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**Wednesday, June 3, 2009**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson**

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## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

• (1640)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good afternoon, everyone. This is meeting 24 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. Today we are continuing our review of key elements of Canadian foreign policy.

As you know, we are conducting hearings in regard to the Great Lakes regions of Africa. Our witness today, from the Canadian Council on Africa, is Lucien Bradet, president and chief executive officer.

We also have a number of other guests at the table. We welcome Mr. Robert Blackburn, the senior vice-president of the Africa division of SNC-Lavalin; and Monsieur Karl Miville-de Chêne, the president of Contacts Monde, Montreal.

We welcome each one of you to the committee.

I think, Mr. Bradet, you have an opening statement, and then we'd be pleased if you would field some questions from our committee. We look forward to your comments.

[Translation]

**Mr. Lucien Bradet (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Council on Africa):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the Committee, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

[English]

We would like to thank the committee for giving us the opportunity to discuss Canada's relations with Africa. This question is of great importance to CC Africa, and we think it's a major issue for a large number of Canadians working in Africa.

We hope our presentation and the questions and answers that will follow will help the committee make specific recommendations to Parliament. That's the way we believe parliamentary committees work.

First a word about CC Africa, for those who don't know us. We were created in 2002. We have a mission to try to increase economic relations between Africa and Canada. We are a not-for-profit organization. We have about 150 members from companies, universities, colleges, provincial governments such as Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and New Brunswick, and we have a certain number of ministries and agencies in Ottawa.

Our activities include everything under the sun in terms of economic development—i.e., hosting African delegations coming to Canada, doing missions to Africa, and developing seminars, workshops, daily news bulletins, research papers—so we believe that makes us unique in Canada. Nobody else in Canada does this kind of work outside the government.

Last week you heard a presentation from a group of 19 African diplomats, who called for a document for a renewed partnership with Canada. This is a very honourable reaction that needs to be underlined for its positiveness and perspective and bringing a message of dynamism and reconstruction, I think.

African nations want more from Canada, there's no doubt about that. They want increased diplomatic relations, they want more economic ties, they clearly want more countries on CIDA's priority list. You've heard that signal very clearly, that the perception of Canada's presence on the continent is shrinking. It's a perception, and we want to check with you: is it only a perception or is it a reality? A number of very valuable recommendations were suggested and should help the committee go forward with recommendations of its own.

CC Africa shares the concerns of the African diplomatic missions. In the last few years we have clearly observed a trend that indicates the Canadian government, in general, is less and less present in Africa, whereas the Canadian population is doing more and more there. We are here today to ensure that this concern is communicated clearly to members of Parliament and that this issue is taken as a priority by the committee. We understand you have many priorities, but we believe this is one that should be considered very seriously.

It is our assessment that there is an emergency and that Parliament must take necessary action to stop it and put in place a moratorium on budget cuts, on embassy closings, until a comprehensive strategy is developed after appropriate consultations with Canadians.

We want to share with you three areas of concern: diplomatic relations, international trade, and international aid.

In terms of diplomatic relations, a few years ago the Government of Canada closed two embassies, Guinea and Gabon. More recently, a year ago, there was an attempt to keep Burkina Faso's embassy in Ouagadougou, but without an ambassador. This fight was won, and we now have an ambassador back in place.

Last week there was an announcement of two further posts closing in Africa, Cape Town and Malawi. And by coincidence—or design, I don't know—a month and a half before, Malawi was cut from the priority list of CIDA. Is that a sign of the times? We cut the CIDA list and then we cut the embassy? I don't know; I'm just raising the question.

Based on informal discussions with people in the know in Ottawa, it is our understanding that this is not the end of embassy closings in Africa. It will be most valuable for the committee—I think that is a task you should take under your wing—to inquire of the responsible departments or agencies in a formal way about the review process, the target for each continent, and the planned closures over the next three years. We are very much afraid that by the end of the closure exercise there won't be many African missions left. Our indication is that a few more are to be closed—and “a few” is not small.

● (1645)

Canada is proud to be a member of the G-8. It has fought to become one and was a host of its summit a number of times, but when it comes to our presence in Africa, we are not even close to the G-8 nations.

We have compiled for this presentation a complete list of the G-8 embassies in Africa. Unfortunately, I was not able to distribute it; I thought the English version would do, but I was told it had to be in French when I came here.

So I will just give you the numbers: the United States, 39 embassies; France, 38; Germany, 33; Russia, 33; the United Kingdom, 24; Italy, 20; and Canada, 16. So we're really at the bottom of the pile.

We look at France and Germany and they have more than double, and if the trend continues as expected, we will readily become, de facto, a minor player in Africa. Is that the role of a G-8 member, to be walking backwards while many other countries are increasing their involvement and are developing new relationships with the African continent?

As a G-8 member, there is a tradition of a long story of friendship with Africa. An asset that no other G-8 member has is that we share English and French as official languages, which helps us with even more countries on the continent.

Is it our role to reduce or even just stabilize the number of our initiatives in Africa? We do not believe so. When CC Africa met the former Minister of Trade, he asked us, through the five representatives who were part of the delegation, what is the most important contribution Canada can make in your work in Africa? They said, very simply, unanimously, representation on the ground. It is very important for the Canadian government to be present on the ground. They don't want anything less than that.

On international trade, when the African ambassador came here last week, and they were not only saying “more”, they were saying, “more economic development”. They want to develop their economy; they want to have more relations with Canada on the economic front. A more prosperous economy is the key to the future. That was also echoed by Minister Oda's speech, which clearly stated that economic development is the second priority of CIDA.

Economic development means a number of things: investment, export, import, but also partnerships such as professional and intense training to potential exporters from Africa so they can do more effective exporting to the western world, including Canada; education at the college level for trade, such as training the young people in the mining trade in Tanzania so they can replace the expatriates who are in great numbers in that country; development of a curriculum for the new program at university level at the University of Botswana. I can cite all kinds of initiatives where it is part of the economic development.

All of these forms of economic development take resources and professionals who are highly knowledgeable about Canada, a capability that Africa needs. This knowledge cannot be improvised. You need people who are dedicated precisely to helping Canadians and Africans work together. These people are called trade officers.

While our investment in Africa has been significantly growing in recent years, reaching close to \$21 billion in 2008—this is not a small number—the resources, and most importantly the human resources, dedicated by the government in the trade area have been drastically diminished, and I'm not talking about over the last year. It's something that has been going on for the last few years. Canada now has 25 trade commissioners for 47 sub-Saharan countries, representing 800 million people. Putting that in perspective, Latin America has 13 countries, 300 million people, and 68 trade commissioners.

In other words, comparing Latin America with Africa, for a little bit more than a quarter of the countries, and less than half the population, there are three times the number of trade commissioners.

● (1650)

If we have to talk about balance and growth, this is important. There is something wrong with this picture. Why should we be less present than any other nation competing in Africa? Everybody says that it is the last frontier of economic development, and many sectors are booming, not only in natural resources but also infrastructure, power, energy, communications, information technology, agrifood, and health. Why should Canada take a back seat in the development of the future of Africa, one of the major phenomena of the 21st century?

We congratulate ourselves on being an exporting nation and a nation that welcomes imports, with examples such as the MAI, multilateral access initiative, that welcomes imports from less developed countries, but it is obvious that the resources are not in line with the objectives.

We work closely with DFAIT, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and we have friends there on every floor, but unfortunately, it is quite evident to us that the resources allocated to Africa are totally inadequate. That will hurt Canada if we don't find a remedy and we don't have a solution.

The third aspect is international development. It concerns Canada's assistance program. As we heard last week with Minister Oda's speech and question period...we share many concerns with the members of the committee. CC Africa was very disappointed to learn of the cuts in the number of African countries from the priority countries. We were disappointed because we felt that the government—not this government, I agree—had already achieved the cuts in 2005 when they went from 69 to 25 countries, plus a more concentrated budget allocation directed to the countries of concentration that went 80% and 20%. Remember, we talked about that a lot last week.

Today, to say that these cuts are directed toward better efficiencies sounds redundant, since the policy had already been achieved.

There's another annex that you have, and this one is in a bilingual format. At the bottom of the page you will see that in 2008 and 2007 the priority countries in Africa received 90% of the aid—not 50%, but 90%. So the total objective of 80% and 20% was achieved. This is a sample. There is more money than that. But this is a good sample to show that it was already achieved. We realize that does not cover the \$1.5 billion of 2007, but it does include all the grants and contributions over \$25,000. Also, we didn't give the figures for the multilateral organizations, because it's not easy to get those numbers. We can conclude that over 90% of the grants were already met there and the non-priority countries were receiving 10%.

The second conclusion to note from that table, if you look at the yellow part, is that six African countries that remain on the list received an increase in aid of 143% between 2007 and 2008, which means that, without announcing it, the list for 2009 was essentially already active in 2008. That list of six was already there, and the countries that were priority countries but not on the new list saw a decrease of 64% in two years. So let's not kid ourselves; it was happening. We didn't know, but we realize it now.

Thirdly, like the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, which is a very respected organization, we do not believe that you can give seven countries 80% of CIDA help in the bilateral programs and give the 40 other sub-Saharan countries 20% and nobody will lose. Nobody can make the mathematics of that.

So we are convinced, as is the Canadian Council for International Co-operation, that the 70% of bilateral aid to Africa that was given will go down within the next two or three years to about 35%. We are not convinced that Canadians want to see, by this announcement, that we are going to help less the poorest region of the earth and the ones who are in greatest need.

• (1655)

Mr. Chairman and honourable members, our purpose was to bring to you a number of alarming signs that if we do not deal with it in the near future, it will create considerable damage to Canada's reputation. It will not serve Canadians well from both the public and the private sector.

Finally, we will put into question our national commitment to African development. We cannot, without consequences, take for granted our good reputation acquired in the past. We must continue and increase our present initiative in Africa on three fronts, not only one: diplomatic relations, international trade, and official assistance. Canada should take the necessary steps to remain a major partner in Africa, because we believe that the continent is changing. It is growing. I was looking at the numbers a couple of days ago. The number of people reached 1 billion on January 1, 2009, and it will be at 1.5 billion within 10 years or so. It is growing and it will play a great role in shaping the world of tomorrow.

*Merci beaucoup.* My colleagues are also here to answer questions.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Monsieur Bradet.

We'll move to the opposition side.

Mr. Pearson, please, you have seven minutes.

**Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.):** Monsieur Bradet, thank you for coming, and thanks to the other gentlemen as well.

I have three questions I'd like to ask you. I'll give you the time to answer them as you need to.

The first is on your impression of the 18 or 19 ambassadors who came here last week. I know that to the committee, it was unprecedented. We weren't quite ready for it, or prepared for it. We often talk, when we do development assistance in Africa, about the need for Africans to find their own voice. Suddenly, it seemed to me that they found it and brought it right here. I think that's great; that's exactly what needed to happen.

I would like to know what your impression of that was. What do you think that means?

Second, you do broad networking. What is your perception around the world, and perhaps even within Canada, of these feelings about Canada slowly leaving Africa? I know when I've spoken with development ministers from the EU or from Britain, for instance, they have their own view of that. I'm not trying to colour your thinking; I'm just letting you know. People have obviously been making decisions as they're watching Canada make these moves.

The final one I have for you is this. The government will continue to come back...when they say, yes, we are changing some of the development within Africa, but we're actually doubling our aid to Africa.

I would like to hear what your thoughts are of that and of that pronouncement.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I will answer the first question, and perhaps ask my colleague to maybe answer the second one, on what they see from their travels every day in the world. But I'm going to answer the first question.

I have been in that job for seven years now. I did my studies in Rwanda when I was young, so Africa has been in my blood for the last 40 years. I must say that what I saw last week was an historical event, to see 19 ambassadors outside of their country getting together in a matter of six weeks, because the announcement was made about six weeks ago, and agreeing on a document with 20 recommendations.

You have to see there a feeling that is profound, *une déception réelle*, and something that they had to say and say it clearly. It took a lot of courage, but it took a lot of discussion among themselves to do that. I was not in the room, sir. I saw it as a surprise, as you did, but it was a great event for me and I hope the committee will take it as a rare expression.

I don't know if you have ever seen so many ambassadors from one continent in front of you at one time, but you did last time and it's an historical event. Whatever we think about the content and maybe some will agree or disagree, but the consensus they create around that shows there is a problem here somewhere.

Do you want to answer the question about how people outside in the world see us when we do those things, Bob?

• (1700)

**Mr. Robert G. Blackburn (Senior Vice-President, Government and Development Institutions, As an Individual):** Thanks.

From our point of view, SNC-Lavalin is working in most of the African countries. I think last year we were in something like 27 African countries working, including the Maghreb, including North Africa.

It's very important to us, and it's important to our clients in those countries, to have a Canadian government presence, senior-level visits. Just right now, I think, Lucien is taking a mission to Angola next week, and our people who have been looking at the Angolan market are saying we need a Canadian minister here, we need a Canadian embassy here. This is a country like Mozambique, emerging from conflict. It's very wealthy. It needs Canadian business. It needs Canadian governance, a relationship.

There's great potential there. We're working there, we've been working on a project there for the last couple of years. But it's very difficult to do it. As Lucien says, so many of our competitors are there on the spot. And it's a sign of respect, among other things. Just having business people going to look for contracts is a little different from establishing a respectful diplomatic relationship, having cultural exchanges, educational exchanges that flesh out a relationship.

We're having fewer embassies, fewer trade commissioners, and a smaller presence in what is clearly, as Lucien says, a very important emerging market.

Just by the by, last year we did a little under \$1 billion in business in Africa. The year before it was about \$1.3 billion. So it's a major market for us in a number of sectors, and it has incredible...the prospects for the future are very rich. But we need to have Canadians there on the spot. You can't deal with people who you don't know.

[Translation]

**Mr. Karl Miville-de Chêne (President, CCM consultation contacts monde, As an Individual):** I would prefer to give a partial answer to the second question.

SNC-Lavalin is a huge company. Consultation Contacts Monde is a small company. However, the small business perspective is also important. In the African context, our mandates are much smaller than the billions of dollars we were talking about earlier. At the same time, the support that we receive, or do not receive, makes all the difference and can enable us to win something.

For example, we have French competitors in Francophone Africa, who are well supported by their government, both financially and in terms of government assistance and logistics on site — something we have less and less access to. So, it is becoming more and more difficult to secure market share. The services we export to Africa represent 50% of our business volume. So, it is critical for us that we be able to continue to access support, and that it be expanded, so that other Canadian companies, particularly in the services sector, can benefit from these growing economies.

[English]

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** The question of the aid is a complex one. The numbers game can kill you. The minister was talking last week of a \$5.1 billion budget. She was talking of the \$2.1 billion that was given to the African country before. The problem is that in the world we are living, the peace and security issue sometimes takes over what we believe aid is.

Darfur is a mix of all of that. If you pour \$200 million there, sometimes we are not sure it's aid. If you pour \$300 million in Afghanistan for purposes that mix defence, peace, security, trade, and all of that, it becomes difficult.

So it's an opaque world, aid. The statistics of CIDA are difficult to understand. I'm making *aucun reproche*.

I'm not saying it's good or bad. I'm saying it's complex. I think that your committee should continue what you were trying to do last week, ask questions and try to find out where the money goes.

I've been told stories of how, for example, money often goes directly to government, and when that's done, the people outside the capital see less Canadian money. Why? I don't know. Because more of it stays in the capital. So it's a very complex question, and I think what you're trying to do is very important. The statistics I gave to you, the 143% increase in one year, that's a huge increase, but the other countries lost 65%, mainly the French countries, which...*je ne comprends pas pourquoi*. Was it on purpose? Was it a grand design? Was it not a design? Was it an accident?

I cannot pass judgment. I look only at facts.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Bradet.

We'll move to Madam Lalonde.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Mr. Chairman, I would like to begin, if you don't mind. My name is Ms. Deschamps.

Welcome, Mr. Bradet. Thank you very much. I spent a few moments quickly reviewing the material you provided. It's very interesting. It conveys a message of hope. We are witnessing changes as some great projects get underway.

As you can see, I speak French. I am originally from an area north of Montreal, the Laurentians, where we are trying to organize educational projects with Africa and other partners.

There is one issue that does concern me at this point. In many Francophone African countries, embassies have been closed. Furthermore, Canadian aid to Francophone countries has also gone down. Last week, a large delegation appeared before the Committee. I, too, was very impressed to see so many ambassadors come here to raise awareness of the problems they are currently facing, or could face, in Africa. Without wanting to sound like a demagogue, I have to say I find myself questioning a lot of things. It seems to me there is a major gap in terms of the amount of Canadian aid given to Francophone countries, as opposed to Anglophone countries. I don't know how that could be rectified. For now, we are asking the government to try to stop the hemorrhaging. The fact that eight Francophone countries have been struck from the list of those that benefit from international cooperation is even more worrisome.

Do you have any solutions to propose? We certainly understand the concerns of the African ambassadors — indeed, of African civil society as a whole.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** It seems to me that, in order to solve the problem, there need to be frank, transparent and open discussions with Canadians. All of you sitting at this table know Canadians. Yes, they are, I believe, in the midst of an economic crisis. However, I do not think that means that we should abandon Africans.

I have just come back from West Africa, where I led a mission involving 22 organizations. We saw four countries in 12 days; I am sure you will agree that this was quick. I attended 159 meetings with three presidents in 12 days. Three of the four countries were Francophone: Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Senegal. There is a huge need there. When people tell me that aid is not being used as effectively there as in Kenya or Tanzania, my response is that that is possible. However, are we now going to provide aid to the countries that work most effectively, that are the least in need and the most able to get along on their own? I don't know.

Let me give you another example — the MAI.

[English]

I don't know if you've heard about MAI. It is the multilateral access initiative.

[Translation]

It is the same thing with the AGOA. Through the MAI, it is possible to import any product from developing countries, except dairy products and poultry. However, if you ask people in African countries whether they are familiar with this program, they will say that they are not. It does not get much publicity, because there are not enough people to do that. It is very important to involve Africans in the export of their products, because that is how the economy will develop. Unfortunately, that program is not accessible enough.

Look at what happened in Burkina Faso. We went from \$24 million in 2007 to \$800,000 in 2008. Furthermore, Burkina Faso is no longer on the list, and yet we are telling people there not to be worried, that they won't lose anything. I am not so sure. I have not yet seen the figures for 2009 and I am afraid it may have gone down to \$400,000. Burkina Faso, whose President Compaoré is setting a good example of proper management and good governance — that was one of the criteria for the list of 25 countries — is not longer on the list. People there must be wondering why.

I am not sure that it was a good idea to go from 25 to 20 countries. Already, 90% of our spending was in those 25 countries. What was the idea of focusing spending in even fewer countries?

To answer your question about what we should do, I say you need to talk to Canadians and people in government, and try to make them aware of the African reality. As I often say to my children and others, when I was little, I paid the missionaries; now, we are the missionaries in Canada, and will continue to be.

• (1710)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Madam Lalonde. You have two minutes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Bradet, Mr. Blackburn and Mr. Miville-de-Chêne.

It was impressive to meet with the ambassadors last week. I will not explain why, but I believe that, for them, it must have been difficult to come together, present a single, common brief and ask for this partnership with Canada. I hope there will be more of us supporting that partnership, so that it can become an actual association and contribute to the economic development you have talked about.

You mentioned Burkina Faso. I actually took part in Paul Martin's major tour. Where do you think Paul Martin went in Africa? To Burkina Faso, after a short trip to the Sudan. Those two countries were visited by a large delegation. It seems to me—and I am only repeating what I said previously—that we should not be giving the impression that Canada is abandoning Africa. You referred earlier to a moratorium on budget cuts and embassy closures.

Do you think that if a certain number of us were to take a strong position on this, something might change for those countries?

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I don't know whether that would be effective. Actually, it would be just as effective as a parliamentary committee can be. I believe a parliamentary committee still has a strong voice in democracy. You report on your activities in Parliament and you make recommendations.

I know that other embassies will also be closing, but I don't know which ones. The embassies in Guinea and Gabon were closed two or three years ago, and still others were closed last week. If as many embassies again were to close—I don't know whether it's the same number—it would be absolutely terrible. With seven or eight embassies on the continent, it would no longer be possible to claim that Canada is interested in Africa. Let's get serious. In my opinion, we would be remiss in our duty as a G-8 country. Here we are talking about the continent that has the largest proportion of poor and 60% of the least developed countries. We should have a presence in most of those countries.

I said earlier that Canada has a presence in 13 Latin American countries. The fact is that there are three times more officers there than in Africa. And yet, there are 700 million people living in sub-Saharan Africa. That position is not defensible, particularly when we see the other G-8 countries increasing their contribution. If they were all cutting back, I could understand that we would be inclined to do the same, but that is not the case. I do not think the \$1 billion given a few weeks ago by the G-8 countries will be enough for Africa to solve its problems.

[English]

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

We'll move to the government side now, to Mr. Obhrai.

• (1715)

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Thank you for coming.

I know that all of you are very heavily engaged in Africa. Even your title says Canadian Council on Africa, so Africa is of course your priority. I come from Africa myself, so I know the issues very well.

So we expect when you look at our policy here...and there has been a change in the policy, no question about that. The Prime

Minister has stated quite clearly our policy's issues. But that does not mean that it is any major reflection on Africa.

I'm just going to talk very briefly about the closures that you were mentioning, and I believe my colleague Jim Abbott will discuss the foreign aid issue. When this government came into power, it consolidated its expenditures and put in a review process. The first closures that took place were not in Africa. They were in Europe. They took place in Milan and Tokyo as part of it. And then subsequently they went down there. Considering that we had a larger area in Africa and everything, naturally Africa would be looked into. But the purpose of closing the embassies—and I've just been down there to Malawi and Zambia where the embassies are going to be closed—was not to reduce services or take away things, but to use other resources more effectively.

It does not reflect a lower priority for Africa by this government. The priority of Africa remains as strong. We're just consolidating the resources. And this matter will be effective not only in Africa but everywhere else as I mentioned: in Europe, in Asia, wherever we feel government resources need to be more effectively used. That is the basic line. Your speculation about the seven or eight embassies left in Africa does not hold water. We do not know how these things will work, but I can assure you that this government's policy does not at any time mean that there is not going to be any engagement, or that the engagement with Africa will be reduced.

Now, having given that political point of view and the embassy closure point of view, so that it is very clear, I will turn it over to my colleague here, who will talk about the aid policy.

**The Chair:** I'll give Mr. Abbott just a moment to pose his question.

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** I'm a little curious; I've been taking a look at your numbers. If I'm reading this correctly, I see that Mali went from \$30 million to \$162 million; and then Senegal went from \$45 million to \$106 million. Tanzania was multiplied by nine times.

I realize that on this page there are some reductions as well. I'm fully aware of that. But given the fact that the figure for aid to Africa from the Canadian people in 2003-04 was just a hair over \$1 billion, and as of March 31 of this year it is \$2.1 billion, I'm really curious as to how you can say that the Canadian government is no longer interested in Africa. And those were your words, I believe. I'm looking at your numbers, where there's doubling, tripling, or multiplying by a factor of nine on millions of dollars, and a figure of \$2.1 billion to Africa from the Canadian government.

I'm really perplexed. I just don't understand how you can come to the conclusion that we're no longer interested.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I can answer both questions, starting with the one about the embassy.

I do realize that the Government of Canada—not only yours but the preceding one also—looked at closing embassies. I have no problem with that. Maybe we have to close certain embassies. My point is the following: if there's one place where you should not close embassies, it is Africa. That's a very simple point. I'm not hiding behind anything.

I was in Hamburg six months ago. Maybe you need one in Hamburg, but if you don't have one in Hamburg, Berlin will take care of it very well. But if you close one in Malawi in the month of June, and you had taken it off the CIDA list in the month of April, you tell me what that signals to that country. Just read Geoffrey York's editorial of this week in *The Globe and Mail*, and you'll understand exactly what's happening.

In answer to Mr. Abbott's question on the numbers, I have no problem with the idea that some countries should get more, and that's normal, because this is the continent where there is most need. However, we object to the Government of Canada cutting by half 14 of the 25 countries for which aid is most important because of poverty. That's what we object to. We do not agree with the principle that you took that list and reduced it to 20, and of that 20 reduced the number of African countries by 50% and left out countries like Niger, Burkina Faso, and Malawi, which any of you who have travelled there will know have huge needs compared with Peru, with which you're going to discuss a free trade agreement next week.

It's as simple as that. That's the difference.

• (1720)

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** If we can stay on Africa for just a second, would you at least admit that we have doubled aid in the last three years from the 2003-04 levels to \$2.1 billion? Would you also admit that we are one year earlier than all of the other countries in the G-7? I don't understand—

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I admit that.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Then how can you make the statement that we are abandoning Africa?

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** Because that was last year. I'm looking at the future, and the future is scary.

I was here last week. I saw the minister last week. I haven't seen the minister renew a commitment, number one. I haven't heard the minister talk about the 8% increase, number two. I haven't seen any of those statements, and before it happens I want to make sure we discuss those things. That's all I'm saying.

I'm not saying that CIDA is going to diminish its spending. However, I must say, Mr. Abbott, that if we were able to spend 50% of \$2.1 billion of bilateral aid, which is almost \$1.1 billion, and we are going to spend 80% of that in six countries.... So if we are not doing that according to the 80%-20%, where is that money going to go?

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Maybe the multilateral program or the partnership program.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** No, because she says 53% is bilateral. That's what she said. I didn't invent that number.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you both.

We're going to go to Ms. Chow.

Welcome to our committee. It's good to have you here. You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Olivia Chow (Trinity—Spadina, NDP):** Thank you.

Talking about the future, World Bank preliminary forecasts for between now and 2005 said that up to 2.8 million additional children will die because of the economic downturn, which was not caused by them but probably because of deregulation and greed. This 2.8 million is actually larger than the population of Manitoba and slightly smaller than Toronto. But you're looking at 46 million more people living in poverty as they make less than \$1.25 a day. Many of them live in Africa, and many of the mothers are losing their jobs. Last I saw, the banks got \$8.4 trillion in bailouts, as of January of this year.

What do you think is the Canadian aid level to Africa? That's my first question. I have two more. It's a quick question, the precise dollar amount.

The second question is about how African minerals being sold here in the west sometimes end up fuelling ongoing conflicts. Take Congo as an example. Some material from our cellphones, coltan, has a connection there. There's a bill being considered in the U.S. Congress to deal with the situation. The bill requires companies using these minerals to keep track of where the minerals are coming from and to ensure that they are not using minerals that fund conflicts. What do you think of such a bill?

Third, I see Barrick Gold in your booklet here. Norway's pension funds do not invest in Barrick Gold because of their open pit mine. Should the Canada Pension Plan invest in these companies, for example, because of some of the practices in Africa?

Those are my three questions.

• (1725)

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I don't want to talk about Barrick, because I'm not that company. They are a member of the organization, and I think that we have to work with them, because they are doing good things around the world.

I remember when I was young in Jonquière, Saguenay, my father used to say that the Americans were stealing our resources. That was what we were saying in Quebec. Well, do you think they still steal our resources? They don't, because we've learned how to do things. That's what the African countries are doing. They've been doing this in Tanzania, Rwanda, and DRC. They are renegotiating deals to make sure that they get their share. Were they abused? I'm sure they were abused. I'm not going to try to say that there was no abuse. But the lessons are learned very fast.

I can tell you that the members we have, including Barrick, are doing great stuff for the development of the economy. For example, in one project in Tanzania, they have a 200-kilometre water pipeline and at 10 different places they put in a pump system for the people of the village, who had no water before. It has nothing to do with the mine, but they did that.

So I think we can find horror stories. I guarantee that, Madam. But as you can see from this page here, we just published a book of 50 things that Canadian companies have done that any Canadian would think are great things that we should do.

Were they abused? Yes. Are there good things happening? Yes.

On the other hand, how much money should we spend in Africa? I think 0.7% is where we should reach. Maybe we cannot do it for the whole world, but I think that we should do it at least for Africa, because Africa is the last place where there are so many poor people, so many kids in danger, and so many women who are not well treated. That's where the jobs will be created. I think that the investment that Canada is making, \$21 billion now, creates those jobs. So we need to train people, because they are our eyes and our friends.

I'll give you a small example. I was with the Chamber of Commerce of Senegal a month ago. In that room there was the Senegalese Chamber of Commerce and there was a Canadian. Who do you think was in the corner? It was our French representative, on loan, free of charge, to the chamber. Do you think that what we were trying to do with the chamber didn't go to Paris the day after? The same day it went to Paris. So let's not be boy scouts here. We have to work in a continent where competition is important and where Canadians are well received. They want us there. We have the technology, we have the people.

We're not going to export, Madam, locomotives and cement. Know-how is what we're going to export. That's what they like from the Quebec people, from the Montreal people, and so forth.

So as for the question of whether we do enough aid, my answer is no, and we should try to reach more in Africa than we do in other places.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** The one question that you haven't touched on is about African minerals being sold here that end up creating even more conflict, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Should Canada have a bill to keep track of where the minerals come from and make sure this money is not ending up funding conflicts by allowing people to buy arms?

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I think the actual government did a good job when it came out with the labelling. That's an example.

Deepak does not hear me.

Mr. Ohbrai, I'm saying something good about you, and you're not listening.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Deepak Ohbrai:** Can you repeat it? Say it twice.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** She was talking about the origin of the metals, and I was saying the present government did something good about it—the labelling of products to say where they are made, so citizens know where it is.

I believe in fair trade. I believe in fair practices, and I think people should know more. At the same time, organizations like PAAC, Partnership Africa Against Corruption, are doing a great job on the diamond business and other things.

The only government in the world that works with the mining ministries of Africa is Natural Resources Canada. It is helping them to have good rules. We are the only one accepted in that circle.

So we cannot change everything, but I think we're doing good things. It's not perfect, and we should do more, but I think we're going in the right direction.

•(1730)

[Translation]

We still are a good influence.

[English]

We still are a good influence.

**Ms. Olivia Chow:** Can I just ask one other question? In Congo, for example, when you're looking at war, there's usually violence against women; they're used as weapons of war. There are projects there, such a project against sexual violence, partly funded by Canada. Are these some of the good things or projects that you're talking about, that we need to do more of to protect women?

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I'll give you two examples.

Madam Ramazani was here from Congo, and *nous parlons la semaine passée* about violence against women. I've been in RDC, and I see how tough it is. I think there are companies who are working in the same field and are trying to help and are making initiatives—and Canada should do more.

But I'll give you an example in Congo, which is a great example. There's a company in Montreal dealing with biopharmaceuticals. That company has developed a program to help Congolese learn how to plant and explore medicinal herbs. This company, with the Jesuits of Congo, developed a new industry that is super high value.

**A voice:** So that's organic medicine?

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** That's right.

These are the things that will help people. Who is the biggest backer of that? It's Lundin Mining of Vancouver.

So the ramifications of what we do are everywhere. But without CIDA in many of those projects, they will not see the light of the day.

**The Chair:** All right, thank you very much. We're out of time.

I do want to thank you for coming to the committee today. I would also, on an aside, encourage you to look at Bill C-300, which our committee is also looking at.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** I've heard about that.

**The Chair:** Perhaps you need to—

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** Is that a question? Can I answer it?

**The Chair:** No, unfortunately, we're all out of time.

But I noted that the companies who are part of your council have made appeals to all of us in regard to that bill, so I think we know where you'd stand.

**Mr. Lucien Bradet:** Mr. Chairman, if we go in that direction, it will be the fourth place where we are going to hurt Africa, because we are going to be stopping a lot of good investment with good intentions and good deeds.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Oh, you can come back any time.

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

We want to thank all committee members for letting us meet a little later on today because of the votes and everything else.

We're adjourned.

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