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Chair

Mr. Dean Allison

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•(0850)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)): I want to welcome everybody to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. This is meeting number 6, and pursuant to Standing Order 108.2, our briefing is on the situation in Haiti.

To all our witnesses, I want to thank you for taking time out of your busy days to come here and brief us with regard to the situation.

Mr. Allen, I'm going to get you to introduce the colleagues you brought with you from the Department of Foreign Affairs. I believe you're going to be speaking.

Then, Lise Filiatrault, could you introduce your group as well? I believe you have an opening statement.

Mr. Allen, I'll turn it over to you.

Welcome. The floor is yours.

Mr. Jon Allen (Assistant Deputy Minister, Americas, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today I have with me Marie Gervais-Vidricaire, director general of the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force. They're our bankers, the people who provide the funds that enable us to do rule-of-law institution-building in Haiti. I also have the director of the Haiti Task Force, Denis Robert. He has much experience and has worked through the earthquake. My colleague, Lise Filiatrault, from CIDA is also here.

Ms. Lise Filiatrault (Regional Director General, Americas Directorate, Canadian International Development Agency): Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I am accompanied by Leslie Norton, director general of international humanitarian assistance, as well as Isabelle Bérard, director general for the Haiti program in CIDA.

The Chair: Mr. Allen, let's start with you.

Mr. Jon Allen: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of committee.

It's my pleasure to be with you today to discuss a country of great importance to Canada and to the hemisphere. Canada has been active in Haiti for decades, but unlike other countries, we have no colonial baggage in that country. Our cultural and linguistic links to Haiti and our longstanding engagement has earned Canada a special relationship with that country—one of respect, one of friendship, and one of compassion. Canadians have shown great solidarity with Haiti, not

only in the aftermath of the January 2010 earthquake, but also through longstanding support to the poorest country in our hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world.

There is also, as you are aware, a large Haitian diaspora living in Canada that contributes to both Canadian and Haitian society. Canada's engagement is an important element of our Americas strategy, which seeks to support democratic governance, security, and prosperity in our neighbourhood. Haiti is also a shared priority with the United States and with a number of our other partner countries, including Brazil, France, and the EU.

Today I want to briefly summarize why Haiti is a priority for Canada, take note of the current political situation in the country, and briefly look at some of the opportunities to support positive reforms by President Martelly's government. In doing so, I want to highlight key aspects of Canada's ongoing engagement in Haiti through our Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force. My colleague, Lise Filiatrault, will take us through CIDA's reconstruction and development priorities and activities coordinated by her agency.

This presentation will not focus only on the aftermath of the earthquake. Despite the devastation of this catastrophic event, it did not cause but rather exacerbated and served to highlight some of the ongoing challenges that Haiti faces today.

Canada is acutely aware of the currently stable but always fragile security situation and precarious history of political instability in Haiti. This fragility makes Haiti vulnerable to corruption, organized crime, narcotics, and human trafficking. Instability and crime in Haiti are already being felt in Canada and in the U.S., as Haiti is a transit point for drugs from South America to North America and Europe. Such instability could also have significant negative effects regionally, and in particular in the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, where more than 10,000 Canadians live and hundreds of thousands more vacation every year, and where there is currently over \$3 billion in Canadian investment.

Democracy, good governance, and human rights are also issues of concern in Haiti. Canada has committed to promoting these values as part of our foreign policy more broadly, but also specifically in our Americas strategy. While these concerns are not new in Haiti, we seem now to be at a crossroads and may have an opportunity to make efforts to address them and to move toward a society where the rule of law prevails, all citizens are accountable, human rights are protected, and the promotion of prosperity and opportunity through increased trade and investment is possible.

An international consensus now exists to the effect that the lack of focus on political governance and rule-of-law reform in Haiti is one of the main reasons the country remains mired in poverty and underdevelopment despite more than 25 years of international engagement.

In Canada's view, these root causes of corruption, poverty, and instability must be adequately addressed in order to allow the international community's reconstruction and development efforts to fully succeed. While concrete results from international and Canadian development efforts in Haiti have been achieved—and Lise will walk you through some of our successes—it is our view that more needs to be done on governance and rule-of-law reform in order to reinforce the foundations of the Haitian state and support its continued development.

● (0855)

Canada is not alone in this analysis.

In addition to President Martelly's identifying the rule of law as a Haitian government priority, along with education, environment, and the economy, the most recent UN Secretary General's report on Haiti identified the rule of law as critical to long-term stability, development, and prosperity in that country. The UN report also called upon the Government of Haiti and the international community to work towards a rule-of-law compact, a plan to ensure sustainable rule-of-law reform in Haiti. Canada strongly supports this proposal and will work with the Haitian government, the UN, and our partners to realize it.

Canada has already invested significantly in the rule of law. DFAIT's START programming has supported Canadian priorities in security and justice with approximately \$100 million since 2006, including \$18.7 million this fiscal year. START projects have helped to reinforce Haitian institutions, including the Haitian National Police, corrections, and border services, in particular by building and equipping key security infrastructure and by providing training and mentoring to senior security sector personnel.

START projects also seek to increase access to justice and to ensure the foundations of a functioning justice system. Canada also contributes significantly to the UN stabilization force, MINUSTAH. Despite some recent criticisms, this mission remains essential to the stabilization and reconstruction of Haiti. While we supported a drawdown of some MINUSTAH forces to pre-earthquake levels, Canada believes that MINUSTAH should stay in place until it fulfills its mandate. In addition to five military officers, Canada currently deploys 138 police and 11 corrections officers, who provide mentoring and training to their Haitian counterparts. This represents Canada's largest contribution of personnel to an ongoing UN mission. A Canadian, RCMP Chief Superintendent Marc Tardif, is the head of the mission's civilian police component. START, in partnership with Public Safety and DND, are key partners in this mission.

The recent presidential elections in Haiti that witnessed the first transition of power in Haiti between two democratically elected presidents of opposition parties were a positive development. But that optimism was short-lived—President Martelly's first two candidates for prime minister were rejected by the Haitian legislature. Two weeks ago, however, the president's third candidate,

Dr. Garry Conille, was confirmed. The following day, President Martelly appointed the head of the supreme court, a post that had remained vacant for seven years. This appointment, which the UN and the international community, including Canada, have been calling on Haiti to make for some time, is an essential step towards the establishment of an independent judiciary.

Finally, late last week, the Haitian parliament approved both Prime Minister Conille's cabinet and his political platform. These recent developments are a sign of the political will and positive intentions of the new Haitian government, but they are only first steps. We believe further reforms are necessary, including the need for measures to address problems of impunity and corruption, land title reform, and a lack of investor confidence.

In closing, I would like to recall that Canada's engagement in Haiti is consistent with our domestic and foreign policy priorities and reflects the interest of Canadians themselves. Haiti is also a shared priority with many of our hemispheric partners, with whom we work closely as principal donors and contributors. Canada's long-term vision for Haiti is one in which Haiti fulfills its potential for lasting security, democratic governance, and prosperity, a Haiti that can provide peace and stability, that can manage and recover quickly in the face of natural disasters, and that can generate employment opportunity and hope for all its citizens. With ongoing long-term support, this goal can be realized if we seize the political will in Haiti for change and focus on rule-of-law and governance reform.

● (0900)

Following the earthquake, Prime Minister Harper noted that it would take at least ten years of international engagement to support the reconstruction and development in Haiti. Canada remains committed to this effort.

I'll now turn the floor over to Lise Filiatrault, and afterwards we'd be very happy to answer any and all of your questions.

[Translation]

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Allen.

[Translation]

You have the floor, Ms. Filiatrault.

Ms. Lise Filiatrault: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to update the committee on the work of the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, in Haiti

Haiti is one of CIDA's countries of focus and, in each of the past two years, has been the largest recipient of the worldwide aid from CIDA. It is the largest recipient of ongoing development assistance in the Americas.

CIDA's work in Haiti, one of the least developed countries in the world, is multifaceted. CIDA responds to immediate and urgent humanitarian needs and addresses medium to longer-term development needs including improving access to basic services such as health and education, supporting economy development, reinforcing the capacity of the Haitian government, and fostering security and stability.

To enhance the sustainability of our work in a fragile state such as Haiti, CIDA seeks to ensure complementarity between humanitarian assistance and long-term development efforts thereby generating mutually reinforcing results.

And we also work closely with our Government of Canada partners to build capacity in Haiti such as in the security sector, border management and government revenue management.

CIDA's thematic priorities, namely stimulating sustainable economy growth, securing the future of children and youth and increasing food security, guide CIDA's work in Haiti.

Following the January 2010 earthquake, Canada was one of the first countries to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Haiti. In total, Canada disbursed \$150.15 million in support of immediate humanitarian needs resulting from the earthquake, and pledged another \$400 million in March 2010 and at the International Donors Conference in New York to support the Haitian government's Action Plan for National Recovery and Development of Haiti and priorities.

This two-year \$400 million commitment is being delivered through several government departments, including CIDA, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Department of Finance. Canada has already disbursed two-thirds of this pledge and has put in place firm commitments to meet the rest of this goal by March 2012.

In response to the earthquake, individual Canadians donated a total of \$220 million to registered Canadian charities, an amount that CIDA, on behalf of the Government of Canada, is matching through the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. To date, 98% of this fund has been allocated.

In more recent months, CIDA has provided \$8.5 million in additional humanitarian assistance to address the ongoing cholera epidemic.

[English]

Concrete progress has been made in Haiti since the earthquake. More than half of the persons displaced by the earthquake have left camps, and half of the debris has now been removed.

CIDA's work in Haiti is helping produce tangible results. For example, 400,000 school children receive a daily nutritious meal; 330,000 women now have access to trained medical professionals when they give birth; 369,000 Haitians have access to credit and financial services; more than 40,000 children now have access to refurbished or rebuilt schools, receive school supplies, and have their school fees paid; and more than 80,000 families are now more food-secure as a result of increased agricultural productivity and income.

While progress has been made, more needs to be done. We are closely monitoring humanitarian needs, which remain elevated, and with DFAIT we are working closely with the new Haitian government to ensure that our programming remains aligned with the Government of Haiti's priorities and the needs of Haitians.

Canada has been a proactive member of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, which is the main body responsible for coordinating reconstruction efforts, and Canada will continue to work with the Government of Haiti and its Canadian and international partners to ensure that reconstruction efforts are coordinated, effective, transparent, and accountable.

As you know, Minister Oda travelled to Haiti last week, where she met with President Michel Martelly and Prime Minister Garry Conille. She also visited some of CIDA's projects to assess progress and results achieved. Minister Oda reiterated the Government of Canada's long-term commitment to Haiti and discussed with the president and prime minister Haiti's national plans and priorities to ensure that reconstruction efforts advance and that Haiti is on a sustainable path towards long-term development.

The minister visited three CIDA projects—a maternity hospital, a transitional shelter, and a water and sanitation project—and met with a number of Canadian partners delivering our initiatives in Haiti for an in-depth discussion on the results they have achieved and the lessons they have learned on the ground. Our monitoring so far indicates that Canadian initiatives are making a difference in the lives of Haitians.

Thank you very much.

My colleagues and I will be pleased to respond to your questions.

● (0905)

The Chair: Thank you.

I think we'll probably have time for two rounds of questioning today.

Let us start with Madame Laverdière .

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all, and former colleagues notably, for the very interesting presentation this morning.

I think I'll switch to French.

[Translation]

Thank you very much for your presentation and thank you for having underlined that we are in Haiti for the long-term. I remember that, when I was working on those files, a 10-year period had been mentioned. At that time, even the experts were often referring to at least 20 years or a generation. It seems to us that it is worthwhile to make this investment over a generation so as not to have to face the same problems every 10 or 20 years.

That being said, I am interested by your comments on what Canada does about the rule of law. I have heard many comments, especially one which I totally approve stating that the rule of law is essential to ensure security in a country.

As far as what Canada does in that area is concerned, I have mainly heard things relating to security forces, border management, police and correctional services. However, we should also deal with the fundamental issues of the rule of law, such as human rights, institution-building, especially in the legal area, impunity issues and the fight against corruption.

I would like to know a bit more about what Canada does in those fields.

Mr. Jon Allen: Thank you. If you do not mind, I will answer in English.

[English]

I'll turn the floor over to Marie Gervais-Vidricaire to add more.

In the first instance, we have tended to focus on institution building to try to ensure the police, corrections, and border services have the infrastructure, training, and mentoring they need to be able to help deliver on the key issues that you mentioned, Madam Laverdière, which are human rights, impunity, and anti-corruption.

We are of course doing some work in terms of providing legal access to those who suffered in the earthquake. In terms of police training, it includes human rights. Those are key elements.

We have to create a base on which everything else can then follow. We are responding in many respects to the basic needs of the Haitian government in trying to build up those institutions in the first instance.

We couldn't agree with you more that human rights, impunity, and corruption are issues that have to be tackled. We want to be able to do that, as do our international partners.

• (0910)

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire (Director General, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): I would add two comments.

You heard a while ago that, since 2006, Canada has spent close to \$100 million through our program called the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force. Of that amount, close to \$65 million have been spent on projects relating to police training and reinforcement, infrastructure building, repairs, etc.

Secondly, in answer to your question, I would refer to a new project that we have set up, with a \$1 million budget, with the cooperation of what is called UN Women. The goal of this project is to improve the effectiveness of the Haitian police when it is faced with situations of violence against women or children, so that it be better prepared, especially when dealing with persons who have been displaced by the earthquake.

There are therefore some very different projects but some are specifically aimed at improving the human rights situation, especially as it relates to women.

Ms. Isabelle Bérard (Director General, Haiti, Canadian International Development Agency): On behalf of CIDA, allow me to flesh out somewhat the activities of the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force.

Of course, we have tools allowing us to support the central agencies of the government, that is to say the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Planification and Cooperation, and the General Secretariat of the Primature, which is the Prime Minister's Office. With tools such as PAT and PARGEP, we provide technical support to planning activities and to financial matters and we try to help the members of those ministries better to implement legislation and manage institutions.

This completes the list of the activities of the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

We have heard a lot about our partners, such as the United Nations and the OAS which, I believe, is still active in Haiti, as well as important partners such as the United States and hemispheric partners such as Brazil and Chile.

Could you tell us how our work is coordinated with those organizations, with those important partners?

[English]

Mr. Jon Allen: Thank you.

Yes, as you indicated, we do work very closely with the UN and the OAS. The OAS was instrumental in providing electoral observation during the most recent elections. The UN, of course, is the organization behind MINUSTAH. Brazil, one of our partners in the hemisphere, has the largest contribution to MINUSTAH and heads that for us. We had the chief of staff to the head of MINUSTAH.

We operate both formally and informally with our friends. There is a Friends of Haiti group. On a regular basis, we get on the phone with our American, EU, Brazilian, and Spanish counterparts, either in times of crisis when we're trying to ensure that the election results will be representative of what the voters desired, or just in terms of trying to coordinate our rule of law and our institution-building efforts. So both at the UN on the ground—our ambassador in Haiti, Henri-Paul Normandin, has regular meetings with his colleagues—and informally on the phone, we are working.

I think it's very true to say that we're all on the same page on this. We all realize that Haiti requires development, but we all are of the view that we have to try to fix the basics in order to be able to deal with its crucial issues and those that you've mentioned. What we're trying to do is ensure that we don't have a lot of overlap and that we're filling gaps where they're needed and not duplicating. We're working with the international Haiti Reconstruction Commission in that regard as well. So it is a team effort, with all of us I think pulling in the same direction.

• (0915)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That's all the time we have. We'll have to try to pick it up on another round.

We're going to move to Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and hopefully we can carry on with that.

Thank you very much for being here today. I think this is a discussion that Canadians are anxious to hear. Thank you for your presentations.

In that same vein, Mr. Allen, sometimes our memories go back to catastrophic incidents, so we go back to the 2010 earthquake but fail to remember that Canada has been present in Haiti for quite some time. I wonder if you could tell us what the status of this development was prior to the earthquake. Even though there is a lot of reconstruction that has to go on, have we been able to pick up and build on what we've already done?

Because CIDA has to work in tandem with what's happening there, of course, and healthy starts are so important, I wonder if CIDA could talk more about what's happening particularly in our child and maternal health initiatives. I understand that we have a new hospital. We've talked about 330,000 women now having access to trained medical professionals when they give birth. What does that look like?

Mr. Jon Allen: On the institution-building front, a lot of work was needed even before the earthquake. On the positive side, the macroeconomic situation in Haiti was actually quite good before the earthquake. It was one of its brighter spots. The Haitian national bank and the finance ministry were reasonably well run. The IMF and the IDB were quite happy and people were working well together.

Unfortunately, as you know, the earthquake wiped out a substantial portion of the public service. That set Haiti back considerably, because now, as we are beginning to pick up the pieces and want to work, there aren't a lot of experienced professionals around with whom we can actually work on a daily basis. That of course will have to be a part of the institution-building, not only rebuilding the buildings—the National Palace, as you've seen in pictures, continues to be in shambles—but rebuilding the shambles of a bureaucracy that was so badly destroyed.

We are, as you've suggested, picking up the pieces. We are beginning to work again on a variety of fronts, from CIDA's development work to ours. It's not easy. There have been huge problems with respect to the rubble that is now being dealt with after a couple of years. Half the rubble in Haiti has now been removed, but there is still much to do. Reconstruction is slow but beginning. People are beginning to be moved out of the camps.

A lot of work has been done, but there's a huge amount to be done, and I think we're just ramping up. Now that we have a government in place, now that we have cabinet ministers, and now that we have a plan, we would want to engage with that government and take it forward.

Ms. Lise Filiatrault: Thank you for your question.

If I may add to that, prior to the earthquake, as you pointed out, we were making progress in Haiti. Both foreign aid and investment had reaped some gains, and we were witnessing an economic growth of, on average, 2.3% per year during the period 2005 to 2009. Of course, as Mr. Allen explained, the earthquake really set us back, and we lost many years through that.

However, our continued presence and our strong relationship with the institutions allowed us to provide a quick response. There was indeed a continuity between what we were doing before—our long-term presence and our ability to respond quickly—and our ability now to not only respond to some of the most pressing needs that continue to be there but also to look at the longer-term sustainability.

So our approach is a mix of delivering services to respond to the most pressing needs as well as developing the capacity and working on technical assistance, as we mentioned in answer to the previous question, to ensure longer-term sustainable development of the country.

If I may, I will ask my colleague Isabelle to talk about the maternal and child health component of your question.

• (0920)

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: Regarding your specific question on child and maternal health, I just want to point out that Canada was one of the biggest donors in the health sector. Prior to the earthquake, we were the second, and we're still the second after the earthquake.

Of course, after the earthquake we engaged in the MNCH file, which is the maternal, newborn, and child health file, and we've been providing support to a number of clinics, helping women deliver their children in a safe environment. We are working toward rebuilding the school for midwifery, which was destroyed after the earthquake.

Last week, as Lise mentioned, Minister Oda did visit the Isaie Gentil hospital. This clinic, which benefits from support from Canada, has seen a threefold increase in the number of women going to it in the last few months because of the support we're providing to these women. There were 150 women delivering in this clinic a couple of months ago, and now there are 450 women delivering children in a safe environment. So Canada's support does make a huge difference in this area, given that Haiti has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the hemisphere.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you.

This is just a comment. I think I've heard from both of you today that we had built strong relationships with people in Haiti, with organizations in Haiti, prior to the earthquake taking place and that we were able to take up those relationships afterwards and to start building on those. I think that's a good news story for Canadians to know, that we have a long-term commitment there, that we've had a long-term commitment, and that we're doing good work down there.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Brown.

Mr. Eyking, welcome back, sir.

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

Thank you, guests, for coming here today.

As many know, it's a challenge dealing with Haiti after the earthquake. I respect Ms. Brown's words regarding how well we're doing down there, but it's not all good. As an opposition member, I'm not here to wreck the party, but there are some bad reports out there saying that we're not doing our job.

Just recently, there was an article by Postmedia News that quoted international groups as saying that we're not doing our job there, especially, as some of you alluded to, helping with a strong professional police force. If we don't have a strong professional police force in that country, things will go back to where they were or get even worse.

There is an article here that states—and this might have been alluded to today—that the national police academy project was announced in 2008 with a five-year commitment from the Canadian government. That was four years ago, so there's only one year left on this one. It goes on to state that

the academy is to accommodate about 300 students between the ages of 25 and 45, with 70 per cent being men and 30 per cent women. There will be about 20 buildings [with various] sports and training facilities.

It also goes on to say here that

the International Crisis Group, a respected think-tank known for its in-depth analysis and work in fragile countries, issued a report highlighting the need for a strong, professional Haitian police force. ICG also noted the lack of progress on the Canadian-funded national police academy.

It pretty well sums it up here. It says:

Three years after Canada pledged \$18 million to build a national police academy in Haiti, not a single brick has been laid.

That's pretty bad. I'm not trying to pick on the government here, but they're fans of law and order, and they're good at getting projects done, especially in places like Muskoka. But back to this, I know it's a hard region to work with, but it's pretty bad that after almost four years not a brick has been laid. Is that going to cause a big problem in that country with their so-called law and order and having a professional police force?

• (0925)

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: Thank you very much for your question.

First let me assure you that we are determined to have this police academy built. True, the project was launched in 2008. The request for proposal was launched in 2009. Of course, there was the earthquake, so we had to stop the process. And then—

Hon. Mark Eyking: If I may, of course the project was set up before the earthquake. So the wheels must have been in motion to get contracts to lay down the whole area?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: Absolutely. The work was started before the earthquake, and then the earthquake happened. There was a bidders' conference during the earthquake, and some of the bidders were in Port-au-Prince when the earthquake happened. So we had to pause for a little while and relaunch the process. Unfortunately, in the relaunch of the process, the bidders didn't meet some of the mandatory requirements from Canada's government regulatory contractual rules, so we had to relaunch.

Hon. Mark Eyking: If you don't mind, I'm following through with this. These contractors would have been from the country, the bidders?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: No, they were—

Hon. Mark Eyking: An international company, okay.

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: They were international, that's right, but the bidders' conference was held in Haiti.

As I said, the mandatory requirements weren't met by the bidders, so we had to relaunch the process. But we are determined to get this police academy going, and we are hoping that by spring 2012 we'll be able to start building.

Hon. Mark Eyking: You will start building in 2012?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: Yes, the spring of 2012.

Hon. Mark Eyking: So that's over four and a half years.

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: There was an earthquake in the meantime.

Hon. Mark Eyking: There's no doubt there was an earthquake, but to me that would make it more urgent. You have disarray in the community. You have thugs floating around—we saw it. You would think that would have been even more of a priority to get an area cleared.

I've built buildings before. You're not dealing with frost walls. These are block buildings. There's a lot of labour in the area looking for work. So not only would it have been a good infrastructure to have in place, it would have been a great work project for many of these young men and women who are idle. But we just couldn't get it together in that short time. We couldn't clear the site and get it going?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: The site is cleared, and we are working on the request for proposal. It has been relaunched, and we're waiting for proposals from bidders.

Hon. Mark Eyking: You're still waiting?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: We've launched the process and we're in the middle of that process.

Hon. Mark Eyking: You wouldn't think that's a bit of a failure, that you're still waiting for bidders?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: We've got to follow the rules.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Does anybody else have any comments on this?

If you people were building your own home and you were going to wait five years, and you're still waiting for bidders...I would think that's a failure in itself. There's something missing here. Why would it take four and a half years to get proper bidders? If there was no earthquake, would it have still taken that long?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: No, of course not. We were having this conference of bidders in Port-au-Prince to have a conversation with the bidders themselves, but because of the earthquake we had to stop the process.

Hon. Mark Eyking: Now, you have other projects that were alluded to. Apparently you're saying they're up and running. Is there a reason why those are up and running faster than this one?

Ms. Lise Filiatrault: The different—

Hon. Mark Eyking: I'm wondering where the directive's coming from, the priority of what projects you get moving along here. Does it come from the top? Foreign Affairs?

Ms. Lise Filiatrault: Different projects have different requirements, obviously. Depending on the nature of what needs to be done, and the set of rules around them, some projects can start faster; others are not as fast.

Obviously, when it relates to humanitarian needs, we have mechanisms to respond quickly. But at the same time, if construction is involved, then we do have to follow a certain number of rules and processes to make sure we not only do the right thing, but also that we do it right so that we respect the due diligence and the accountability procedures, because we also want to make sure that things are done with value for money and accountability.

• (0930)

Hon. Mark Eyking: One more quick question, if I may.

Whether we failed or we didn't get this job done, what's it like on the ground there? If we still have, as was quoted in this article, the old-style police force they had, which wasn't up to snuff for sure, what's happening there with this non-professional police force or maybe this ragtag group that's in the country? Is it causing a problem with your own aid workers and with law and order and the day-to-day operations of a country?

Mr. Jon Allen: I think we should just make a distinction between the construction of a building, which in the circumstances—proposals made, earthquake, having to redo the whole process and follow the rules—is one thing, and the mentoring and the training that we have been engaged in with the Haitian National Police, which has continued. For that we didn't need—this building will be important. It will be a key element of them being able to go forward, because they need infrastructure. They have to have proper buildings to work out of.

But our activities with the Haitian National Police have not stopped. They have continued. We have been able to engage with them. We're trying to build up the force. We're vetting police. We're providing a whole bank of training and mentoring, so we continue with that. We do consider it to be key, but we're respectful of the difficulties that people are engaged in throughout Haiti.

This police building is not the only difficulty that people have encountered. As I said, problems of rubble, problems of finding places for people to live—this has been a massive problem, and it's not unique to Haiti. You see it around the world where you end up with a disaster like this. So I have some sympathy for my colleagues in—

The Chair: I'm going to leave it at that. I'm not sure we'll be picking this line of questioning up in the next round. We'll have to come back.

Mr. Dechert, we're going to start a second round. You have five minutes.

Mr. Bob Dechert (Mississauga—Erindale, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your appearance here today and for the good work that you and your colleagues do in Haiti to help the people there who desperately need our help. I really do think that Canadians owe you a debt of gratitude for the work that you do there.

I'd like to start with Mr. Allen. In your remarks you mentioned land title reform. I've heard something about this. I've heard that there are problems with the land title system in Haiti and that it in some way hampers relief efforts, the ability to build new buildings and especially to replace residential housing that may have fallen down in the earthquake. Could you expand a little on that and tell us a little bit more about what the problem is and what might be done to fix that problem?

Mr. Jon Allen: Thank you, Mr. Dechert.

It is one of the fundamental missing links in Haiti. Denis Robert can expand because he has been working with the Government of Quebec and with France, and with others and with the Haitian government.

In terms of the nature of the problem, not only is it a problem because it has affected the removal of rubble, but it has affected the reconstruction. Each time people want to either remove rubble or build a building or build residential homes, they run into the problem of competing demands on the title. There is no functioning land title system, and there is no court system that's able to adjudicate on conflicting demands.

But it's not only a problem on the humanitarian side. When we were recently in Haiti and met with the business community, it became clear that we're not going to be able to attract investment into Haiti if people who want to build a manufacturing plant can't be assured (a) of the land on which they want to build and (b) that there won't be a challenge to it in the next month or the next year.

It's a fundamental problem.

Denis, maybe you could just expand.

Mr. Denis Robert (Director, Haiti Task Force, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade): I think, Mr. Allen, you have touched on all the right points. It's a problem that dates back in history. It's true that there is no *cadastre* in Haiti, so there has been a bit of anarchy, if I may say. So when you want to have a piece of land you will have two or three owners with papers. They all claim that they are the right papers. As was said, the justice system does not really arbitrate this, so it becomes a political problem.

We hope that the new administration...and President Martelly has mentioned *cadastre* as one of his priorities. This is fundamental, as was said, not only to attract investment, but to agriculture, to ownership. We have problems selecting people because nobody knows where to put them because there is no land available for that. This is a real problem. Again, President Martelly has underlined this. We do hope...and we'll help him.

We have some projects already, as was mentioned. Those projects are small in nature. What we want to avoid is that you have a patchwork of projects, that the French have one, and the Inter-American Development Bank has another one, and then the OAS is proposing another one. It will be again a mistake of the past to have this kind of patchwork.

We're trying to work with those who are involved, because there is a place for everybody, but it has to be well coordinated so that the work fits together and it makes sense at the end of the day.

The bottom line is that we need to have a government in Haiti—we do since last week—and then we can start working with them, because as in many other issues, we cannot do it for them. We have to help them to do it, to identify the problem and then find a solution with them.

• (0935)

Mr. Bob Dechert: Thank you. That's very good.

I'm glad to hear that the Haiti government is committed to—

Mr. Dave Van Kesteren (Chatham-Kent—Essex, CPC): On a point of order, could the witness clarify if the term is “cadaster”?

Mr. Denis Robert: It's *cadastre*. I don't know the translation.

Mr. Jon Allen: Land registry.

Mr. Bob Dechert: To finish, I'm glad to hear that the Haitian government is focusing on this problem.

Is there a similarity between the land conveyancing system in the province of Quebec and the system in Haiti that would allow legal experts from Canada to assist in this process?

Mr. Denis Robert: Yes, indeed.

Mr. Bob Dechert: Very good.

Mr. Chair, my next question, if I have time, is for Ms. Filiatrault.

Ms. Filiatrault, you mentioned in your opening remarks about the ongoing cholera epidemic in Haiti. I wonder if you could tell us a little about the current status, what the causes are, and what Canada is doing to assist.

Ms. Lise Filiatrault: Thank you. Leslie Norton, our DG for humanitarian assistance, can address this question.

Ms. Leslie Norton (Director General, International Humanitarian Assistance Directorate, Canadian International Development Agency): Thanks very much for the question.

I want to add, very quickly, on your last question, that the situation for land tenure was very serious before the earthquake, but afterwards, because so many of the government buildings were lost, that added to the situation. The humanitarian community is looking at a whole range of community-based solutions for this, and they've been working closely with locals.

On the cholera epidemic, to date CIDA has contributed \$8.5 million to address the needs resulting from the cholera epidemic. Our response began last October, at the height of the epidemic. I think you are familiar that in May-June there was another peak, and there's reference to a potential third peak, which we may be seeing now.

In addition to the \$8.5 million, we also supported the deployment of a Canadian Red Cross Society cholera treatment centre in Port-au-Prince. This centre treated 1,500 patients in total. The treatment centre is now operated by the Haitian Red Cross, with support from the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. CIDA also supported the deployment of nine Canadian experts to reinforce the operations of the Pan American Health Organization, UNICEF, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, what we call OCHA.

One of the key results achieved by this support from CIDA is that our partners have treated well over 240,000 cholera patients who had been hospitalized. Probably the most important result is that the fatality rate decreased from 9% to 1.4%. There were over 42,000 children receiving hygiene kits.

Currently PAHO has implemented a disease surveillance and alert system, allowing humanitarian organizations to respond very quickly to new outbreaks. It's being monitored very closely at this time. Our partners are there and they continue to keep their eyes open.

As we look to the next round of humanitarian appeals, we will continue to consider water, sanitation, and hygiene elements to try to prevent any further outbreaks.

• (0940)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to wrap up on the opposition side, with Ms. Sims.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims (Newton—North Delta, NDP): Thank you very much.

I want to thank you for the reports. This is a new area for me, and I'm looking forward to meeting with some of the staff and receiving briefings and updates. This has given me a little more information.

As you know, there have been some concerns expressed in the media and stories have been raised about the speed with which we get our aid to areas that need it, specifically Haiti. I know there was an earthquake in between....

I want to go back to the question that was asked previously about the police academy. My understanding from the answers you gave is that we were in a process of getting bids and we'd shortlisted the people who had made the bids. They were in a conference and then an earthquake happened. We know when an earthquake happens that things get sidelined, so now we're going through another bid process.

Did we go back to the same bidders and pick up from where we left off so we could move forward expeditiously, or have we started as if it's a whole new process?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: Thank you very much.

The way you depicted the sequence is good. The conference in Port-au-Prince was to inform the bidders prior to their final submission, and the process was never completed. After the earthquake we paused and relaunched the process. Essentially everybody who had an intention to participate in the process prior to the earthquake was invited to bid again.

When we had the conference with the bidders, we had a number of people attending the conference and we never completed the process. Whether all these people in the room would have bid or not is something we don't know, so we had to start the process from the beginning. There was no short list, essentially.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: So we were still at the initial stages of inviting bidders, and then we'd call them to a meeting. Now we're at that same initial stage. We've put out the bids.

Have we called them all to a meeting yet, or will that be some time in the future?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: The two bidders didn't meet the mandatory requirement, so we had to relaunch it.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: On those mandatory requirements—excuse my lack of knowledge in this area—were they expectations that we put on? Are we trying to meet the Canadian standards of buildings, and all of that, or were those mandatory requirements negotiated with the Haitian government and we're not meeting them?

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: They are Canadian mandatory requirements, but they're contractual requirements. They're not necessarily linked to the building code. That is the next step once we've selected the builder.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: So the technicality on which they were rejected was not the building code, so to speak, but maybe not meeting some of the requirements we had put in place.

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: That's right.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Have we looked at those requirements to make sure that they are streamlined and not a barrier, that they get us to where we want to go without placing unnecessary barriers in the way of contractors? This government is very fond of getting rid of a lot of the rules to open it up and streamline things.

Ms. Isabelle Bérard: What I'm alluding to are Treasury Board contractual rules, so at this point it's a matter of the bidders meeting those rules.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: I'm really delighted to hear that we're still carrying on with building the capacity for internal policing, because security becomes very important. But are we ensuring that built into this training is sensitivity toward gender issues, specifically violence against women and sexual exploitation of women? We know that when there is turmoil women often end up being the victims, and abuse is not out of the ordinary.

So what are we doing to ensure that kind of best practice is being instilled into the training we're giving?

• (0945)

Mrs. Marie Gervais-Vidricaire: It is absolutely part of the training. I previously mentioned one particular project to support the security services related to the problem of gender-based violence in Haiti. We do that with UN Women. There's a \$1 million contribution to that effect. But more generally speaking, we know that this is a real issue, and it's part of our considerations when we deal with training.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to wrap up because we have another session to go.

I want to thank Mr. Allen for attending today with his team from DFAIT.

Madame Filiatrault, thank you very much for being here with your team as well.

We'll suspend for five minutes to change witnesses, and then we'll go again.

• (0945)

(Pause)

• (0950)

The Chair: I call all our members back to the table. We have an additional three witnesses and just a little over 55 minutes left.

We have Kevin McCort, who is with CARE Canada. He's the president and chief executive officer, and also a member of the Humanitarian Coalition. Welcome, and thank you, Kevin, for being here.

We also have Conrad Sauvé, the secretary general and chief executive officer of the Canadian Red Cross. Welcome again. With him is Pam Aung Thin, who has also been here before with the Canadian Red Cross.

From UNICEF Canada we have Stephanie Kleschnitzki, who is the reports and contributions manager for Haiti at UNICEF.

I'm going to start with you, Mr. McCort. You have an opening statement. We'll run through the opening statements, and then hopefully we'll get time for a couple of quick rounds of questioning.

Mr. McCort, welcome. I'll turn the floor over to you.

Mr. Kevin McCort (President and Chief Executive Officer, Member of the Humanitarian Coalition, CARE Canada): Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Good morning. My name is Kevin McCort. I am the president and chief executive officer of CARE Canada, and also a member of the Humanitarian Coalition. My opinions and comments are strictly my own.

[English]

CARE has been present in Haiti for more than 50 years. We partner with families, communities, and local governments in the departments of Artibonite, Nord-Ouest, Sud, and Grand' Anse to support sustainable development and improve the quality of life.

We invest in programs of economic and food security targeting women and youth, water and sanitation, basic education, sexual and reproductive health, inclusive and accountable governance, and building more disaster-resilient communities.

Our current program in Haiti is about \$18 million a year, funded globally, with about 500 staff, of whom 94% are Haitian.

My first visit to Haiti was in the mid-1990s and my last visit was last week.

As mentioned, I also represent the Humanitarian Coalition, which was formed in 2005 and brings together CARE, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam-Québec, Save the Children Canada, and Plan Canada.

We coordinate our fundraising in Canada and launch a single appeal rather than multiple competing appeals. This is all part of our effort to ensure a greater percentage of donations is available for programs as opposed to fundraising.

In the field, the members of the Humanitarian Coalition implement our own programs but we are part of in-country coordination mechanisms and have recently completed a joint evaluation of our programs in collaboration with the Disasters Emergency Committee, which is the joint appeal mechanism from the United Kingdom.

I won't spend much time on the root causes of poverty in Haiti because I'm sure you've heard them before, other than to mention that social exclusion is a significant problem, poor governance at all levels in Haiti is a challenge, and a lack of access to education and insufficient opportunities for sustainable livelihoods contribute to the chronic vulnerability of Haiti. CARE in Haiti desires to influence and support Haitian institutions and initiatives rather than set up our individual programs around the country.

But as a very brief comment on the chronic nature of poverty in Haiti, it's worth commenting also and quoting Paul Farmer, who coined the phrase that the disaster in Haiti was an acute epidemic on a patient with a chronic vulnerability. That acute-on-chronic phrase really does sum up what happened to Haiti with this devastating earthquake that hit a very vulnerable country.

After the earthquake, CARE found itself with a program that was predominantly rural and not a significant presence in the earthquake-affected area. But we were able to draw our staff in from around the world and from around Haiti to support communities in Leogane, Carrefour, Pétienville, and other parts of Port-au-Prince to provide access to safe water and sanitation, decent housing, and sturdier building structures.

Since the cholera outbreak in October 2010, CARE has been particularly active in rural areas of the country to spread prevention messages, improve water supplies, and support medical facilities with essential materials.

Here are some brief point-form achievements. We've constructed almost 2,500 transitional shelters, 97% of which are occupied because we spent significant amounts of time on community consultations to ensure there were no conflicts over ownership. Our water, sanitation, and health department has provided over 1,000 latrines to people in spontaneous settlement areas. Our cholera and education prevention activities have now reached more than 1.7 million people, and we were providing water to 500,000 people per day in parts of Port-au-Prince. We employed over 12,000 people in cash-for-work activities, primarily in Bassin Bleu, cleaning drainage ditches and facilitating the re-establishment of irrigation canals. We distributed almost 20,000 school kits to earthquake-affected students and 20,000 sports kits to kids living in spontaneous settlements. And the health team is involved in sexual and reproductive health activities, having distributed almost a quarter of a million condoms recently, and has begun the construction of 10 community health centres to provide sexual and reproductive health services.

These efforts are part of a coordinated response. Our recent evaluation has indicated that beyond the specific achievements, we

have made a significant contribution to restoring the dignity of earthquake survivors and helping create the conditions where we can return to addressing the underlying chronic condition.

What I saw in Haiti last week is that the roads are clear, the camps are smaller, economic activity is evident, and security has improved, though sexual and gender-based violence is still a problem in the displaced persons camps. So we have made progress in addressing the acute elements of the crisis, but the underlying and chronic problems remain.

I'm going to give two examples of the types of work we believe we should be doing to address these underlying chronic problems. One is continued work in the area of shelter, in particular in the Port-au-Prince area. There are still 600,000 people remaining in the camps, but that's down from 1.3 million. The people who remain in the camps are the poorest of the poor. They were often tenants before the earthquake, and they are the most difficult people to return to their settlements.

• (0955)

Where we have built houses, it's really been for those who had some form of evidence that they were the owners or the occupiers of a house before. These neighbourhoods cannot yet re-absorb those 600,000 people. So we believe that significant work remains to be done in these neighbourhoods.

We're starting one program to work with 5,000 households in southwest Carrefour to improve shelter, infrastructure, and income-generating projects to help create the conditions, a pull factor, to help bring some of those 600,000 back into communities.

We are going to be working on a retrofit program. I'm sure you've heard of the red, yellow, and green system for assessing the damage to houses. The yellow houses are ones that people are moving back into spontaneously. There's a significant need to assist them, as they move back to those houses, with retrofit options that will improve the safety of those houses.

We hope this will address the reality of Haiti. People are moving into these houses, whether they should or not. And improving technical assistance to the homeowners and also to builders and mobile construction units will help address this weakness.

Also, we're very committed to working outside of Port-au-Prince, to help communities in the rural areas and other peri-urban areas, to help, again, perhaps, create conditions where people can move to those communities for greater economic opportunity, or also reduce the flow of new people into Port-au-Prince, because it remains a desperately overcrowded and complicated city.

There are many examples in Haiti of savings and loans work, agriculture development and value chains, watershed management, and maternal, newborn, and child health programs that are effective in a context such as Haiti.

In wrapping up, really we just have three points to leave you with. First, I would like to congratulate the Government of Canada for their commitment to Haiti. It has been longstanding and substantial. Minister Oda visited six times in the last five years. There have been substantial resources committed via the government and strong support of private giving. The match program, supported by the Government of Canada, demonstrates to Canadians that the government also supports their private individual work.

I would certainly encourage government to remain engaged, to avoid any kind of temptation to declare victory over the acute phase, as the chronic phase remains.

I have a second concluding remark. There have been many comments about the “republic of NGOs” in Haiti, that there are too many NGOs and not enough government. We should resist this as a call for fewer NGOs, but more as a call for greater government, greater capacity in governance at all levels, at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

I will just recall that in Canada our civil society sector has over two million jobs, 7% of GDP, and twelve million volunteers. A strong, non-governmental sector in Canada is part of what makes Canada strong. But in Haiti we would like to see not fewer NGOs but greater governance capacity to engage with those who are there.

Again, a balanced investment program... As Canada goes forward, it has to keep in mind there is more to Haiti than Port-au-Prince. The outlying areas of the country are also significantly in need of assistance.

Thank you very much for your attention. I'll stop there.

• (1000)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McCort.

We're now going to move over to the Canadian Red Cross and Conrad Sauvé. Welcome, sir.

Mr. Conrad Sauvé (Secretary General and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Red Cross): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, members of Parliament, colleagues from CARE and UNICEF. Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the ongoing efforts in Haiti and the role of the Red Cross.

[Translation]

There is no need to mention the events that have brought us here today. We are all aware of the destruction and devastation caused by the Haitian earthquake about 20 months ago.

We are here to talk about the progress made and the challenges faced in reconstructing Haiti for the Haitian people. We have had many successes, but the situation on the ground, as has been reported in the media, means that there is still a lot of work to do.

The Canadian Red Cross has been involved in all the relief operations in Haiti. We were on the ground shortly after the earthquake and we played an important role in the initial relief activities. Thanks to the generous financial support of CIDA, we deployed an emergency field hospital in order to fight the cholera epidemic which occurred last year, in December.

[English]

With the generosity and support of the federal government, through CIDA, we have been a partner on the development side of Haiti's recovery since the outset. We have been a leader in providing shelter, in supporting the health systems of the country, and in addressing disaster preparedness.

There are three critical phases following a disaster: emergency, recovery, and long-term planning and development.

I think we met with members of this committee previously. Some of you may recall that the emergency phase in Haiti was much longer than what we've seen in other contexts. In terms of the Red Cross, there were 14,400 tonnes of aid, one million relief items, and 2.5 million litres distributed to over 300,000 people daily; medical care for 216,000 people; and 100 camps sheltering 172,000 people.

From emergency, we transferred to the task of rebuilding lives through the recovery phase. This has included the completion of more than 18,000 earthquake-resistant shelters. It has also included shelter solutions, such as repairs to housing and grants for housing rentals or repairs.

Finally, we're looking towards long-term planning to ensure that efforts can be sustained. This includes a health care initiative, which I'll describe shortly.

A major focus of our efforts during the recovery phase has been to create safe, secure shelter in communities, which includes adequate water supplies, proper sanitation, and, where possible, access to community health.

The international movement of the Red Cross will contribute shelters for 30,000 families through projects ranging from repairing damaged housing, to rebuilding shelters, to building shelters that can withstand future disasters. Canada's contribution to this initiative is the provision of 15,000 shelter solutions through generous public donations and the federal government matching program.

The Canadian Red Cross will construct about half of these shelters, housing 7,500 families, in places such as Leogane, one of the hardest hit areas, where over 90% of buildings were destroyed. We're proud to say that we have completed two-thirds of this project. The additional shelters will be completed by the end of March 2012. In fact, these shelters can resist hurricane winds up to category 3. They represent, really, small homes that will last for over 10 years. And in many cases, they offer better living conditions than what was available to many Haitians prior to the earthquake.

• (1005)

[Translation]

In optimal conditions, an emergency shelter can be built in a few days. All that work can be done thanks to the participation and the support of the local population. On the ground, under the supervision of the Canadian Red Cross, it is mainly Haitians who are helping Haitians.

[English]

Some of our long-term projects in Haiti include a \$25 million initiative to reinforce Haiti's fragile health system. We've signed an agreement with the Haitian Ministry of Health and three Canadian health organizations offering maternal and neonatal health programs. The five-year program will make it possible to reconstruct and strengthen the health care system for the most vulnerable groups in the country's southeast region. In addition we are participating in the rebuilding of the main hospital in Jacmel, with a focus on the maternity and children's sections.

We have begun programming on community-based health. This includes providing basic health education messages to the public that are critical towards preventing the spread of disease. Training, public education, prevention, and strengthening the capacity of the Haitian Red Cross to deliver health services are all part of this initiative.

These long-term initiatives grew out of the obvious gap in the health system, which was highly evident throughout the emergency phase of the earthquake when the Red Cross treated 216,000 patients.

Haiti experienced yet another emergency at this time last year. I think you previously talked about the cholera outbreak. The country's health system did not have the expertise or capacity to address this new crisis. In response, the Canadian Red Cross deployed for the first time a field hospital to address the deadly cholera outbreak. The hospital, created in partnership with the Canadian government, treated over 1,600 people and was handed over to the Haitian Red Cross in March to give them the means and knowledge to address future outbreaks. We're proud to say this hospital is fully managed by the Haitian Red Cross and continues to treat patients.

We're making progress, but many challenges and complexities remain. They will not be resolved quickly or easily. Of course, many of these issues existed before the earthquake. One thing that will remain constant will be the presence of the Red Cross. We have a long-term commitment to Haiti that goes beyond the initial emergency and recovery phases.

Many of the concerns about reconstruction have been discussed at this panel. These range from a lack of adequate space to clearing rubble, as well as logistical challenges such as poor infrastructure and supply chain issues.

As the shelters are built, the need for labour decreases. This is a concern as we start to wrap up some of the construction projects. In areas of poverty, jobs are at a premium, and job losses, even temporary ones, create tension and increased security issues in different communities.

The humanitarian situation in Haiti remains precarious. There are over 600,000 people who remain in camps without sufficient access to shelter and basic water and sanitation. Reconstruction, while progressing, will continue to take time. It's essential that all involved remember the pressing nature of the situation. We can ill afford to relax our efforts.

In conjunction with supportive governments, we will continue to move forward even in the face of complexity and possible criticism.

We are committed to stay the course with our Haitian partners, the Haitian Red Cross, and continue to invest in communities.

In conclusion, I'd like to add that around the world the Red Cross is working closely with governments and other humanitarian actors and within the Red Cross movement to maximize our impact. Together we have made some important investments in Canada and around the world.

In addition to the mobile hospital, we have relief supplies ready to be shipped to respond to urgent needs. We have trained Red Cross staff and volunteers who are well prepared to face the most complex of disaster situations. This standby capacity requires investment every day. We're grateful for the support we receive in Canada.

Our unique experience around the globe makes us a valuable partner to the Government of Canada on policy development for international humanitarian disaster relief, recovery, and long-term development. With regard to today's subject, as I think you'll have appreciated from our remarks, we're here today with a wide base of knowledge and expertise, and we're eager to respond to any questions you may have.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1010)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Sauvé.

We're now going to move to UNICEF Canada. We have Ms. Kleschnitzki.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Stephanie Kleschnitzki (Reports and Contributions Manager, Haiti, UNICEF Canada): Thank you.

I'm joining you today, coming in from Port-au-Prince, where I've been based with UNICEF since about 10 days after the earthquake.

It's an honour to be here today, not only because I'm representing UNICEF but also because I'm a Canadian citizen. This is my first time presenting in front of a committee like this, so this is not actually a prepared statement but rather talking points. They are still accurate and sincere.

I wanted to speak a little bit about the earthquake relief and how we're repositioning in Haiti, not just for recovery but also for historic change for children.

I also wanted to speak briefly about the cholera response and what it's telling us about where the needs in Haiti really are.

First, let me congratulate the Canadian government for being the first public sector donor to release funds against the flash appeal, and in particular to release funds against UNICEF's appeal in 2010.

CIDA became the primary or the first-place donor in the public sector for our program and the third-largest contributor to the program overall. Over \$14.2 million was released for the earthquake recovery efforts, and UNICEF allocated this substantial contribution to the areas of education, nutrition, water, and sanitation.

Meanwhile, the Canadian people were also generous and showed their solidarity with children in Haiti by fundraising and mobilizing an additional \$14 million over the last year and a half. So not only is the government strong behind Haiti, but we also have a strong show of solidarity from civil society.

What I'd like to say is that the speed with which the first pledge was confirmed, its rapid transfer, and the flexibility of its manner enabled us to respond to the urgent, changing needs on the ground in the way that we needed to. So thank you once again for the consistent and appropriate assistance as a good humanitarian donor.

I'm sure that you've heard today about some of the major victories achieved in 2010. There was an immediate lifesaving response with UNICEF's work in the WASH Cluster. As a Cluster coordinator, we were able to work with partners to extend an emergency water-trekking operation that ensured safe water for over 1.2 million persons in the immediate aftermath. UNICEF's financial assistance, also through CIDA, helped to cover the needs of about 680,000 people. Some 11,300 latrines were constructed to fill the emergency sanitation needs in the immediate aftermath.

At the same time, the nutrition situation was stabilized. Malnutrition will often affect children, who are the most vulnerable in a crisis. Over 11,200 children were treated within a network of 159 different treatment programs and 28 stabilization centres for children who experienced complications when they became malnourished. UNICEF supported these partners with financial assistance and supply assistance.

Also, we had over 107 baby-friendly tents and corners, which are actually a preventative intervention to help mothers understand how to properly feed their infants and their children and how to breastfeed. This is a good and innovative example of how you can have a preventative intervention in the middle of a lifesaving emergency response.

The area of child protection received a lot of media attention and scrutiny from abroad. UNICEF focused on working with a variety of community-based organizations to create child-friendly spaces within the displacement camps. Over 445 were established in 2010, and every day they reached over 120,000 children with recreation and psychosocial support. It is particularly interesting that the majority of our partners are national partners. They are civil society organizations and faith-based organizations that will continue to provide this kind of support even after displacement ends, because they will carry these protective services back to their communities.

Also in child protection, UNICEF worked closely with Save the Children and with a variety of other partners to roll out a system of family tracing and reunification. In the early days, this was extremely effective in registering children. Family tracing, however, has been a little bit more of a challenge. About 40% of the children who were registered were separated before the earthquake, which means that in some cases families don't want to be found. This continues to be a very challenging area, which I'll talk a little more about in a moment.

• (1015)

I'd also like to say that in 2010, over 720,000 children received support to go back to school immediately after the earthquake in

April. This is a huge victory. It was accomplished in partnership with the ministry of education. A distribution of over 1,600 tents was made to about 225 different sites across the country in the earthquake-affected areas, and there was a distribution of school supplies, teaching and learning supplies, and a really strong support with partners to make sure that schools could reopen even if they were in a tent. These are quite large and substantive achievements, but they only represent a fraction of what was accomplished, particularly with CIDA funding.

As my colleagues here have mentioned, at exactly the same time that an emergency response was being conducted, there was an effort to look at capacity development, and particularly of the government as the overarching duty bearer for the protection of child rights. UNICEF, as a member of the United Nations family, is of course concerned about the issues that were discussed earlier in terms of rule of law and good governance and citizen participation. So from the start, UNICEF focused on trying to restore the operational capacity of the ministries that deliver social services and also the technical capacity.

I'll explain a few of these examples so you can understand that there is concrete evidence of change. In one case, for the nutrition division, which is a part of the Ministry of Public Health, while the centres to look at therapeutic feeding and to address severe, acute malnutrition were being expanded, at the same time UNICEF was working on training a large cadre of health officials to be able to identify malnutrition and also to be able to raise its profile in the delivery of health services.

At this point, UNICEF is funding the ministry to recruit six nutrition specialists at the central level and a group of 10 nutrition specialists, one for each department of Haiti, who will implement programs to improve surveillance on malnutrition and also treatments through the health system.

In child protection, while we focused on child friendly spaces, at the same time UNICEF was looking at things such as legislative reform. We had a victory for advocacy. In March the government signed the Hague Convention on International Adoptions, which is a basic step in enabling a protective framework for children within the country.

At the same time, UNICEF worked to improve the regulatory capacity of the ministry of social affairs by developing a database of residential care facilities, which house and host separated children, but we also enabled them to conduct assessments and to begin the process of accreditation and achievement of minimum standards for children in these centres. This is a great victory because it is coming from a country in which we were unable to identify and confirm the locations of these facilities. Now they are mapped, they're assessed, and they're on their way to being better managed.

Most significantly, I wanted to speak about education. At the moment, I would like you to know there is an unprecedented momentum for education. With the election of President Martelly and now with the confirmation of a prime minister, we have a unique moment to be able to capitalize on the momentum around education. The *rentrée scolaire* has just been completed, and UNICEF has supported the president's initiatives to reach children out of school by distributing school supplies to about 750,000 children throughout the country.

UNICEF will also be targeting some of its construction efforts for schools, not only in areas affected by the earthquake but also in some of the 150 different communities throughout the country that have no access to public education infrastructure.

You might have heard that UNICEF has a very extensive construction program. We've completed 160 semi-permanent schools; 40 are in the works to be completed by the end of the year. In the next year, we will focus not just on recovery but on equity, on ensuring that children in the most remote areas and the most vulnerable can have access to a safe learning space.

• (1020)

I also want to briefly mention the cholera epidemic. Unfortunately, about 450,000 cases have been recorded, and there have been about 6,300 deaths. Incidence rates are not even throughout the country. We're now seeing small, localized outbreaks throughout the country.

This is telling us that the needs are not necessarily within the earthquake-affected areas. Although those who are most vulnerable are still very much in need, and some of them are in camps, there are children without access to social services in the most remote rural areas. The stark gaps they have in accessing basic water, sanitation, and health care are proving to not just be a danger to their individual achievement of rights, but to the stability and public health of the country. Therefore, we're interested in seeing support for the decentralization of social services and generally for the government in the most rural areas.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I'll try to keep everyone on time, because we're almost out of time. I want to try to get two rounds in. Let's try to keep our first round to seven minutes and the second to five. If we have to go a little bit shorter, we will, so we can get two rounds in.

Ms. Sims, you have seven minutes.

Ms. Jinny Jogindera Sims: Thank you very much.

All of your organizations play a critical role, both at home and overseas, and are critical components of civil society and rebuilding civil society in countries like Haiti that have gone through disasters. I was really glad to hear Kevin specifically say that we're sometimes very good at addressing the immediate disaster and going in, but often the chronic problems remain. So it's important that we stay there until we've stabilized and put something in place long term.

My specific questions are around security and sexual violence. All of your organizations are on the ground. So give us any information

you have around what is happening in the camps with systemic sexual violence and what you are doing to address issues in this area.

I'll throw out a couple of questions at the same time, because I know they will get to all of you one way or another.

How are we ensuring that women are engaged, not only in rebuilding, education, and capacity building, but in economic development? We know that is central to re-establishing some continuity and stability. What steps are being taken to rebuild the women's movement, because during these kinds of disasters women often end up being the most disenfranchised?

What could we as Canadians be doing to assist in this momentum for education, which we realize is absolutely fundamental to re-establishing peace, security, and long-term sustainability for Haiti?

I know I've thrown out a lot, but I'm hoping you can encapsulate it for me.

• (1025)

Mr. Kevin McCort: I will start, if I may.

First, the question of sexual and gender-based violence in the camps is a particularly challenging one, and it is being addressed at a number of levels. The first level is physical, in terms of lighting and the location of latrines. There are a number of things we know you can do to reduce the likelihood of attack. Lights are critical. Having latrines in locations that are...the combination is sometimes difficult because you're constrained by the space, but location is important.

There are also systems you can build in the camp, such as buddy systems. It's Neighbourhood Watch, essentially. People are available to escort girls to the toilets at night. There are social structures you can build.

The third level is reporting. People need to have safe places to report violence against women. That often involves community centres. It involves ensuring that there are women in the centres who can take the complaint.

Those three pieces are where we start to work. There are ongoing campaigns of information about the scale of the epidemic and the problems it causes. It's not an easy one to address, but there are some learned techniques for doing that.

Very briefly, on women's economic empowerment, one of the tools we have found to be most effective, which has been supported by CIDA in many countries and by private donors, is a savings and loans program. The programs are not specifically aimed at either men or women, but they seem to be most effective with women's groups. They are solidarity peer savings and lending. Their most useful attribute is actually as insurance and as an income-smoothing component. But they do provide small amounts of capital for business. They prepare economically literate and numerate people.

I'll pass it on to others for other comments.

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: Thank you.

I think you're absolutely right in terms of the concern about violence and abuse prevention. The Canadian Red Cross is one of the leaders, actually, in the world of the Red Cross in terms of training and education around violence and abuse prevention. It's part and parcel of all our programming in Haiti, such as the education component and codes of conduct for all of our staff and everybody working for us.

We work very closely with the Haitian Red Cross. The head of the Haitian Red Cross is a woman. They have strong participation of women within the Red Cross. We have included all gender components in our housing projects, so we provide titles to women as well. We started that after the tsunami as well, to make sure women had title to the housing.

Finally, in terms of our hiring processes, we ensure that women are hired as well as men, including in our shelter construction projects.

Mrs. Stephanie Kleschnitzki: Thank you for your question.

With regard to sexual and gender-based violence, UNICEF is actually thinking about the issue countrywide. We are not just focused on camps and on the population living in them that is most vulnerable. We're actually trying to get away from saying "displaced persons", in a way, because these are representative of the most vulnerable, not necessarily people who are displaced.

From UNICEF's perspective, sexual and gender-based violence is one of the threats affecting children and women in different communities all over the country. So what we've been focusing on is trying to look at it holistically from the perspective of a protective framework. What we're doing is working to try to train a cadre of social workers with MAST, the Ministère des Affaires Sociales et du Travail, and IBESR, the Institut du Bien Etre Social et de Recherches. We've trained about 200 and have ensured that referral mechanisms, treatment, and addressing the issue is integrated into the training.

We've also worked at the community level, through the partnership with over 85 different national organizations, to try to spark the setting up of child protection committees, which are an extension of the child-friendly space. These committees would actually have a role in identifying children and women who are potential victims. They would be trained to know where to access protective services and where to take their claims and their cases. The child-friendly spaces already have this feature, but the protection committee will have much stronger linkages to clinical facilities and things like that. We're trying to think of it as more of a systems approach and are not necessarily focused on just the camp-based population.

• (1030)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to move over here to Ms. Brown, and then we're going to have a second round. Oh, Mr. Goldring is going first.

Go ahead, Mr. Goldring.

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

Thank you for being here today.

When talking about violence against women and violence against women and children, aspects affecting that certainly can be the lack of housing, the lack of food, and of course the lack of jobs for the family to be engaged in.

Dealing with those three issues, I see from the report from the Red Cross that some 7,500 homes have been developed or are expected to be developed in the Jacmel and Leogane area at a cost of some \$43,300,000. If we work that out for the approximately one million who are without housing or have been without housing, and estimate 10 persons per house—and these are very modest houses—it would come out to some \$5.5 billion to supply that housing. Given that this housing is virtually plywood boxes, am I correct with my math here that the cost of these plywood boxes is \$5,500 each—for a plywood box?

The other aspect concerns the problems with land assembly and utilization of land. For legal ownership of land, I can understand that is an immense problem. But is it not possible to relegate some property that can be, at least temporarily, leased or used for a 10-year period, or whatever, so we can get on with it and put these houses on the land? Has that been looked at?

My second question deals with food and security. We're aware of the deforestation throughout the country. We're aware that it was a very serious problem before the earthquake. What has been done since then, and what is the status? Is it still a negative? Are they still importing food to feed people? For a while they were importing rice, when at one time they were a major supplier of rice throughout the region. Would you comment on what has been done on food and security? Those are certainly two aspects that affect marital breakdown and family violence and other social issues.

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: Thank you.

Actually, in your second question you touched a little bit on the first one with deforestation. The issue is that these homes, actually... and two-thirds of them are already built.

It costs about \$5,000 a unit, absolutely. These are wind-resistant to about 240 kilometres. The costs and the relationship to deforestation is that we have to bring the wood from Canada because there is no access to materials.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Is it all from Quebec?

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: Yes. We put out a tender in Canada to find a supplier. And we have to bring the materials there because there are no existing materials in Haiti. That is part of the problem, and I think you've raised it.

I think one of the presentations talked about how we get away from patchwork.... You're asking if we find solutions. Well, we do, in terms of the housing projects. We work with local lawyers to get an agreement.... In the absence of clear land titles, we get an agreement between the landowner or the renter and the owner of the shelter, on the one hand, and we give a title to the shelter because it is a removable shelter.

So we are looking for solutions, and we're finding solutions in the absence of an overall system, and I think that's part of the challenge.

These homes are very well accepted by the Haitians. They're very appreciated. The concept was built with their participation.

I'm not sure about the math on the \$5 billion. I need to look at that. It seems a little high, actually, but we could look at that.

Mr. Peter Goldring: If it's 100,000 homes....

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: Yes.

Leogane and Jacmel are peri-urban areas. We're managing to move fast there. The challenge is more in an urban area like Port-au-Prince, where there is debris. Where there is already built infrastructures it is much more complex. We can get into that, but it's a complex question. Yes, we are finding solutions. Unfortunately, they're not global solutions because there is no global system there. So we are finding immediate solutions. They're well appreciated, and we will complete them.

On the food security issue, you put your finger on an existing problem about the Haitian economy, the fact that they're dependent on imported goods. These things need to change, but then we're getting into the role of the government there and their economic development as well as their capacity to invest, the lack of clear title

• (1035)

Mr. Peter Goldring: But the comment earlier, in the opening, was that issues of food security are a part of the areas that are worked upon.

Is that government or is that yourself?

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: We're not working specifically on the food security. We're working on the health issues and the....

Mr. Peter Goldring: Just one quick comment. It had been mentioned that to bring industry in and to bring jobs in is very difficult, once again because of the land ownership problem, but there is one company there, Gildan, a very large Quebec manufacturing company, that has two large mills there. They seem to have solved that problem, and they have some 5,000 families sustaining jobs there, at double the minimum wage per day. I would think that would be an ideal type of work.

Is this part of your work, to look at that other element, to see at least or be aware of what the employment situation is, particularly from...? There's a Canadian perspective there. Perhaps they have some ideas to help.

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: Right.

Our work is on the emergency relief side, the recovery side, and we're putting a lot of emphasis on the health side.

Mr. Peter Goldring: But it's one of the keys.

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: Yes, absolutely, but we're one of the partners. We're not taking care of all aspects.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Nudge them.

Mr. Conrad Sauvé: I'm sorry?

Mr. Peter Goldring: Nudge them. It's certainly something to be encouraged.

Ms. Pam Aung Thin (National Director, Public Affairs and Government Relations, Canadian Red Cross): I'd like to add to that. Conrad mentioned before...we do hire local staff as well, in terms of the staff that are in place in Haiti. We do have expatriates who are there, but only in very specialized positions. We have over

326 national staff who we're training. We're building their capacity. We're giving them job skills, and that includes women and men who are part of the program.

And we are working with suppliers here in Canada to help us oversee.... So on the project that Conrad mentioned earlier, in terms of housing, we're working with a Quebec-based firm called Maisons Laprise, as well as with other suppliers, to help us look at the issues and the complexities.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're now going to move to the second round, and we're going to start with Mr. Morin. Then we're going to finish up on the Conservative side.

Mr. Morin, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marc-André Morin (Laurentides—Labelle, NDP): I have been wondering since the beginning of this meeting how all those organizations manage to coordinate their efforts.

For example, after the Japanese tsunami, that country had very specific needs. It had a government and local administrations that were able to determine what was needed and to submit those needs to the countries able to provide assistance. In a way, it was a sort of ideal situation for emergency relief.

On the other hand, in a country where there is no government, no laws, no police, and where the parliament as well as the police stations have been destroyed, the number of local counterparts is close to zero. So, how can the international organizations and foreign countries develop an effective strategy? Does this kind of situation not lead to a lot of ineffectiveness?

I am not a specialist but when I heard about the earthquake, my first thought was that the absence of sanitation infrastructure would lead to a cholera outbreak that would be horrible. As a matter of fact, I wonder if it is not the time needed to set up such a sanitation infrastructure that has caused that outbreak. I wonder if all the respondents were able to set up a strategy for putting in place some kind of decision-making authority.

As they say in English,

[*English*]

money can solve only money problems.

[*Translation*]

I see that we are in a situation where a lot of money has been spent with the best intentions, but only a fraction of the expected results has been obtained.

I am not trying to criticize your actions or those of our government but I wonder if we have not reached the point where we should step back and rethink. I believe that we should develop a long-term strategy that would allow us, as well as all the other organizations and countries, to act in a way that would bring concrete results in the medium and long term.

• (1040)

[English]

Mr. Kevin McCort: I'll start. I know that both the Red Cross and UNICEF are deeply involved in these coordination efforts. Very briefly, the humanitarian organizations, under the leadership of the United Nations, have established a cluster system, whereby organizations that are involved in water, food, and health security come together and coordinate their activities. That happens very quickly, largely because all of our organizations are in the country before a disaster strikes and we have existing relationships and coordination mechanisms already in place. They're organized by theme.

That deals with emergencies in particular. One thing worth noting is that the cholera epidemic occurred 10 months after the earthquake and was largely prevented through effective coordination by international humanitarian agencies in the IDP camps. Also, the cholera epidemic actually started outside of the displaced persons camps, which is an indication of the weakness of existing communities in Haiti, as opposed to an indication of weakness of the coordination of the emergency response.

I have been doing emergency response work for 20 years. I can find many examples in the past where coordination was much worse than what we saw in Haiti. We are getting better at it, but you are correct in that there are many organizations involved, and organizations that don't have the capacity to engage in coordination mechanisms are in fact the ones that cause problems. That's something to be concerned about. These are organizations that are too small, too new, or too independent to participate in coordination. But the agencies here do a significant amount of work in collaboration to avoid the problems you've identified.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We're going to finish off with the government side.

Ms. Brown.

Ms. Lois Brown: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for your presentation here today.

That was one of the things that I wanted to hear as well: with so many agencies present in Haiti, it almost sounds like you would be tripping over each other, so I'm very pleased to hear that there is a system of working together and of pinpointing the areas where you have expertise so that you focus on those. I think that's very helpful.

Mr. McCort, I do have a question for you, though. You talked about CARE Canada having been in Haiti for a 50-year involvement, which says to me—and I recognize that you talked about an international donation base and that it's not just Canadian money going there—that it seems there would be approximately three generations of young people, then, who we have focused on

education. We have given them some sort of education. Maybe it hasn't been for the whole population, but we've had some impact.

What's happening to those young people? Are they now part of the diaspora? Are they in Canada? If so, is there a contribution back to Haiti culturally from an education perspective? Are those young people leaving and not reinvesting in Haiti, or are they becoming the people who are now going into government and social services and who are part of the response team that we need to see from a national perspective? Could you give us some insight into that?

Mr. Kevin McCort: Thank you.

Our focus is very much on the communities where we work. We don't do tracing of individuals to see where they end up eventually. But I think all of the points you mentioned are in fact what happens. Many Haitians move from rural to urban areas in search of a better life. Many in fact move to Canada, the U.S., and other places in search of a better life.

One thing we find about Haitians no matter where they move is that they retain a very strong connection to their home communities. Remittances are a wonderful and powerful example of that. Even if they do move, either from a rural to an urban area or from Haiti to another country, they remain very involved through remittances. Also, we have seen many Haitians come back as diaspora engaged in the programs of our agencies and others.

One of the things that was commented on numerous times during my visit was that for Haiti to truly prosper, there needs to be some way to retain the middle class in Haiti. That is a tremendous challenge in terms of economic opportunity, housing, and education for their children. It is something that drives people away.

• (1045)

Ms. Lois Brown: So when we talk about sustainable economic development, that has to be part of that key component, does it not? It is key that we see people in sustainable jobs.

Earlier we heard about the land titles problem from the DFAIT officials, as well as the problem of investment coming into Haiti because investors are not sure they're going to have title to the property they've invested in. But Mr. Goldring did talk about a Canadian company that's down there. Maybe there's an example there that we can build on. Maybe we can learn from some of their struggles and successes and some of the jobs they're supplying.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

To our witnesses, once again, thank you very much for taking the time to come here and update us on Haiti.

The meeting is adjourned.

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