Chair: *Merci, Madame.*

In view of the time, I'd like to ask the committee members if we could do two rounds of five minutes, if you are agreeable. Otherwise we'll do one round of seven minutes.

Is there agreement on two rounds of five minutes?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Okay. Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses.

I have a lot of questions, but I want to focus in on a couple of things, because my understanding to some degree is that when Madam Frulla set up the task force it was partly to look also at the issue of legislation, if I'm not mistaken—or maybe I misunderstood. I want to go to the heart of it only because I have a whole lot of questions here.

On legislation as an oversight, we have discussed this here. We've had some witnesses, but we really haven't had a proper discussion. My personal feeling has been for some time that government needs to move toward legislation to ensure that all of the pieces that everybody is talking about and the things that are happening actually happen, and there was an actual oversight of some kind that continued. This committee can try to do that, but it really wouldn't be consistent. And it would also give this committee some mandate.

Could Madam Rowan-Campbell and Madam Langevin—maybe Madam Langevin first, as she mentioned it—tell me exactly what this piece of legislation would look like and whether or not it is in fact needed, given the state we are in at the moment?

The Chair: Ms. Minna, would you like to finish all your questions; otherwise you won't have time.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm sorry. Let's deal with this one; it's an important one.

Ms. Louise Langevin: Do you want an answer right away?

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, please.

Ms. Louise Langevin: Thank you for your question.

GBA has been in the picture at the federal level for many, many years. We've been talking a lot about it, but there's no political will. From my point of view, and I think it was also the point of view of our committee, of our group of experts, there has to be a law that forces the federal government to systematically do GBA. Just like in other laws, there is an obligation to report annually from, let's say, an environmental point of view or the law on multiculturalism. There are some laws where there is an obligation to report annually on what has been done and what has not been done.

What we're talking about here is forcing the government to apply GBA and to do annual reports and show the progress, if there is any. I think it's the only way to do it, because it won't be done and there won't be enough financial resources put.... I think right now only the immigration department is forced to do it in its law. So I think there should be a law that forces all federal agencies and departments to apply GBA.

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: Perhaps I could add to the comment Louise was making.

We did, Ms. Minna, in our report give some ideas about what that legislation might look like, on page 30 following. I think the key about legislation is that it shifts the oversight from the executive branch, which is looking after itself, to Parliament. In our annexes we indicated the other areas where there is parliamentary oversight, for example—official languages or multiculturalism. I think it's up to members of Parliament, though, to decide how effective that oversight is.

For the system, it adds another level of oversight, but the advantage of it, of course, is that it survives all governments once

there's a law in place. I think this committee has to consider whether it wants that extra level of oversight, which perhaps might then become part of its role—and that was really the frame that we were looking at it in. We also felt, because we know that legislation takes time and it has to be drafted, that it is important not to wait. Sometimes we're going to pass a law and it can become an excuse for not doing anything, so we thought it has to be a two-pronged approach.

● (0925)

The Chair: A 30-second question for a 30-second answer.

Hon. Maria Minna: Maybe I'll let Madam Rowan-Campbell answer, since she wanted to.

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: Well, I noticed that in the responses you had from witnesses, one of the things you asked—I think it was the Treasury Board, or it might have been the Privy Council—was this. Treasury Board said they were challenging departments when they didn't do their submissions with agenda perspectives, when they didn't use GBA, but you didn't know which departments. In our system the cloak of cabinet confidentiality can be thrown very wide, so sometimes there is no transparency in terms of what is happening with which department and whether people really are adhering to the rules. That's another reason that another level of oversight can be very, very valuable.

At the moment the role for Status of Women is a bit grey. You can't be a petitioner, the judge, the jury, and the executioner, and in many ways we're asking Status of Women to do all that. Again, a legislative framework would really help to clarify a lot of the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities.

The Chair: Thank you very much to all of you.

We now go to Madame Deschamps.

Vous disposez de cinq minutes, s'il vous plaît.

[Translation]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Firstly I wish to thank you for all of your testimony this morning, you were highly informative. I do not have your expertise. I am simply a member of Parliament who is trying to advance the cause and status of women.

I quickly reviewed the report you produced and tabled in 2005. It is rather fortunate, but even now in 2008, the recommendations contained in your report have not been heeded. That is my impression.

Ms. Rowan-Campbell, you say that departments should support the volunteer sector. Perhaps I was not paying enough attention, but this is the first time a witness emphasized this point. How can this support enhance what departments are doing in terms of gender-based analysis?

[English]

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: I think the voluntary sector, the civil society sector, has a great deal to offer and perhaps is not being used as it might be. We have a number of civil society institutions that do research but are underfunded. We have a number of women's organizations that used to do certain amounts of research but now, under the funding requirements, find it difficult to access funds to do that type of research.

When I was at the Commonwealth Secretariat, I could not undertake policy initiatives until I commissioned research that would give me some evidence-based data to say that was what we needed to do, and therefore to say to all the Commonwealth governments that those were some of the critical issues and these were the ways of approaching them.

I think there's a gap right now in Canada where we don't have enough of that partnership. It's not that their research is necessarily going to agree. It may be diametrically opposed to what we think is happening, but it's still valuable.

Statistics Canada does very good research. But we also need, outside of government, numbers of organizations doing research in areas they are particularly concerned about. When you start to do GBA, you realize some grey areas are thrown up that may lead the government to say they need a policy in this area.

I'll give you one example in an area where I do some voluntary work, the area of housing—affordable, adequate housing. Women are the ones who suffer the most. Women are the ones who are most negatively hit by homelessness. Those figures emerge mostly from the organizations that collect the data about who's sleeping rough on the streets and how many times they've been in a shelter.

That type of information collected and research done well is useful in order for a government to ask if this something we need to look at. Do we need a national policy on housing and to begin a debate? They may say no, we don't need a national policy on housing, but we may need to do this, this, and this. So that partnership is very important. It keeps the tension between government and the governed alive, and that's what makes our system wonderful.

● (0930)

[Translation]

The Chair: You have one minute remaining.

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: All right.

Often, these organizations are closest to the poorest and underprivileged. They are in a position to collect data that will help government amend legislation and improve the status of women.

[English]

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: I think one of the problems is that there isn't a track to feed the information into and to have a dialogue. I'm not talking necessarily about confrontation; I'm saying a consultative process perhaps.

A long time ago the National Council of Women met with the Prime Minister every single year, which was what gave them their power throughout the 1900s, because they brought the voice of women to the highest level. We need some mechanisms like that—

the bridge between interest groups, the information they collect, and the policy.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Boucher, you have five minutes, please.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Thank you very much for coming here today. I have listened carefully to your comments.

You are saying that it has been a bit of a long road, which is clear to everyone around this table. Even though each government has its own way of seeing things, this issue is moving ahead. We did state that the budget had to take into account equality between men and women.

I am the first person to have been appointed parliamentary secretary for the Status of Women, and I take my role seriously. I find it marvellous that everyone around the table is trying to advance the cause of women. We all represent a political party, but we are trying to reach agreement because this issue has a great importance to all of us.

You have talked about the need for legislation, which is a suggestion that we have often heard. Ms. Minna has also talked about this. I am not against the idea. However, I would like you to tell me which department should take the initiative for the legislation, since things get complicated when the issue is addressed to everyone. What should the scope of the legislation be? What can we do to ensure that the legislation encourages the government of the day, regardless of the party in power, to systematically prepare a gender-based budget?

As has been pointed out, this is a long road. I know that studies were done and it all seemed to be a burden some at some point, so the idea was dropped.

● (0935)

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: I think that Ms. Langevin might have comments, but I would like to add something first.

[English]

I think, Madame Boucher, if you look at page 55 of our report, you'll see we have given some suggestions on what that legislation might look like. It's in the English, but I think it's the same thing in the French. Really, what we patterned the idea on is that there are a number of laws in place now that are trying to address very specific issues: the Employment Equity Act, the Environmental Assessment Act, the Human Rights Act, the Official Languages Act, the Multiculturalism Act. Our sense was that it would be similar in terms of trying to promote substantive gender equality. As I mentioned earlier, what a law would do is shift the oversight to Parliament versus the executive branch, where it is today. Today, as was being discussed, a lot of the oversight is really being exercised through the Treasury Board Secretariat, to some extent assisted by Status of Women Canada.

In my opinion—and this is my personal opinion—if this were to happen, it would probably have to be the Minister of Canadian Heritage, in her responsibilities for Status of Women Canada, who would have to introduce that legislation. Obviously this committee has a role, and if it felt it was important to have that, it could recommend it happen. It would then be up to the heritage minister, because she has the legislative responsibility for Status of Women Canada.

[*Translation*]

I know that Ms. Langevin has a strong interest in the legislative aspect.

Louise, do you have any comments?

Ms. Louise Langevin: Thank you, Georgina.

First of all, legislation with no control mechanism cannot work. It has to include obligations for the departments. There will be an action plan for all departments and agencies, which will have to define their own measures and results with a view to achieving equality for women.

Under the action plan, departments will be required to prepare annual progress reports, which will be submitted to the House of Commons by the respective ministers. The legislation would require all departments to adopt an action plan and then achieve their objectives.

Our report also states that there should be a complaint mechanism, since there would be sanctions. A commissioner or ombudsman could oversee implementation of the act, supported by the annual reports, of course, similar to what is done for other legislation. The Official Languages Act and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act are examples that come to mind. It is very clear that the Canadian government cannot put up a building without first doing an environmental assessment.

The same thing would apply with the legislation we are talking about: it would impose an obligation on all departments and agencies to carry out a gender-based analysis for all their programs, set annual objectives and measure results. The analysis would require the commitment of resources. Officials would be required to do what they are already doing under the official languages and environmental legislation, for example.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We now go to Ms. Mathysen for five minutes.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): You've touched on so many important things. I thank you for being here. It provides great clarity to our study.

I want to pick up on what Dr. Langevin was talking about in regard to the need for a commissioner. We've heard that from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and from FAFIA, which have recommended the appointment of such a commissioner. It does make sense. As you've pointed out, if we engage in construction or something, we look to the Commissioner of the Environment.

Would you place the commissioner under the auspices of the Auditor General? Is this a good idea?

● (0940)

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: Personally, I wouldn't. I think the Auditor General has a very different role. I would use the model of....

[*Translation*]

Ms. Boucher, it is on page 61 of the French version.

[*English*]

I would use the model of the law we're recommending in French. It is on page 61.

My view is that a commissioner is most effective in the context of the legislative framework. I'll use the analogy, again, of the Official Languages Act. There is a Commissioner of Official Languages, and that is within a law that says that this is the role of the commissioner, this is how he or she should be proceeding, and this is the objective of what Parliament is trying to achieve with this law. I would suggest that this is a more appropriate framework than just taking a person and putting him or her in an existing agency that is perhaps out of context.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

In the panel's report, the terms “formal” and “substantive” equality are used. For the record of the committee, could you please expand on what these terms mean, so we have that clarity on the record?

Ms. Louise Langevin: Maybe I could intervene on that question.

[*Translation*]

I will explain the difference between formal equality and substantive equality. Formal equality is when people in identical situations are treated the same way. This formal equality approach has been rejected by the Supreme Court of Canada since 1989. Equality does not mean treating everyone the same way. The aim must be substantive equality. Real equality, equality in practice means treating people differently to enable them to achieve genuine equality.

It will use the example of a race. We often have the impression that daily life is a race. Equality of opportunity is achieved when all the runners, citizens of both sexes, are at the starting line. In the race of life, some people run harder and faster because they are stronger. Other people run more slowly because they are disabled or have only one leg. Others are weighted down because they are looking after children, the elderly or the ill. So the people who are really fit and really young will win the race, whereas other people will never cross the finish line.

Substantive equality enables people who do not run as hard or as fast, for all sorts of reasons, to cross the finish line. The real definition of equality is substantive equality. It is the one that takes into account systemic discrimination, which people no longer even see.

I hope that that answers your question.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Ms. Barnes is next.

We're going to the second round for five minutes.

Hon. Sue Barnes (London West, Lib.): Thank you.

There are countries, in the Commonwealth especially, who have already introduced gender budgeting. What systemic testing do you have—both in the legislative process and in the parliamentary process—to ensure that gender budgeting is not just a check mark, but is actually real and substantive? What are the processes and the checks and balances? Perhaps you could just choose a Commonwealth country.

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: Well, it's interesting that there are three Commonwealth countries—Nigeria, Uganda, and I think Ghana—that have a women's group, an NGO, that monitors everything and tries to push the idea. They're still working from the outside, trying to get in, even though their governments are signatory. You may remember that in the last status meeting in February-March, one of the things was about accountability and gender budgets.

But not a lot is happening. It's those outside agencies that are doing the analysis, rather than a lot of the internal mechanisms. There are some, but not a lot. So it's from the outside pushing in.

You had Debbie Budlender here, so you have the South African example. I guess she gave you a lot of detail.

• (0945)

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, she did.

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: One of the questions that were asked was about where the impetus needs to come from. It was interesting that you had the U.K. here as well. Did they talk about legislation?

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes, they did.

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: They did? And they said it really emanated from the top, and then went back down to the minister responsible to push it through the system. The decision was made cabinet level, and then it went back down. So it may have come up at some point, but the push was really from the top to have legislation and to have a requirement right through the British civil service, which was quite an amazing turnaround, because Canada had been so far ahead of Britain—in fact, so far ahead of everybody. We really have lost ground.

In Bangladesh, they're trying to do gender budgeting, and it's been with CIDA and DFID British aid assistance. We have a project there on policy leadership and advocacy for gender equality. We've made a lot of strides in being able to get the idea across. They've been very keen, because they've been able to track. They have a lot of women-focused spending, so they feel very good about being able to do that. Now the technical backup is being given to try to get them to understand that you have to disaggregate the whole budget, and you have to disaggregate your policies and allocations to the various activities.

So a lot of people are doing a lot of work, but I don't think it's really come as far as it should. It's all dependent on the quality of your gender-based analysis. If you don't have that, you can't make that leap into doing any analysis of the budget, and you can't compel the technical understanding or involvement of your bureaucrats. That's your first step.

I think we've come quite far now on that, really trying to push that.

Hon. Sue Barnes: Are all of the countries that are now doing or attempting to do gender budgeting using independent research, peer-reviewed research on equality issues to assist them? Has any country that has moved forward cut out the gender-based, equality-based research? Is there anyone who's been successful in advancing gender budgeting who has also cut out research on equality issues?

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: No, I haven't seen that. Australia, which was really the lead country in 1980 in looking at gender budgeting, did a women's budget, and it's gone downhill in terms of being more a PR exercise, but at least it gets people's minds thinking about how anything you do affects men and women differently. Sometimes it may be hard to see.

In Indonesia, which is not Commonwealth, they use their system very well. Their primary system is not the budget but the plan, because they still do 5-year, 10-year, 15-year, and 20-year plans. Those are the blueprints for everything, and everybody in the government knows that if it's in the plan, you do it.

So the challenge there was to get the gender issues and get the disaggregation and get the analysis into the plan. Once it's in the plan, the budget will flow automatically. There's no debate at the budget level.

The Chair: Thank you.

We now go to Mr. Stanton for minutes.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, witnesses. I must say it's a great honour to have the three of you here today. I thought your report was extremely thorough, coming on the heels of what I would consider to be some very comprehensive work on the part of this committee and including the government response of the day.

One of the things I'd like to deal with first, Madam Langevin, is in regard to your comments suggesting that at this point there is in fact no political will on the part of this government to deal with gender-based issues. That was a rather categorical statement. I point to some of the initiatives—and I appreciate, by the way, that observers may look at that question and have varying degrees, and accept the fact that some would like to see more political will, but to suggest that there is none is, I think, a little bit harsh.

We point to, for example, budget 2008, in which we've committed to an action plan on equality. Changes in the recent mandate of the Status of Women Canada, particularly to the women's program, point to this evolution.

We've heard testimony here before the committee that though some would agree that we are not yet where we ultimately need to be on the work of ingraining gender-based analysis into the culture of planning and decision-making and budget-setting, we're making some progress on it.

Do you have any response to that?

• (0950)

Ms. Louise Langevin: Yes, I do have a response.

You're talking about the budget. There was a statement on gender equality in the budget. I think one of your witnesses said it was 52 words out of 400 pages. So if there is political will, from my point of view, I'm trying to look very hard at where the political will is.

I could put on the table many examples that would show there is not a lot of political will to improve women's condition in Canada, but I'm not sure this is the place to start arguing on this. You just have to go outside Parliament and ask women's groups if they think this government has political will to achieve women's equality, and you will have the answer.

I think we all know that there has been a setback, and Canada is not what it used to be. Canada is using its international reputation, but we know from the inside that it's not what it used to be. And I think that—

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you for that. I have a short time span. I don't mean to cut you off.

Ms. Louise Langevin: Yes, I'm sorry.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: And I appreciate that there is a mixture of opinions on this.

But in point of fact, we have been hearing that there has been progress made in making advances by our own department, Status of Women Canada, who point to some successes in continuing to enshrine this culture of analysis within the department.

It gets me to the final point, and I'd ask our other two witnesses to perhaps comment briefly on this, if they could. Is the sense that while we are engaging in our decision-making processes, the outcomes of those don't necessarily...? I mean, commentators are saying, well, we don't think that the outcomes of those decisions are the way we would like them to be, so therefore the gender-based analysis is not working.

So somehow we have to close this gap between the instruments, the infrastructure, being in place, but also the ability to measure that on the back side to point to the fact that they are in fact working. We have to somehow close this gap. How do we do that?

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: Mr. Stanton, there's no question that there has been progress made in introducing analysis. And I would also suggest that some of the work that Status of Women Canada has begun doing with respect to introducing gender equality indicators and trying to get an evidence base for what is happening to women in Canada has also been good progress.

I think you've made a very important distinction between the mechanics of getting there, where I think there has been significant progress, and the outcome to be achieved. I would personally say that it is up to each government to say what outcomes it believes are important for Canadians.

We, as a committee, looked at the evidence of the position of many women in Canada and concluded, for example, that notwithstanding much of the progress that has been made by many women, there are still significant issues affecting aboriginal women, who face higher rates of poverty; there is a much higher risk of women leading lone-parent families; there are specific issues faced by immigrant women, and I think there is an attempt to build an evidence base around that.

Whether a government in power chooses to address those issues or believe it's within its mandate is clearly very much up to that government. And I would differentiate very much between the mechanics of doing the analysis generating the indicators and then a government deciding what the issues are that those indicators are generating, and whether that government wishes to address them.

• (0955)

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thanks very much.

The Chair: And being mindful of the time, *Madame Demers, trois minutes, s'il vous plaît.*

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Good morning.

I will ask my questions right away.

As experts, you seem to be in communication with Status of Women Canada. Have you been asked to evaluate the training tools developed by Status of Women Canada? Have you been called on to monitor the training given in order to evaluate it?

There are no longer any champions at Treasury Board and the Privy Council Office. Those two agencies have appeared before us and they told us that this was not really important, since it was being done anyway. At the Privy Council Office, the champion is transferred every three months. According to you, that person comes from within the department.

In order to be effective, where should the champions come from and how long should their turn be?

Madam Steinsky-Schwartz, is Imagine Canada actually a foundation?

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: It is a charitable organization.

Ms. Nicole Demers: We know that in order to have an impact women should hold at least 30% of the seats in Parliament. Have you ever thought about setting up or helping to set up a foundation for women who want to get into politics, like the one that exists in the United States?

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: You have asked a number of questions. I will start, and my colleagues may have something to add as well.

We have not evaluated the tools, nor what is being done at this point. We have received some briefings, and our mandate ended with the submission of the report. We are counting on Status of Women Canada to continue the work.

You want to know if there is a foundation for women.

[*English*]

There is actually an organization—and you're probably familiar with it—that exists to promote and support women who wish to run for Parliament. There is also a group called the Canadian Women's Foundation, which is not focused on women running for office; it is more focused on funding grassroots organizations that are attempting to address significant social issues faced by women in their communities. Those are two organizations that Imagine Canada, as an umbrella organization, would have interaction with.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: What about the champions?

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: With respect to the champions,

[English]

my view is that the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Privy Council Office both have an important role to play. The degree to which people are assigned to those positions and stay for a while obviously is a sign of the priority the issue is being given.

I really can't comment substantively, because I don't know what is happening today.

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen, a very short question, please.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Recommendation two of your report says to let the Minister of Finance set the example. You recommended that Finance Canada apply gender-based analysis to new tax measures in the 2006 and 2007 budget. We have that, and I can tell you it is very disappointing.

Do you believe at this point in time that the Department of Finance has the capacity to perform a fully informed gender-based analysis of the budget, and have you had a look at budget 2008 in that regard?

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: I will speak for myself. I have not had a look at 2008 from that perspective.

When we looked at this in 2005, one of our concerns, first of all, was the sense that training of existing analysts was needed. Secondly, our sense, also, was that if this was to be treated as a priority, there would need to be more resources put to it, not just in the Ministry of Finance but in other departments. The whole policy function has been significantly cut back in many government departments, and if gender-based analysis were to be done deeply, training would be required, but also additional resources would have to be devoted to it.

•(1000)

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: I did ask a question as to whether additional resources had been committed for the budgeting exercise, and I gathered that there had not been. I take my hat off to them for trying to do something, but I would want to see much, much more, and much more in depth.

For instance, with the \$5,000 tax credit for lower incomes, from the way it's presented I found it very difficult to see what indicators they would use to say this is going to benefit women. Yes, women have lower incomes than men, but do they have the funds to put into savings? Where do we get that information?

Our statement was that starting gender-based analysis is going to throw out more questions than answers. This is one question that maybe we have to follow in the next round to see what it has really meant. We made an assumption that it would benefit women. Has it really? Have we seen the savings in women's names being used? That's something you can keep your finger on.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Steinsky-Schwartz, Madam Langevin, and Madam Rowan-Campbell, for your presentations. Your report has

been exhaustive, and for the questions we asked, you have directed us to which pages you have responses on. We will take a critical look at it.

I know that the next round of witnesses is here, but I'd like to give you each a minute to wrap up if you have missed out on anything you needed to say.

Oui, Madame Langevin.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Langevin: If we really had gender-based budgeting in Canada, we might have a high-quality, affordable national day care program, which is not the case right now. If efforts toward gender-based budgeting are being made, we are not yet seeing any results.

That is all I wanted to add. Thank you.

[English]

Mrs. Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz: I would just like to urge the committee on two points. One is that gender budgeting is really part of an overall system, so one should not look at gender budgeting in isolation. In that context, I think the committee has a judgment to make on whether it wishes to move the oversight of these issues affecting gender and gender equality to Parliament or whether it wishes to leave it with the executive branch. That, I think, is where the issue of legislation comes in.

Ms. Dorianne Rowan-Campbell: I think there is one issue. When we did our report, there was also supposed to be some companion work done on the role and functions of Status of Women of Canada. Now, it's been in existence a long time. It's being asked to do...in the Caribbean, we say it's given a basket to carry water. As I said, it cannot be all things to all people.

I think now is a moment to have a very focused look at what its roles and functions are. It's doing a job at the moment providing technical backup to departments and to agencies. What else should it be doing? How should it be relating to all the women out there in Canada who have a wide and varying expectation of what it should do? I think it's a moment to redefine, to rethink, to clarify, and it's a wonderful opportunity to do that in this context. I hope you'll have time to do that.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We will just give a few minutes for the technical stuff to be managed and for the next round of witnesses to come in. Thanks.

• _____ (Pause) _____

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•(1005)

The Chair: Committee members, could you please take your seats? We are commencing our meeting.

We have with us, from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ms. Julie Fontaine, senior analyst on gender-based analysis; Madam Allison Little Fortin, director of corporate planning and reporting; Mr. Peter Oberle, director general of corporate affairs; and Mr. Jeff Daly, manager of program development and analysis.

I understand that you have a presentation. Do each of you have a presentation? It is one presentation.

Mr. Oberle, could you start the presentation? Then we will have questions and answers.

Thank you.

• (1010)

Mr. Peter Oberle (Director General, Corporate Affairs, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada): Good morning, Madam Chair and honourable members. I want to thank you, on behalf of my colleagues, for the opportunity to be here today.

In 2003, responsibility for gender-based analysis was centralized in the gender-based analysis unit within the Citizenship and Immigration strategic policy branch. In 2005, the gender-based analysis function was transferred to my branch, corporate affairs, which is now situated in the corporate services sector of Citizenship and Immigration. This provided an opportunity to strengthen and integrate gender-based analysis into departmental planning and reporting processes that my branch is also responsible for coordinating.

At Citizenship and Immigration, gender-based analysis is understood to take account of diversity and how the variables of age, race, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and culture, among others, intersect with gender. This approach broadens and deepens the analysis, the policy, and the program impacts.

Across Citizenship and Immigration, gender-based analysis is carried out, by and large, at the branch level, where most policy and program work occurs. To support the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis, my branch provides advisory services. We develop tools, deliver training, facilitate information sharing, develop guides, and assist branches in formulating their branch plans. We also coordinate input into the annual immigration report to Parliament.

Accordingly, Allison, Julie, and I are not the policy experts on immigration. Rather, we support the experts, experts like Jeff Daly, who represents policy on the refugee side.

We work to increase Citizenship and Immigration's capacity to integrate gender-based analysis into its work based on the following four principles of Citizenship and Immigration's five-year strategic framework. Principle one is that policy, legislation, programs, and services are consistent with gender-equality objectives. Principle two is that gender-based analysis is an integral aspect of policy and legislative analysis, program development, and service delivery. Principle three is that the quality of advice is enhanced when gender implications are considered. And the fourth principle is that progress requires innovation—innovation in training and innovation in data collection and analysis.

Today I want to give you a quick update on some of the progress we've made at Citizenship and Immigration on strengthening our capacity and performance on gender-based analysis. In so doing, I'll do my best to also address the points I understand you wish to examine: the current legislative framework and the reporting structure for gender-based analysis at Citizenship and Immigration, the process that led to the adoption of a legislative model, and how this model impacts on the implementation of gender-based analysis at Citizenship and Immigration.

Back in 2005, the gender-based analysis unit worked with partners across Citizenship and Immigration to develop our 2005-2010 strategic framework. That framework lays out a path for filling the requirement to report to Parliament. The framework is about progressively building capacity in CIC to do gender-based analysis. It's also about facilitating the integration of gender-based analysis into CIC's work so that policies, programs, and legislation better reflect commitments on progress towards equality between men and women.

Broadly, we accomplish this in two ways. One is the GBA capacity-building initiative I'd spoken to earlier, which my branch is responsible for. Second is the branches themselves developing their plans based on the analysis of the issues.

Since publishing that framework, we've done a few things. We've developed and then improved a comprehensive and interactive two-day training programming. Other departments continue to come to us and express their interest in the program we've developed. This committee hasn't seen that program. We'd be happy to share it. It's worth taking a look at.

We've delivered that training to more than 200 employees. We've developed and then improved a template to facilitate branch planning, and we've taken the first steps to integrate planning around gender-based analysis into the broader corporate planning.

We have branch plans in place for integration, immigration, Metropolis branch, refugees, risk litigation, and strategic policy. In addition, we have a plan in place for our citizenship program that falls outside the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, which I think is a testament to the commitment of the department to gender-based analysis.

• (1015)

We have an active departmental working group that shares lessons and best practices, that tackles common and horizontal issues, that tests new ideas with each other, and shares with each other some of the developments going on more broadly in government.

We've completed a survey of managers that tells us how to improve. For example, we've learned from the survey that we need a more a tailored workshop for more senior managers to better equip them to lead their teams in the implementation of gender-based analysis.

You've heard from other officials from CIC in previous appearances before the standing committee, and you've seen in our annual immigration report the kinds of tangible results we've achieved. This takes me to the questions you've posed about what impacts our legislation around GBA has had at CIC. As you know, we're the only federal department required by law to report to Parliament on the gender impacts of our policies and programs.

In my mind, there's no question that the progress CIC has made in strengthening its capacity and performance in gender-based analysis is attributable in large measure to the 2002 legislative requirement in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. It was the impetus for the creation of our original gender-based analysis unit in the development of our five-year strategic framework. It brings sustainability to our work, because there's an annual ongoing requirement to report.

The opportunity to report to Parliament that's built into legislation brings a heightened sense of relevance and commitment to the file. It helps us convey a sense of importance and priority to our colleagues and it challenges us, perhaps most importantly, to take the time to think through what it takes to report positive results. In short, the impact has been significant, and it's been positive.

But in saying that, I would point out that the legislative requirement itself is quite simple. It simply states that the annual report on immigration shall include a description of the gender-based analysis impact of the act. That's the legislative requirement. So I wouldn't characterize that requirement as a framework.

I say that because we have a framework, and none of the activities that are laid out in our framework that I'd spoken to earlier, things like training and getting branch plans in place, are part of the legislation. So I would suggest, therefore, that while the legislative requirement was certainly an important foundation, a key driver, it alone wasn't sufficient to account for the progress that we've made at CIC.

Without the thought-through strategic framework my predecessors developed, without the support of the Status of Women, without the leadership and commitment and innovation I've seen at Citizenship and Immigration Canada in my short time there, I don't think we would have seen the same kind of progress. Without doubt, I would suggest that our progress is also attributable to the fact that gender considerations are naturally an integral part of the work of CIC.

We naturally think about gender, and it's a regular consideration when examining our specific policy proposals, from family reunification to preventing vulnerable foreign workers from being exploited or abused to live-in caregivers. Gender considerations are paramount and something we take very seriously.

Under the language instruction for newcomers to Canada program, for example, we provide child-minding services to ensure that language training is accessible to all eligible clients. Child-minding is aimed at removing the barriers often experienced by immigrant women and caregivers.

Finally, I want to suggest that while legislation certainly had a catalytic effect for us, I'm not sure it's the only means to have achieved that effect for Citizenship and Immigration. Perhaps the same results could have been achieved through other means—a requirement, for example, to report in the main estimates, to report on plans and priorities in the departmental performance report. We do that anyway, but that could have been one approach.

A Treasury Board policy might have worked equally well for us. Something in the management accountability framework, where Treasury Board rates departments each year, might have worked equally well for us. We produce a corporate plan each year and we're

required to do that. Perhaps a requirement to build gender-based analysis into our corporate plan would have worked equally well.

These are just some of the possibilities I believe this committee has considered. I saw many of those in the April 2005 report called "Building Blocks for Success".

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to be here.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now start with the first round of questions.

Ms. Minna, for seven minutes.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for coming today.

We've heard a great deal about the successes of Citizenship and Immigration. I know CIDA does a great deal of this as well.

My first question—and I have a series of questions I can ask. Mr. Oberle, you've said that while the legislation was not the catalyst, it helped to get it going, but it was not necessary. Can you tell me when the legislation first included gender?

• (1020)

Mr. Peter Oberle: Madam Chair, I'll ask Allison Little Fortin to respond to that.

Ms. Allison Little Fortin (Director, Corporate Planning and Reporting, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada): The original impetus for looking at GBA as part of the development of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act went as far back as the 1995 government commitment to gender equality and gender-based analysis as a key motivator for that. As we went forward in developing the department, we took that commitment very seriously.

At the time, a gender-based unit was hired and put in place to review the act. Some of the work in terms of training of policy analysts to assist in building that capacity within the department was put in place at that time. As some of you may remember, we published a GBA of the act and of the regulations in the *Canada Gazette* as we went through the process.

The actual reporting requirement came out of a motion at the committee stage of the act, and it was agreed to by our department, but to be honest, it wasn't part of the original thought-through process.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm sorry, when was that? I'm trying to recall the timelines.

Ms. Allison Little Fortin: It was in 2001, at the committee stage of the approval of IRPA.

Hon. Maria Minna: That's when we were going through the major...because I was part of the process at the time. I was parliamentary secretary to the minister, I think, and we were going through the new immigration act. It was part of that process, was it?

Ms. Allison Little Fortin: Yes.

Hon. Maria Minna: I just wanted to get a timeframe as to how long you've been doing this kind of work.

To go back to you, Mr. Oberle, my next question has to do with the fact that you said the legislation is not necessary, that it could have been done in other ways. I think you did also say that the legislative requirement was a catalyst to actually getting this done and spreading it across the department.

You've given me a couple of examples with respect to child-minding and ESL, but if you could, explain to us exactly what impact getting the legislation going has had on the overall planning of immigration, as you plan not just recommend categories but priorities, criteria, that kind of thing. How has the legislation impacted on that kind of thing?

Mr. Peter Oberle: The first point I want to make is that we were doing gender-based analysis before the legislation came along. In fact, we'd done a gender-based analysis of the proposed legislation, and then it got fed into legislation to do that.

When the legislation was set, it brought an increased focus to gender-based analysis for CIC. Fundamentally, it got us to develop a framework for the department, the kind of framework that said we need to build capacity to do gender-based analysis across the department, so we're going to need to build our knowledge, build our training. Secondly, it said we need to turn that capacity into action, so we're going to need branch plans and a template and process to manage and get those branch plans done, signed off by directors general. It brought that focus, that structure, to CIC. I think that was the fundamental impact.

Again, I would underline that I think it also brought sustainability to CIC. That annual reporting is a sharp focus for us.

Hon. Maria Minna: That legislation in fact did bring focus and sustainability and, to some degree, I guess, accountability.

I do recall your department doing some GBA, or at least we didn't call it that, because I was a volunteer with an organization called COSTI, and I do remember the child-minding program, but back in the 1970s—late 1970s, early 1980s, anyway. So you have been—I know that—and that's encouraging.

As a department, are you aware of any other department at the moment in the government that is doing this? There's no other legislation. Yours is the only one. I know you said that, but is there any other department in the government right now, apart from CIDA, actually doing that kind of work? Are you working with any departments to share your experience to help build the framework and the capacity, the branch plan, the training, all of the good things you've done? Is that expertise being shared anywhere? Are you involved with any other department?

• (1025)

Mr. Peter Oberle: If I may, I'll ask Julie to pipe in on that one. I know we participate in an interdepartmental committee, led by Status of Women, where some of the sharing is done.

Julie, if you'd like, jump in on that.

Ms. Julie Fontaine (Senior Analyst, Gender-Based Analysis, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada): Sure. There actually is an interdepartmental committee that is led by Status of Women. I think approximately 13 departments are part of that committee, that are all involved in doing gender-based analysis. You

named one earlier: CIDA. Also, Indian and Northern Affairs is part of that committee, and quite a few other ones, such as Justice—

Hon. Maria Minna: What about Finance, which is the core of the departments? Is your experience being used by Finance at all?

Ms. Julie Fontaine: The central agencies actually have been approached lately to be part of the interdepartmental committee, and I believe Treasury Board and PCO are. I'm not sure that Finance is at this stage, but maybe that would be a question for Status of Women.

Hon. Maria Minna: Can you give us a couple more examples, apart from the one you did with respect to child-minding? How has that changed certain policy? You might have gone down one track, but then it's really changed it. How does it affect the actual outcome of some of that?

Mr. Jeff Daly (Manager, Program Development and Analysis Unit, Resettlement Division, Refugees Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada): I can't speak directly to the child-minding piece, but I work in the resettlement division of the refugees branch, and one of the pieces we've been trying to develop over the course of time, within policy specifically, is large-scale resettlement of our most vulnerable refugees. Refugees are the most vulnerable people we bring into this country.

One of the projects we've undertaken, where we did do a gender-based analysis on the pre-selection and post-selection, was on a group of Karen refugees, and I'm not sure if this committee is familiar with that, but it's a group of refugees out of Thailand. In 2005 and 2006 we started to bring in about 810, and we've been doing that every year now. The GBA for the Karen refugee group processing initiative identified factors of potential mitigating strategies in refugee pre-selection and post-selection, so it gave us an idea as to what we should be looking at and what we could build upon for when the refugees actually arrive in relation to their integration into Canada.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm sorry, in the selection...?

The Chair: Madam Minna, I'm sorry, your time is up.

I'm sorry, go ahead. Complete your sentence.

Mr. Jeff Daly: I would just say that the factors we actually looked at specifically were women at risk, female heads of households, risk of permanent separation of family members, issues linked to age—because we're looking at gender-based analysis from an age perspective as well—implications of large numbers of de facto dependants, and possible consequences of admissibility screening. We were trying to build this into our own analysis so that we would have a good sense of who would be arriving in Canada.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Deschamps, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: I will be sharing my time with my colleague, if I may, since we have had quite a thorough overview of gender-based analysis.

What I find interesting about Citizenship and Immigration Canada is that you have been very proactive. You have been trying to implement this kind of analysis in your department since 1995. Can you tell me why you decided to include gender-based analysis when the new legislation was implemented? What did it provide that was new? Did it enable your department to gather data?

Ms. Allison Little Fortin: We took...

[English]

If you don't mind, I'll do this in English, because it's going to go faster and time is of the essence.

At the time when the act was coming forward, we took a commitment to gender-based analysis and to gender equality seriously, and we did a lot of work to ensure that the new provisions—the selection criteria, other parts of the act—would not negatively impact men or women. As we were doing that and trying to build that capacity in our department, I think the discussion at the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration was around, how will we know this is working if we don't have a review of it after the fact? So a motion was put forward, and the decision at the time was to include it into our ongoing reporting against the act, so to look at what the gender-based impacts of the act and the implementation of the act were over time. That was the original thought behind that, and it was welcomed and included in the act as the government went forward with the bill.

As for what it has done, as Peter said, it has been a catalyst for us to make sure we think through what we need to do: how do we make sure this continues, where do we look at and prioritize where we do our analysis, and where do we focus as we move to implement this requirement?

• (1030)

[Translation]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: Thank you.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Good morning. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Oberle, you talked about your analysis of the various categories of refugee claimants in Canada. In the documents provided to us by our researchers, I see that the largest group, after skilled workers, is live-in caregivers; the largest number of women coming to work in Canada fall into that category. You told us that your analysis placed particular focus on that aspect. I imagine that you made recommendations to the department on the basis of your analyses.

Have all of those recommendations been implemented? Was the work that you do taken into account? If not, this work does not lead to significant change.

I would also like to know how the inter-departmental committee that you created identifies its priorities. You told us that the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs was represented on the committee. And yet, shelters for aboriginal women are having a great deal of difficulty.

I would also like to know, Mr. Oberle, how your employees benefit from what you are defending. Do you have pay equity?

[English]

Mr. Peter Oberle: There are a few questions there. Let's try to take them one by one.

What Julie was describing was our participation in an interdepartmental committee with Indian Affairs and other departments. Correct me if I'm wrong, Julie, but one of the primary objectives of that committee is to be a forum for sharing knowledge and lessons as departments proceed to develop tools and build knowledge. Within CIC, we have a few tools and pieces of knowledge to share.

But that takes me to your second point, which I think was directed at the commitment we're seeing across the department. I think we are expressing a commitment today and you're asking if that's alive and well across the department. I'm pretty new to CIC, and from what I've seen of gender-based analysis over the last few months, I'm really excited to be a part of it. I'm not just saying that; I've been in government for 23 years—I've seen a lot of programs developed—and I've got to take my hat off to my predecessors for what they've developed and what this framework looks like.

I can tell you that the progress that CIC has made, and the quality of that framework, is really a testament to the commitment of folks across CIC. If I speak to an ADM or somebody in this branch, at a minimum they are aware of it, but there's more typically a passion around the issue. As I was saying earlier, it's something that really comes naturally to the department, and I do see the take-up across the department. The evidence for that is that we're seeing branches that want to be trained. We've trained 200 people. We're seeing branch plans becoming increasingly rich and more numerous.

I think that would be my best answer to that.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: How is it that we are not seeing any improvement in the programs? If this works, why are the programs not being changed to take into account your analysis? I assume that in the analysis, especially with respect to live-in caregivers... There are many problems encountered by women from the Philippines. I do not understand. There has been an evaluation and an analysis, and recommendations have been made. But the program is not changing enough to meet the needs of people who come to live here. How do you explain that?

• (1035)

[English]

Mr. Peter Oberle: I would argue that bit by bit, more and more, year after year, we are seeing a change in programs. I had given you one example with language instruction for newcomers. Jeff had given a second example. In our annual reports—the most recent one and the year before that—there's a variety of other examples as well. I couldn't take the time to walk you through it; I would use up the rest of our time.

But there's no question that we have more work to do. I don't think this is a target or an end. This is an ongoing cycle of continuous improvement. We do have more work to do, but I think we can point to specific programs that are better because of gender-based analysis.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Could you send us the list and the changes?

Mr. Peter Oberle: Absolutely.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The Chair: Madam Boucher, you're sharing your time with Ms. Davidson?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I just have a quick question, and Ms. Davidson will use the rest of the time.

You said that yours was the only department required by law to report on its gender-based analysis. I want to understand the impact that such a requirement has on your work. I would also like to know how you gather the information to carry out a proper gender-based analysis.

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Oberle: There are a couple of questions in there.

To the first part of your question, I don't think I'm qualified to comment on what's required for all departments, but again, I can reiterate that the legislation for CIC was a catalyst.

With respect to your question about data, we've been collecting data that are disaggregated by sex and by gender. We've been doing that for a number of years now—I think in previous testimony we saw that it went back about 10 years. So there's a good set of data there.

As well, if you look at our annual report on immigration, you'll also see initiatives that are there to drive out the collection of new data, where there are areas that we need to explore further. I think one of the first references in the annual immigration plan is a piece of work that does a literature review and gets input from the provinces and territories about some of the settlement challenges faced by newcomers, differentiating between gender again.

Does that answer your questions?

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: Yes.

Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Davidson.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you very much for your presentations this morning.

We've heard from a lot of different experts in the field of gender analysis and gender budgeting. There was one thing that I wanted to ask you about, since your department is actively involved in doing the gender analysis.

We had one person testify who was doing an expert analysis of the budget. In that person's presentation, it said:

The goal of gender analysis is to eliminate existing differences in incomes, wealth, empowerment, and other indicators between women and men to promote the full and equal development of women; and to support the attainment of women's equality.

Then it went on to say:

A full gender analysis of budgetary measures seeks to determine whether each individual budgetary measure is likely to have a negative, neutral, or positive impact on the status of women as compared with men.

They went on, then, to analyze and to give us the results of the impact on different policies, whether or not they actually increased the gap between men and women, or ensured that women were no worse off, or actually improved the status of women.

And then we have had other expert presenters say that this should not be a “men versus women” issue. It definitely needs to be something that analyzes the impacts on all sectors of our society, whether it be men, women, children, whoever.

Could you tell me how your process works? Does it include the overall general analysis, or does it do an analysis of women only?

● (1040)

Mr. Peter Oberle: Maybe I'll let Julie pipe in on that one.

Let me just say up front that the way we think of the objectives is as follows: first, that there's no unintended differential effect; and second, that beyond that, our programs, policies, legislation, and services actually promote the equality objectives. That's how we think of the objectives.

Julie.

Ms. Julie Fontaine: I can add that definitely in our training we've included those dimensions and we reinforce with policy analysts and staff to take into consideration the impacts—unintended—on various populations. Whether it's age, culture, race, being a man or woman, these are all important dimensions that should be included in an analysis.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: And is this type of discussion what takes place at your interdepartmental groups? Is it an across-the-board analysis? Is that the type of thing the champions are instructed to look for in the different departments?

Ms. Julie Fontaine: Status of Women really has the lead on that working group, so I'd prefer not to infringe on their lead on that.

What I can say is that in CIC we also have a departmental working group that looks at those components and we also do brainstorming sessions. And we put that working group in place to create more horizontality between branches and to discuss the issues that sometimes go from one branch to another. We've definitely been reinforcing that, so sometimes it is to provide general information to analysts as well as brainstorming on a particular GBA, if you wish.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

The Chair: You have one more minute, if you want.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Do I? Okay.

We also talked a bit about the legislation, and I think you had indicated, Mr. Oberle, that some of the same results could have been received through four or five different methods. And I think you were referring to your department when you said that.

Could you make a comment on how you see these other methods, other than legislation, working for other departments? Do you think it's something that may be successful across the government, or do you think there is something specific to your department that would make these things more acceptable or workable?

Mr. Peter Oberle: I don't think I feel qualified to comment on behalf of other departments. But I think I can say something about the second part of your question, which is if there is something unique to CIC.

I think it's telling at CIC that gender-based analysis was under way before the legislation came along. So maybe considerations of gender are a bit more clear and present at CIC—and madam, they certainly are clear and present at CIC.

With respect to other mechanisms—Treasury Board policy, MAF—I raise those because in coming to CIC I find a department that is very responsive to Treasury Board policy and MAF. And having seen similar requirements or perhaps even more elaborated requirements in those mechanisms, my sense is that you would have seen a similar kind of effect at CIC. I can't speak for other departments.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Ms. Mathysen, for seven minutes.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you for being here.

I am quite interested in this idea of CIC being required to provide the annual gender-based analysis of the impact of the act to Parliament. And we're looking at some potential changes to the act in regard to ministers' powers. Have you had a chance to anticipate the impact of these possible changes, or do you have to wait until after it's a fait accompli? Do you have any kind of input in terms of anticipating impact?

Mr. Peter Oberle: I can give you a partial response to that. First and foremost, the requirement to report on the impacts of the act as it relates to gender continues.

Secondly, I was speaking to my colleagues yesterday, and it turns out that the former manager of the gender-based analysis unit is working right in that section, so gender-based analysis is very clear and present in their minds. And I understand they have plans to do gender-based analysis for the proposed changes.

On details beyond that, I'd have to perhaps reply afterwards in writing, as they're the experts. But I hope that's helpful.

● (1045)

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Okay. And actually I would appreciate that reply. I think it would be very useful to know in terms of those changes.

In 2002 the GBA unit of CIC produced a gender-based analysis chart, and it summarized the key policy legislative initiatives and their potential impacts on women. I wonder if the department has completed all this research. If it's complete, what did you find, and is it available on the website? What light can you shed in terms of that research?

Mr. Peter Oberle: I'll ask Allison to respond, if that's okay, Allison.

Ms. Allison Little Fortin: I'm happy to respond. Unfortunately, I don't have all of the information.

I know that for each of the provisions there were specific areas where impacts were identified, or there were possible impacts where monitoring was required. To give you one example, the policy work that rolls out of this is the responsibility, to some extent, of the various policy groups. I'm not fully up to date on that. We can get back to you with what has been done.

I can give you a sense, for example, of the evaluation of the impacts of the changes to the selection criteria for skilled workers. As the implementation of the act comes forward, we have been waiting to gather enough data to do a full evaluation of the impacts. We are almost at a stage—and you'll see that in the annual report—to do that. It takes time to actually gather as the people roll through the system.

While it seems as if six years is a long time, because of the time it takes to process and for people to arrive here, we are still not at a point where most of this analysis....

And that's just one example. For me to go through the whole list and respond wouldn't make sense, because I'd use up all of your time. But we can get back to you.

Mr. Peter Oberle: Perhaps I could add a couple of quick points. We publish a document called *Facts and Figures*. Certainly part of our data is in that publication. So we do make that available.

One of your questions was whether our research was finished. Our research will never be finished; it's absolutely going to be ongoing. You'll see our research plans in our annual report.

As we learn, as knowledge builds, and as administrative measures are taken, it's a constant exercise to do the research and make sure we understand the gender-based impacts. Again, you'll see that reflected in our annual report.

The Chair: You have about two minutes.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: In the course of the discussion you talked about the gender-based analysis training through the branches. I kept thinking about the people on the ground who make that first contact, whether it be in an embassy or a community. I'm thinking about the local CIC office in London, Ontario, where despite the fact that they don't have enough staff, they do incredible work—tremendous work.

To what degree do they receive gender-based training, if at all? And how important is that in terms of dealing with those human beings in that very intimate kind of situation?

Mr. Peter Oberle: I have to let Julie have a chance to jump in on this. She's the author of so much of our training, and she has been so engaged in it. But I can tell you that there is engagement on the front line. Training has been delivered to the front line in a variety of circumstances.

It's also a two-way street. We get some news of where we need to shape policy and promote gender equality from the front line as well, so it's a two-way street.

Ms. Julie Fontaine: The training at CIC is open to all staff, whether you work in policies, programs, or the front line. Everybody can follow that training. There were a few folks from our region in Ontario who followed it last fall. The effort is coordinated at the national headquarters, but certainly the information trickles down to our region.

• (1050)

Mr. Peter Oberle: Perhaps I could highlight one example in our annual report as well, where training was delivered to our front line officers to raise awareness about victims of human trafficking, many of whom are women and children, of course.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'm going to be mindful of the time because there's a committee after us. I would request that everybody go for four minutes. If you keep your questions brief, they can answer them.

Mr. Pearson.

Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for coming. We appreciate the hard work you do. Many of us have had personal experience with your department, and we very much appreciate the efforts you put in.

We realize Status of Women has been working with various departments, and that they have champions. We've heard, though, as a committee, that though efforts have been made, the outcomes are not necessarily as successful as we would have hoped. That's what some witnesses have said.

So my question is more about whether you have monitors in place to make sure we're getting to the sinew of what we're trying to do here. Do you have plans to continue to monitor this to make sure it becomes even more effective?

Mr. Peter Oberle: Yes, absolutely we do. I'll try to quickly walk you through this and give you a picture of how it works.

There's us, the gender-based analysis unit. We provide support to branches. The branches develop their plans. Check one is that the director general for each branch signs off those plans. So there's an accountability mechanism there.

Policy program proposals come to a central policy committee. There's a second check there.

Overseeing that policy committee is our policy sector, which has an overall coordination challenge role in policies. There's an additional check built in there.

We produce the results of all of that in our annual immigration report. We also build the results into our report on plans and

priorities, the departmental performance report. That brings in an additional check.

There's a final thing I would add on the responsibility of my organization. We have a five-year framework. It's 2008, so we have to be turning our minds to what the next framework looks like. One thing we need to do in designing the next framework is to do a stock-taking of this framework. That's something we'll have to take to senior management. They sit on top of all this. The executive committee sees the annual immigration report, the outputs of the policy, and they see what the RPP looks like. Ultimately they'll see the stock-taking exercise and where we need to go next.

Does that give you a good picture?

Mr. Glen Pearson: Yes, it does.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Madam Chair, I don't have anything else.

The Chair: Mr. Stanton requested that I take his time—

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Yes, please.

The Chair: —so I'm going to ask you a couple of things.

Ms. Mathysen had asked for an analysis and wanted to know if you could supply us with a document on that analysis. If you have that document, please supply it to us. We would also like to have a copy of your training program, as you so willingly suggested.

Mr. Daly, you talked about the GBA that you did for refugees from Thailand, the Korean refugees—

Mr. Jeff Daly: No, those are the Karen refugees from Thailand. It was on just the pre- and post-selection phase of it.

The Chair: Oh, okay.

The committee has been dealing with human trafficking. It has been a critical issue for us. I looked at your GBA on the borders and how you let women in, etc. Could you tell us how you do that gender-based analysis of the very vulnerable ones, and the pre-removal risk assessment? When you're sending the PRA to third countries, to safe havens or whatever, we need to see that, because it really affects our work.

Mr. Jeff Daly: I don't think I can get into all the details of how it works operationally, but I can tell you that there was a GBA done on the pre-removal risk assessment. I don't know if the committee is familiar with the results of that.

We have preliminary results. They suggest that PRA has no significant differential impact on women and minors who are applying for protection through the program. Instead, the study shows that there tends to be less and less limitation on access to the PRA program for all clients.

We don't have all the details on the analysis for this yet. That's still ongoing within our asylum division of refugees branch. But that's preliminary information that I can provide to the committee right now.

The Chair: As a final question, has the GBA affected your resources? You don't have to answer that now—I need to give some time the Bloc—but perhaps you could give me the answer later, or submit something.

Madame Demers.

•(1055)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, we must not forget that we have also asked for the list of recommendations that have been made and those accepted for the various programs.

Mr. Oberle, I asked you a question earlier about whether you practised what you preached. Do your employees have pay equity?

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Oberle: Are we tooled properly? That's our job, to year after year develop and grow our tools. I think we're doing pretty well on tools, although that doesn't negate the fact that we want to continuously improve.

We've built in training packages, one example of which we could share with this committee. I think it's about to go into its third iteration of development.

I'm sorry, your second question was around equity for staff...?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: I was talking about your own employees. Do they have pay equity? Are they entitled to the conditions that are being sought for employees in other sectors of economic activity?

[*English*]

Mr. Peter Oberle: Certainly it's a goal of our department as well. I would hesitate to speak on behalf of our folks in human resources, except to say I know that's one of the items they work very hard on. I'd be happy to follow up with an answer to that question, if I may.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you very much, sir.

Mr. Peter Oberle: You're welcome.

[*English*]

The Chair: Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I'm thinking of situations in my riding where we run into cultural differences, particularly with Muslim couples. They marry once, or they have a kind of agreement. They don't regard it as a full-fledged marriage until after there's been a wedding in front of the community. But sometimes, as in the case with the war in Lebanon, it becomes necessary to bring brides, and sometimes grooms, to Canada without that officially sanctioned marriage before the family, although they still regard themselves as being married.

Has CIC taken a look at these cultural differences between how we regard legitimate applications and how other cultures regard them?

Ms. Julie Fontaine: Definitely. It's part of our mandate to take into account all these differences. This is one of the reasons we're going beyond gender differences and taking into account racial factors, cultures, religion, age, etc.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

In your submission we saw that you do a diversity analysis. Perhaps when you're doing your GBA and diversity analysis you could give us a little framework on what you do so the committee has a grip on it. It's all technical for the time being until we see something concrete. Whatever concrete examples you can provide, the clerk will send you an e-mail to that effect.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank you and wish you success in your GBA. Hopefully, with the pressure of our committee, we can somehow get gender budgeting done.

Thank you so much.

The committee meeting is adjourned.

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