



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

# **Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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FAAE • NUMBER 022 • 2nd SESSION • 41st PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, April 9, 2014**

**Chair**

**Mr. Dean Allison**



## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Wednesday, April 9, 2014

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)):** Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), we are considering the main estimates for 2014-15, under Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, as well as under the International Development Research Centre and the International Joint Commission, Canadian section. We will have our witnesses give us their testimony.

We'll welcome the Honourable John Baird, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Welcome, sir. We're glad to have you here.

We also have the Honourable Christian Paradis, Minister of International Development. Welcome, sir. I'm glad you could be here as well.

We have the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Welcome, Ms. Yelich.

Also as witnesses from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, we have Paul Rochon, who is the deputy minister of international development. Welcome, sir. Glad to have you here. We also have Peter Boehm, who is the associate deputy minister of foreign affairs. Welcome. We have Nadir Patel, who is the assistant deputy minister and chief financial officer. Thank you, sir, for being here as well.

I will turn the floor over to Minister Baird.

We'll start with your opening testimony and go from there.

**Hon. John Baird (Minister of Foreign Affairs):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and honourable committee members.

I welcome the opportunity to speak with you again about the international priorities of our government and how the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development advances those objectives.

I'm keen to provide as much time as possible for your questions, so I'll keep my opening remarks brief and focus on some of the top issues in Foreign Affairs.

[Translation]

Since I last appeared before you, in November, foreign affairs issues have remained significant. A major challenge over the past few months has, of course, been the crisis in Ukraine.

I am proud of the Canadian response to that crisis—the response of Canadians, Parliament and our government.

We are united in our commitment toward a free and democratic Ukraine. The proudly raised Ukrainian flag in front of Parliament is evidence of that.

[English]

Canada has been at the forefront, together with our G-7 partners, the European Union, and others in condemning the invasion and annexation of Crimea. The so-called referendum was a complete sham carried out in the intimidating presence of some 20,000 Russian troops. We can never accept ethnic national justification for invading a peaceful, democratic neighbour.

We have coordinated sanctions with our allies, and through the IMF and bilaterally, we are marshalling badly needed resources to support the Ukrainian government, including \$220 million from Canada. My department and I have been and will continue to be very focused on our response to this emerging situation.

A few weeks ago I accompanied Prime Minister Harper to Kiev in what was a very clear demonstration of Canada's unwavering solidarity with the new government and the people of Ukraine. The Prime Minister marked the end of his time there by laying flowers as a symbol of Canada's respect for those who died while standing up for democratic change.

The difficult journey that Ukraine has been on is a reminder of the considerable time, effort, and sacrifice that it takes to build societies in which there's respect for freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

In reflecting on that, I think we should take a moment to recognize that the last Canadian soldiers from our mission to Afghanistan have recently come home. This has been the longest active military engagement in Canadian history. More than 2,000 of our finest men and women in uniform were wounded, and 158 paid the ultimate price, as did Canadians in the fields of diplomacy, humanitarian affairs, and journalism.

Just recently, a cowardly terrorist attack at the Kabul Serena Hotel took the lives of nine people, including two Canadian citizens. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families and friends of those we lost.

There's no finer repudiation of tyranny or affirmation of democracy than the bravery we saw from Afghans last weekend. It was encouraging to see them make their voices heard at the polls in such high numbers, especially an unprecedented number of women. I'd like to single out and pay tribute to the phenomenal work of our entire Canadian team led by Ambassador Deborah Lyons in championing this vital cause throughout the election process. The role of women in building a new democracy, and building civil society, in ensuring a country that is peaceful is tremendously important and one which the government has championed for a good number of years. While Afghanistan clearly has a long way to go, I believe Canadians have made a real and tangible difference in improving the lives of millions of Afghans. We should be very proud of that.

Elsewhere in the world, Canada continues to take principled positions in promoting our values and a forward-leaning posture in advancing our interests. We continue to bang the drum for Canadian jobs and business, most recently with the Canada-Korea Free Trade Agreement, another achievement for my colleague the Hon. Ed Fast. This is our first FTA in the Asia-Pacific region, and is an example of how Canada continues to broaden its horizons.

Over the past year, my commitments have taken me to Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe, and across North America. We recognize the world as it is and will be, rather than as it was. That also means not solely relying on the traditional institutions and levers of diplomacy, but also embracing new and innovative tools for advocacy.

This is a fast-paced global environment network and we have to be agile and coordinated. The enlarged mandate of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development is helping us do that, and we can see this integrated approach very clearly in the updated 2014-15 priorities for DFATD.

Thank you very much.

• (1535)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister Baird.

We'll now turn the floor over to Minister Paradis, please.

**Hon. Christian Paradis (Minister of International Development and Minister for La Francophonie):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, ladies and gentlemen, members of the committee, thank you for inviting me today.

I will be making my remarks in both official languages.

I want to begin by recognizing those Canadians who have lost their lives working abroad. Those men and women embody the best of Canadian values.

They risked their lives to help strangers in need, in some of the most difficult conditions, and they paid the ultimate price. We send our thoughts and prayers to their loved ones. We will honour their sacrifice by ensuring Canada remains a world leader in humanitarian aid and international development.

[English]

Canada's development programs save lives. It's as simple as that. As Minister of International Development, my main priority is poverty alleviation, but if we are to achieve that goal, we need to be innovative. We need to look to new solutions and new partners, and promoting the involvement of the private sector in development is a big part of that.

Ending extreme poverty and promoting global prosperity are two sides of the same coin. Creating sustainable economic growth is our most effective tool for eradicating poverty around the world. We remain focused on the same goals, but our approach is adapting to the changing needs. I've spoken to heads of states on three continents and they all tell me the same thing: they don't want aid; they want trade.

[Translation]

Canada is recognized as a world leader in many areas, such as agriculture, telecommunications and responsible resource development. Canadian companies have immense expertise to offer the world. A lot of good can come from their involvement in development.

We are also broadening our relationships with civil society organizations, which are our crucial partners in development. His Highness the Aga Khan put it very well when he spoke to the House of Commons:

An active civil society can open the door for an enormous variety of energies and talents from a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals. It means opening the way for diversity. It means welcoming plurality.

In addition to the long-term programs it funds, Canada remains at the forefront of humanitarian responses. We were there in Haiti and the Sahel, and we are currently a leading donor in Syria, the Philippines and the Central African Republic. This is not going to change. There will always be a need for immediate disaster response.

[English]

Successful long-term development can help build resilience and lift people out of poverty.

It was the relentless focus on delivering results for those most in need that drove the Prime Minister to launch the Muskoka initiative in 2010. Maternal and child health is Canada's leading development priority. Before the Prime Minister drew the world's attention to this crucial issue, we were falling short on reducing child mortality and curbing maternal deaths, and thanks to the Muskoka initiative and subsequent global action, maternal mortality rates are declining and millions more children are celebrating their fifth birthdays.

Our common goal has not yet been reached, but it is within arm's reach. Together we can eliminate preventable deaths among women, children and newborns, and we can save millions of lives that hang in the balance.

[Translation]

Canada also saves lives by contributing to high-performing global initiatives, like the Global Fund for Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. With Canada's help, the global fund is saving more than 100,000 lives every month.

Mr. Chair, it was just over a year ago that the amalgamation of the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade was announced. The goal of the amalgamation was to enhance coherence and alignment between Canada's trade, diplomacy, and development activities. The department is delivering on its new, redefined mandate, and development plays a central role in that.

There is no better example of coordinated action than Canada's response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines. The Canadian response was quick and efficient, and it utilized all of Canada's resources.

[English]

As noted by Mark Kane of Save the Children U.K.:

...it was brilliant that the Canadians came to provide critical assistance. In such situations it is about mobilizing resources quickly to make sure that everyone who is suffering can be reached, and that is what Canada did. It was important that they were willing to work away from the headlines. They made a huge contribution.

[Translation]

The situation in Syria, though a man-made and not natural crisis, is another example of Canada's coordinated response.

Three years ago, the Assad regime responded to peaceful demonstrations with obscene and brutal repression. Today, the situation has deteriorated into a major humanitarian crisis, which has been made worse by the regime's wilful denial of assistance to populations in need and its deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers.

In total, Canada has contributed more than \$630 million in humanitarian and development assistance to Syria. It has spent millions more to help the surrounding regions cope with the huge influx of Syrian refugees.

While completely different, the Philippine and Syrian examples demonstrate how Canada contributes to complex efforts. Our work in this area has been exemplary, and our government and Canadians are proud of our contributions.

[English]

Mr. Chair, I want to emphasize also that the department manages and disburses funds with the utmost diligence and efficiency. Our government's commitment to helping people who live in poverty and to responding to humanitarian crises remains strong. Canada is recognized around the world for paying what we pledge, and we encourage all nations to do the same. Canada met all of its international development commitments for the year, and I have made clear to the department that I expect Canada to meet all of its commitments for this year as well.

Thanks for your time.

• (1540)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

I'll turn it over to Minister Yelich for the final opening statement.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich (Minister of State (Foreign Affairs and Consular)):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It is a pleasure to join Minister Baird and Minister Paradis today to provide an update to the committee as Canada's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Consular.

We've already heard from both ministers that our government is actively pursuing Canada's interests in a dynamic global environment. I'm honoured that my role as Minister of State allows me to support these global priorities.

There's no sector in Canada and no community that is untouched by the shifting international landscape. Like many of you, I represent and serve my constituents. Whether in farming, in the extractive industry and services, or in the small business sector, my constituents of Blackstrap, Saskatchewan directly contribute to the supply of Canadian products to foreign markets in today's global economy. That is why Canadians expect our policies and engagement to advance their commercial interests at home and abroad.

In this regard, it has been humbling to support Minister Fast and Minister Paradis by advancing Canada's trade and development initiatives through the promotion of Canadian exports, profiling Canadian investment opportunities, and supporting sustainable international efforts that help people living in poverty in much of the developing world. Not only are our efforts creating vital jobs here at home, but they're also lifting vulnerable communities from poverty abroad.

It's also been a privilege to support Minister Baird by advancing his priorities on human rights, religious freedoms, and strengthening the global response for issues relating to women and girls. In my work, I have been particularly touched to represent Canada on the global stage on child early and forced marriage. After seeing alarming statistics that show that every hour over 1,100 children and girls are forced into marriage, I understand why our minister is so passionate about this issue.

As minister for consular affairs, some may say I have the most interesting job in government. First let me highlight that Canadians are a travelling bunch. Last year alone, Canadians took over 61 million trips. The increase in travel to countries where the local laws and customs are much different from what we are used to here in Canada poses significant challenges when Canadians find themselves in distress. To respond to this demand, our Prime Minister created the first ever minister for consular affairs.

The creation of my role demonstrates the importance that our government places on assisting Canadians when they choose to leave our borders. It's extremely important that before going anywhere, Canadians read up on the country they are visiting. Through travel.gc.ca and our social media platforms, we provide timely advice on everything needed to make smart travel choices. For example, during the Sochi games, we ensured that Canadians travelling to cheer on our athletes were well aware of the laws and customs, as well as concerns on security.

We also provide guidance on important issues that Canadians seem to forget in the excitement of a well-deserved vacation. For example, we've been emphasizing the importance of obtaining travel insurance before they travel. It is amazing how many Canadians don't think they need travel insurance, and when they get sick are unpleasantly surprised when they are hit with a hefty medical bill. Travel.gc.ca also contains important online publications that you can use to educate your constituents on safe travel.

We also have created the Travel Smart app, so Canadians can access important travel information on the go, and we have simplified our registration of Canadians abroad system. That system allows Canadians to register with us so that we can reach them in case of emergency. I cannot begin to stress how important it is to encourage your constituents to continue to register. To give you a recent example, the registration system was instrumental in ensuring that no Canadians were affected as a result of the recent earthquake in Chile.

While most trips go off without a hitch, when Canadians find themselves in distress and need to reach us, Canadian consular officials are there to provide assistance 24 hours, seven days a week. Our government created the emergency watch and response centre, EWRC, to respond to the growing number of international crises and the request for consular assistance. The centre works, as I said, 24-7, assisting over 150 Canadian missions.

● (1545)

To assist the EWRC in December 2012, we created a standing rapid deployment team, a team of specially trained volunteers on stand-by, ready to assist in time of crisis. They are deployed to work alongside Canadian missions abroad. They help to provide critical services to Canadians during emergencies and often in dangerous situations.

There are limitations to the assistance that officials can provide, though. Consular officials can assist to replace personal documents. They can provide information on local lawyers. They can visit a Canadian who has been detained. They can advocate for well-being, if there are concerns, and they can speak with family here in Canada. However, Canadian consular officials cannot help you evade the local laws of another country, nor can they advocate for you in a court of law.

Finally, I am proud to reiterate our commitment to the cases involving children. To address the growing complexity of cases, I launched our vulnerable children's consular unit with Minister MacKay last fall. Through an increase in regionally specialized case officers and enhanced policy analysts, we are better equipped to address and resolve the issues relating to Canadian children abroad.

Because of the sensitivities and complexities of most of our cases, as well as the need to protect the individuals concerned, the Privacy Act limits how much information we can say publicly on a certain case. Canadians need to educate themselves. They need to educate themselves using good common sense and they need to use that common sense when they're travelling.

All information on what we like to call the three Rs of travel, read up, register, and reach us, can be found on travel.gc.ca. It is Canada's one-stop shop for everything Canadians need to know before leaving our borders.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

With the first round of questions, we have seven minutes for each. We're going to start with Mr. Dewar from the NDP.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Thank you to our guests, our ministers, for their time today.

Minister Baird, I want to start with you.

For almost a year, I guess, I've been asking about the replacement of the global peace and security fund. Each time I've asked you questions about it.... First of all you told me that there are asterisks in the estimates because it's a work in progress, that you're looking at reformulating the fund. As you know, it's extremely important for our foreign policy. It's actually a cornerstone for many of the issues you mentioned in your preamble.

Here is a very simple question. Can you tell us what stage this is at? When will you be actually announcing what you said you were going to announce earlier regarding the replacement of the global peace and security fund?

**Hon. John Baird:** Thank you very much for the question.

The work that program does is important. We have retained the same envelope. I don't know whether it has always been in estimates or partly in supplementary estimates. We are looking at trying to improve it and redesign it to make it even better. That process has taken longer than I expected. Nonetheless, the program resources and the existing program continue to exist and will continue to be funded until we introduce a new program. It has taken longer than I expected.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I'm concerned about that. It's not the first time I've asked you, as you know.

**Hon. John Baird:** But the good news is that the existing program is still functioning well.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Well, it's fine, but it's not really there, if you will. It's there in your commitment, and I'll—

**Hon. John Baird:** But we are making grants and contributions. I want to assure you that we are making—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I know, but it's.... Well, we'll get to that piece in a second, but let's not get ahead of ourselves. That's an issue we're concerned about as well.

But I'm not hearing that there are consultations on this that anyone can point to. I'm hearing you say to me, a couple of times now, "We're working on it." That's good, but I'd like some definite timelines as to when we can see results, because as you know, our terrific people who work for you need to know where things are going for our partners. This is what is particularly important, for people who are aware of this fund and the good work it has done, they need some understanding that there's going to be something coming.

Can you give us any timeline on this?

• (1550)

**Hon. John Baird:** I want to reiterate that we have continued to make a significant number of grants under the existing fund. None of this is annualized funding, so there are no groups that should be worried about losing funding, because they're done on a project basis. It's not annualized.

I don't have a timeline to give you, but I appreciate your comment about its having taken longer than I think any one of us would have liked.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I think that people need to hear from you as to what those consultations are about and where you are going with them, because that's what I'm concerned about. If you want to replace—

**Hon. John Baird:** Those are your words, not mine.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** They are, and my words are that questions abound, because we're not hearing anything, while you keep on saying that it's coming, it's coming.

Let me turn to the—

**Hon. John Baird:** And that's a fair criticism.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Yes. Thank you. That's why I made it.

In terms of the numbers—

**Hon. John Baird:** You're fair and reasonable. What can I say?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I always try, John.

It is the details for the most recent fiscal year estimates that we're focused on here. We have on record the public accounts 2013 for DFAIT. We have total budgetary authorities for DFAIT of \$2.9 billion and—we've talked about this before—the total spent was \$2.4 billion. That's a lapse of 16%.

Minister Baird, I know what you're going to say. You're going to tell me, "I don't wake up every day, Mr. Dewar, to figure out how I can spend your money."

**Hon. John Baird:** You listen.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** That was last time.

I want you to understand. My dad was a public servant, and he took direction from his political masters. His first job actually was before World War II, over in East Block. He worked for the Department of External Affairs and then he worked for customs and excise. He always knew that his political masters were the ones who

went to Parliament, who got the appropriations so that he could deliver and do the job for Canadians.

Here's the problem, Minister Baird. This isn't about waking up every morning and figuring out how you can spend money; this is about your administering the money that Canadians have actually given you to invest. And I'm sorry, but the answer that you don't get up every morning thinking about how you can spend more is not going to work this time.

Please. It's about why you are not even able to actually invest the money, which you have cut back on, by the way, in terms of your envelope, that Canadians, through Parliament, have appropriated to you, which you're suppose to be able to delegate to the wonderful people who work for you.

What is going on, Minister Baird?

**Hon. John Baird:** I'm disappointed that you don't share my frugality.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** No. I fundamentally disagree with what your analysis is. It's dead wrong. It's not about saving money; it's about your doing the job Canadians pay you to do. You're not doing your job on this.

**Hon. John Baird:** We have an honest difference of opinion, but—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** No, we don't.

**Hon. John Baird:** We do, actually. I expected you would ask this question and I have some numbers for you.

We have put grants and contributions into four categories. These are all preliminary results, and I'm happy to share them with you and members of the committee.

For me, under grants and contributions expenditures, what preliminary results show is that we spent approximately 96% of the budget. The frozen allotment for the crisis pool quick release mechanism is more than ninety—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** —for this year? I'm sorry to interrupt. Do you mean for this year?

**Hon. John Baird:** It's for 2013-14, last year. I'll give you this in a chart. I have a chart here.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** You can hand it in, because I only have a minute.

**Hon. John Baird:** But I want to read it out, because it's good. You'll be happy to—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Well, no, you can hand it in, because I have a question, and you can follow up—

**Hon. John Baird:** No, no. You asked me a question, and I want.... I'll just go very quickly.

For the frozen allotment to the crisis pool, we spent over 97%; for restricted funds to assess contributions, we spent over 99.4%; and of non-restricted grants and contributions we spent more than 99%. I have a little chart here—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** For the global budget, you would admit that the numbers I gave you are correct.

**Hon. John Baird:** No. I'll give you my little chart. It has the facts.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Well, your little chart is not what we get as parliamentarians, so we have a problem in terms of information sharing.

**Hon. John Baird:** Well, that's why I brought it for you.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Well, they should be in front of us as estimates, Minister Baird. I love your pie charts, but as members of Parliament

**Hon. John Baird:** You've never seen it.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I know. We're supposed to get the estimates in front of us so that we can actually hold you to account.

**Hon. John Baird:** But these are the estimates of what we have spent. You're talking about my underspending.

Can I give this to him?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** You can't come here and hand out pie charts and say that you've done your job, when the numbers you're giving to us aren't up to date.

So let me ask you—

**Hon. John Baird:** No, no, but you made a comment. I want to respond. In fairness—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** —one more thing, Minister Baird. I'll have to come back with another math question for you, so get your pencil sharpener—

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dewar. I'm sorry, but that's all the time we have. We're going to—

• (1555)

**Hon. John Baird:** But could I make a quick response?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** If I can't have an answer in the time.... My time allotted says the same.

**The Chair:** Is this in response to his question?

**Hon. John Baird:** Yes.

You asked a specific question. We're here about the estimates, so we can't talk about what we haven't spent. We're only a week into the budget process, so obviously I can't—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** But it's like last year's [*Inaudible—Editor*] put forward.

**Hon. John Baird:** No, but this is the estimates committee, not the public accounts committee.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I know. I was talking about what you said to us last time.

**Hon. John Baird:** But that's why I will give you this chart, which shows that we've done really well.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Oh, okay. Well, then, I guess we're all happy.

**Hon. John Baird:** I'm glad you're happy.

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

Now we will move over to Ms. Brown, please, for seven minutes.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Ministers, thank you for being here.

Minister Paradis, I'd like to have a bit of an update from you, if you don't mind, because we have spent a lot of money, particularly

on maternal, newborn, and child health. It has become a signature program for Canada.

I'm pleased to say that I have been in many countries in Africa. My friend Ben Ofosu-Koranteng, who is from Ghana, works for the United Nations Development Programme and has 14 countries for which he is responsible in Africa.

Ben tells me that Canada's name is golden when it comes to our efforts in maternal, newborn, and child health. We've had a really integrated program, I would say, because with the contribution we've made recently to the global fund, \$650 million over three years, we have put forward \$2.85 billion for maternal, newborn, and child health over that program, and we're looking to a summit that's coming up in May. The Prime Minister made that announcement.

I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the successes. You alluded to some of them in your opening comments on maternal, newborn, and child health. Can you tell the committee how you see this summit rolling out in May?

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** Yes. Thank you very much for your question.

I think it's a great initiative and our commitment to saving the lives of mothers and children is a driving force behind the work at DFATD in international development. Of course it does align with the government's goal. As minister, I do take pride in the accomplishments Canada has achieved under the leadership of our government.

Here are some numbers. Our G-8 Muskoka initiative on maternal, newborn, and child health, MNCH, will save the lives of 1.3 million children and newborns, as well as more than 60,000 young mothers.

When we look at the MDGs, millennium development goals, I think we're on the right track. On MDGs four and five, there is still work to do, but a lot has been accomplished. I think by holding a summit, the Prime Minister once again will demonstrate Canada's leadership on this, which is well recognized. It's a great opportunity to send the signal that we will remain a leader in this, and make sure we do involve Canadians through partnerships on a Canada-wide approach. Of course, the MNCH network in Canada is very active. The members have good new ideas for the future, using technologies for filling the gaps.

Now we put the focus on strengthening health systems, also on nutrition and reducing the burden of illness and disease, but more can be done. We can think about civic registration and vital statistics. We can think about increasing participation on nutrition. We can focus also on newborns under 28 days. These were conclusions that were in the report of the commission called by the United Nations, which was co-chaired by Prime Minister Harper and President Kikwete.

These are good conclusions, and we can see that we can address some more issues in the future.



I think we've done a lot. You talked about the 20% increase in the global fund. It has tangible results. We could see solid people from the Bill Gates Foundation and the GAVI Alliance praising it, saying it was a good thing to do. Also, just yesterday, we announced new money on top of the \$250 million we committed for the eradication of poliomyelitis, with the Rotarians, the WHO, and UNICEF. We'll continue also on the announcement that the Prime Minister made in Jordan for Syria, \$150 million, the last tranche we announced. We carved out \$50 million for the no lost generation strategy also. So it all goes in line with the child protection and the MNCH initiative in general.

There are a lot of things to come. The summit will gather together civil society, and this will be a great moment for Canada.

• (1600)

**Ms. Lois Brown:** Thank you, Minister.

I had the opportunity a year ago to visit a hospital in Cameroon. It's actually a hospital that was started by Father Émile Léger, from Quebec—Canada has a wonderful reputation there—and it started as a polio hospital.

They're doing tremendous things there, and they're very grateful for the initiatives that Canada has taken. We've had the pennies for polio initiative with Rotary Canada and Rotary International. There are some wonderful things that are taking place in looking to the eradication of polio.

Minister Yelich, I'll direct my comments to you for a moment.

I have a daughter who is a bit of a vagabond, I'll call her. She's been in about 43 countries in her young life. In fact, last Tuesday night I had an e-mail from her. The subject line was, "Mom, not in the earthquake or the tsunami". Indeed, she was in Chile. She is travelling for the winter in South America. When she travels, I always insist that she register with travel.gc.ca as a precaution. I'm very grateful that your department has undertaken to put that in place. Being young, she thinks it's never going to happen to her. She never thinks that insurance is a necessity, but we have impressed upon her the need to do that.

I wonder if you could comment on the need for people to look at these things. We always think it's not going to happen to us. What should the average traveller do when embarking on a voyage?

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Ms. Yelich, could give a quick response, as we're almost out of time.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** Really? Well, then, I'm going to tell you not to leave Canada—

**Hon. John Baird:** Just like Paul, she used up all the time.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** —without ensuring that you have insurance and adequate health insurance. There are many ways to purchase it, through either a travel agency, an insurance broker, or an employer's insurance provider. Credit card companies also offer travel and health insurance.

Even for a day trip, you should make sure that you have insurance. Even a day trip to the United States might surprise you. If you do have an accident, you're not going to be covered.

Don't just be a good mom, but be a good MP. I'm asking everyone to tell their constituents, first of all, to be aware of what their insurance policy will cover so they know what they're covered for, and to make sure they look into having travel insurance before they travel. As I said, that's even for a day trip to the U.S.

For the necessary guidance, as you said, go to travel.gc.ca. Members of Parliament can do everyone a good turn. As I said, there were 61 million trips last year. That tells us that we can remind people to make sure that they take out travel insurance.

Thank you for that question. It is so important to send that message.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Garneau, to finish up the first round, for seven minutes, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Marc Garneau (Westmount—Ville-Marie, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, everyone.

My first question is for Minister Paradis, and it's about the International Development Research Centre, IDRC. I see that IDRC's budget has been reduced by \$37 million compared with last year.

Can you explain to me why \$37 million has been cut from the budget of this organization that has existed since 1970?

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** In the program streamlining and review exercise, we try to be as efficient as possible in the allocation of budgets. We also try to avoid duplication.

I recently met with IDRC officials. This is a work in progress. They understand that we want to achieve results. Research is important, but resources also have to be dedicated to achieving results. We came to the conclusion that resource allocation could be optimized further. That work is underway, and we are in touch with the IDRC people.

• (1605)

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** If I understood correctly, you are saying that you are doing as much as before, but in a more efficient manner.

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** We are trying to optimize the use of the allocated funds.

A noteworthy branch is currently being implemented within IDRC. The goal is to manage that organization efficiently.

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Thank you.

When it comes to Syria, I have often said that Canada provides a solid contribution in terms of humanitarian aid. However, I have also said that the refugee issue was a concern for me. I personally think that 1,300 refugees is not enough for a country like Canada.

I am constantly asking the same question, and I am yet to obtain an answer. The war has been going on for over three years. How many Syrian refugees have officially been accepted to Canada?

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** That issue comes under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. My mandate is to ensure that we are providing as much aid as possible. There are really some issues involved in that.

When it comes to humanitarian corridors, we must vocally condemn the Assad regime, which often obstructs the provision of aid. We sometimes even have to deal with various rebel factions. We have to work with credible partners, who are familiar with the terrain. That is what I work on.

As for refugees, I honestly cannot say anything more about that because it's outside my jurisdiction.

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** I was hoping to obtain an answer because I did not get one from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. [English]

Switching over to something that is international in scope, the Canada-United States enhanced tax information exchange agreement implementation act, which we tend to call FATCA, is in the budget implementation bill, Bill C-31, at this point.

I would like to ask a question. Of course, it deals with the fact that we are going to be helping the United States, specifically the Internal Revenue Service, with information so that they can collect taxes from close to one million dual nationals in this country, I believe, who happen to be Canadian and American. This will very clearly involve Canada spending quite a bit of money to accomplish this, whether it's in the financial institutions themselves or through the CRA.

I would like to ask you, Minister Baird, why it is that Canada is accepting to do this at the cost of hundreds of millions of dollars. What is in it for Canada to help in this particular case—and possibly there may even be privacy issues—to help the United States Internal Revenue Service collect tax from Canadians with dual citizenship?

**Hon. John Baird:** I want to thank you for the question.

Our department is obviously here to discuss things that we're responsible for, as a deputy and as a minister. This has been a lead of the Department of Finance. Obviously, it's self-evident that this is something we'd rather not be doing, but the reality is that the United States, and the U.S. Congress, and the Obama administration have policies and practices that tax people whether they're resident or non-resident. That's obviously not something that Canada does.

As for the cost of the implementation, you'd have to talk to either Minister Oliver or Minister Finley, because they're best able to know what goes on at CRA. Obviously, that's not something under my purview.

I think it's a fair issue.

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Thank you.

On the question of the current government's foreign policy, if I'm not mistaken there has been a shift to the Americas. I believe that was mentioned in the past, and I'd like to ask a question about Venezuela, which obviously at this point is a place where there is a considerable amount of civil unrest.

I wonder if the government has considered or done anything within the context of the OAS to try to bring pressure on the current government in Venezuela to address the legitimate concerns of the citizens there.

**Hon. John Baird:** That's a great question.

I tried to visit Venezuela last year before the presidential elections. I was actually already in South America when the Venezuelans cancelled my visit. It turns out that President Chavez was coming home from Cuba. I was very keen to engage with then-Vice-President Maduro.

We have been working with the OAS, particularly with the United States, and particularly with Panama, on trying to put a spotlight on our serious concerns about the limited democratic space and room for civil society there.

We have seen a number of countries, even friends and allies in South America, that have been perhaps reluctant to speak up and be as vocal as Canada, the United States, and Panama. Panama has had its ambassador kicked out and it's been quite problematic for them. I'm actually meeting my Panamanian counterpart tomorrow here in Ottawa to discuss this issue.

We've sent a new ambassador, Ben Rowsell, who I would say is one of our best of his generation to go there. He's particularly good on new media technologies.

We're very keen to try to engage with the Maduro government. The challenge is for the opposition. There is not an election this year. The control of media is quite profound, and then there is significant violence where we've seen upwards of three dozen people killed. That is obviously causing us great concern.

I spoke with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Roberta Jacobson about how we might work together on this issue as well.

I don't think it's going to get better in Venezuela. I think the economy continues to face significant challenges, and obviously their capacity as well to provide energy subsidies to a range of countries in the region with Petrocaribe, and Nicaragua, and Bolivia, and elsewhere is real and significant. So we're keen, but we haven't had the greatest success there.

This new dynamic ambassador we're hoping can be the opening. We remain committed to a diplomatic dialogue with them on it, but we've been deeply concerned and have been quite vocal at the OAS about this.

I'd be happy to get you a bigger briefing on it if there is something that interests you.

● (1610)

**Mr. Marc Garneau:** Thank you.

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

That completes our first round. We're going to start our second round, which will be five minutes.

Mr. Wallace, welcome to the committee. The floor is yours.

**Mr. Mike Wallace (Burlington, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's a pleasure to be back here again.

I am just filling in for the parliamentary secretary, but I do happen to be a big fan of the estimates process. I've been at it for a number of years.

Based on the previous discussion that happened, Mr. Chair, it might be advisable that you have officials from the Treasury Board come and give the committee some overview on how the estimates process works. They've offered to do it for every committee. I've been at many of their presentations. It takes a while for it to sink in, but it's a great way to understand that you're comparing mains to mains, that the public accounts are six months behind the actual end of the fiscal year and comparing what you're doing. I think it's a very good point.

I think Minister Baird made a very good point. Just because you're allocated money for a program, if the program can be delivered at less cost it's better for the taxpayer. There's nothing wrong with being under expenditures.

One part of the estimates process that I actually like, and have used numerous times, is the plans and priority documents that go along with the performance reports that come out in the fall. Frankly, Mr. Chair, I'm not a foreign affairs specialist. It's not an area that I specialize in much. I don't know a lot about it. I have lots of people in my riding who are interested in the issues. So what I do is I print out the plans and priority documents and I send them to those organizations and individuals and say, "This is exactly what the department is doing", not what we're doing politically, in a sense. I mean it has a political overtone to it.

I want to thank you, and through you, your staff, and the staff who are here, for the quality of the work that goes into these documents. It's very good reading. It highlights what we've done in the past in terms of numbers, even in terms of the number of people doing each strategic direction, and it tells you what the plan is for the next three years. So there's a real opportunity to have a real good discussion with your constituents on what is happening.

There's one part in your piece that I was very interested in, in the plans and priorities document. It's about the risks in your department. You have different risks than those in many departments. Those risks include, and I highlighted them, personal and physical security. There's a risk for cyber threats, as we know today, as we've seen elsewhere. There are emergency response issues that we have in terms of being able to respond to our goals, and the final one, which is relatively new, because of the amalgamation of the two departments there's a bit of risk there.

I would like you or whoever would like to comment on how you've approached those risks, and what actions you're taking.

**Hon. John Baird:** Thanks very much.

Obviously the document would be written by the professionals in the department who Mr. Dewar spoke of, so thank you to everyone who worked to put it together.

We obviously have a number of big risks. The thing that probably concerns me and keeps me up at night most is just the physical safety and security of our people. I have had to meet with the family of a fallen diplomat who was killed in a terrorist attack in Nairobi. It was after hours at a shopping mall. It was well heard of. It was the worst

possible day of my time as minister. This is something we constantly talk about: the security of our diplomats abroad.

Obviously in many parts of the world there's tremendous risk. We have to constantly be re-evaluating updated circumstances in a new context. If someone could fly a plane right into the Pentagon, the military headquarters of the world's largest superpower, obviously it shows that anything—anything—is vulnerable. Whether it's civil unrest, whether it's war, if you look at, for example, our former mission in Damascus, and I won't go on, but the hotspots are probably fairly obvious. This is probably the thing that concerns me the most. We have a very simple principle that we have to ensure that we're doing the best we can to keep our people safe. If they're not safe, we have two options: one, get them out of there until it is; or two, make the investments that are required. That's something that is tremendously important.

There are other things. Cyber risks are growing, not just for our department but around the world. Emergency response is a big one. Obviously, a big chunk of that is not just our own staff but dealing with Canadians. You look at the situations we saw in recent years, in Libya, in Lebanon in 2006. That can be challenging. That's something we try to keep an eye on.

I was particularly pleased with the work the department did with respect to the voluntary evacuations in Syria to give people a lot of heads-up, to leave while they can, and thus far we have avoided significant challenges there.

With respect to amalgamation, that's obviously something shared by all ministers.

Did you want to speak to that, Christian?

I'll just finish up then.

Obviously we want to see the structure come along well, and the vision, and engaging employees is really important.

● (1615)

**The Chair:** That's all the time we have.

**Hon. Lynne Yelich:** I have to tell you, we do have a risk-based approach. We are focusing on training and exercise resources in order to ensure the missions are in fact safe in emergencies.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Yelich.

We're going to turn it over to Mr. Dewar and Madam Laverdière for five minutes.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Minister Baird, I just want to ask you to provide the committee with information. Last year, I asked you about the approvals from the first quarter of both 2012-13 and 2013-14. You did follow up with the data for 2013-14, but could I ask you to provide the committee—not right now, you can send it in—with information for 2012-13? That part I had asked for, we didn't get.

**Hon. John Baird:** Okay, I'd be happy to do that.

I would just ask you to write out exactly what you want so we have precision. I'll ask Nadir Patel to get back to the committee.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I've had a chance to digest your chart. It's wonderful news.

**Hon. John Baird:** It's actually the department's chart. Mr. Patel here wrote it.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I will decide who—

**Hon. John Baird:** I want to give him credit because he's one of the best of his generation.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** It's great, but the numbers don't change. Those are the facts in looking at it. So I was putting forward the fact that \$300 million had lapsed and your numbers say the same thing, albeit it's in a nice pie chart. That's great.

**Hon. John Baird:** See? He liked it.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I appreciate the pie chart. A constituent did it, I think.

**Hon. John Baird:** He's a constituent of yours actually.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** It's blue.

**Hon. John Baird:** Don't forget, you work for him.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I absolutely do. So I'm giving credit where it's due.

But now to you, Minister Baird, because you're the one who's actually responsible for how things are done at the end. You're accountable.

This doesn't change anything. There's \$300 million that lapsed in terms of your being able to provide funding. I'll give you an example and I will tell you that this is having an effect on our reputation.

We're hearing from other countries that Canada is not in the game in certain areas and that's hurting our reputation because you, sir, can't get money out the door.

I'll give you one specific example: Guatemala. For some reason, and I don't understand why, we did not approve funding to help with bringing people to justice for the mass atrocities that were committed in the 1980s. Our government, your ministry, was working.... Your department was doing good work on this, but this fund that you have, that you didn't spend all the money for, decided not to fund that project.

There are many others and I won't tell you what they are. You know what they are. Minister, you have \$300 million that lapsed. This isn't about saving money. This is about investing money and at the end of the day, it's about our reputation. It's about, in the case of Guatemala, dealing with a genocide that happened in the 1980s where people were being brought to justice and dealt with with

impunity. You met with the attorney general. I did. They were hoping for approvals on this.

Why weren't you able to approve that project and all these other projects that have been put in front of you? Sir, I believe it's hurting our reputation.

● (1620)

**Hon. John Baird:** I've never had any country in the world raise this with me. So you're talking about different people.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Guatemala; they didn't ask you to support a program for justice?

**Hon. John Baird:** You said it was hurting our reputation that we were lapsed in funds. There are a lot of people who make grant applications.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Because we aren't doing our bit, sir.

**Hon. John Baird:** There's a lot of—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** We need to do more. At least please invest the money that you're given, that Parliament gives you, that taxpayers give you. This, sir, is not about waking up and spending money. This is about your approving projects on your desk that you don't seem to be able to move.

One of them I'm underlining as very important is the issue of what happened to bring people to justice in Guatemala. As you know, we invested there. They were doing good work. They wanted to finish it and we decided to cut them off. Why?

**Hon. John Baird:** Listen. Last year, the best estimates from the public service say that in various programs, we spent over 96%, over 97%, and two of them, over 99.9% and 99%. So that's pretty—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Three hundred million dollars out of your department was not spent. Your own nice graph shows you that and it's all here in blue. It's in yellow—

**Hon. John Baird:** It's a big sum of money.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I'm asking you, why weren't you able to actually invest in programs that actually help our country work with other countries—

**Hon. John Baird:** We don't have a big—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** —to do good work in your department?

**Hon. John Baird:** We don't just have a big red approve stamp that we stamp on everything that comes through our door, Mr. Dewar. I'm accountable to taxpayers, and whether I think projects have value—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** This is basic math here.

**Hon. John Baird:** Let me answer. I'm accountable to taxpayers—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Why not Guatemala? Why not invest in Guatemala?

**Hon. John Baird:** You've raised a specific grant. I'd be happy to look at the one if it wasn't approved—

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** You met with the attorney general when she was here. I met with her.

**Hon. John Baird:** I did not meet with her.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I'm surprised. I mean this is a program we've been investing in for years. It was one that was very important dealing with impunity, dealing with mass atrocities—

**Hon. John Baird:** You said I met with the attorney general of Guatemala. I have not.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I think that there are other... The problem is that all of these approvals are on your desk. I think you have the biggest desk in Ottawa.

**Hon. John Baird:** I'll take you and I'll show it to you. There's not that much stuff on it.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** All of these approvals are there—

**Hon. John Baird:** It's right upstairs. I'll show you.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** —and what's happened is that we have \$300 million in your department not being appropriated because you can't figure out how to get the money out the door. I don't understand that.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dewar. That's all the time we have.

We're now going to move over to Ms. Grewal, for five minutes.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Ministers, thank you for your time and your presentations.

My question is for Minister Baird. Minister, in March 2011 the regime of Syrian President al-Assad violently repressed peaceful demonstrators who were seeking respect for human rights and democracy. Minister, what is your view on the current crisis in Syria? In particular, what has Canada done to address the humanitarian crisis there?

**Hon. Christian Paradis:** I think this is a very big crisis and we need to be there. This is why we've committed a lot of money in Syria. Of course we've condemned loud and clear when workers are attacked or even killed. We condemn it loud and clear. Now, as I said, the challenge is to work closely with the specialists of those societies and credible partners like the Red Cross and Red Crescent. They do a very good job there. There's also the Aga Khan Foundation, and so on. They know exactly what the situation is on the ground. It evolves fast. It can be the regime. It can be factions among the rebels. It's quite a complex crisis.

I just want to let you know that Canada can be proud. We are the sixth largest donor there. We are very active in the region, and with the Prime Minister's delegation, we announced money also for Jordan. They desperately need help there too, because there is a huge number of Syrian refugees there and they have to cope now with their infrastructure systems. So we are very active.

The key in this is to make sure we keep a close relationship with the governments, like Jordan, and also with credible partners to make sure we are effective on the ground, while keeping pressure also against these terrorist attacks. Again regarding the situation of the workers, we have to continue to condemn this loud and clear.

In summary, this is basically where we are. So far we've committed \$385 million for the Syrian crisis.

•(1625)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Tremendous critical change has swept Ukraine, including the replacement of the discredited regime of President Yanukovich and the annexation of Crimea by Russia. So Ukraine now faces Syria's domestic challenges.

Can you comment on Canada's support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people?

**Hon. John Baird:** Sure.

First and foremost, we want to work with the new government on a financial package. Obviously the group best placed to do that is the International Monetary Fund. We've committed two sums, \$200 million and then \$20 million, to an IMF effort. They've gone in to make a diagnosis of the economic challenges that the government faces and then are working on what the prescription would be of having to get by. Obviously from the new government, the challenges are that they need to make major reforms. We want to take a balanced approach, particularly with what's going on with the influence of Russia there. We'll wait and see when the IMF comes back, but we indicated a significant amount of support, \$220 million, which does put us up in certainly the top seven or eight countries with respect to assistance.

Also we've offered a wide range of support to the new government on capacity building, whether it's on money laundering, anti-corruption, good governance, elections, election monitoring. We've given them a blanket offer and said to come to us and to tell us what they need, and our ambassador on the ground is working there. They have enough funds to get them through the next few months. At the same time, there are so many challenges facing the new government. The reality is that they have presidential elections on the 25th. So if there are going to be new directions, we'll see what happens when the new president is elected. But we're prepared to be very generous there, particularly on the capacity-building side. They have lots of money in Ukraine; it has just been plundered from the people for years.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Minister, the government has just sold Macdonald House, our diplomatic mansion in the heart of London's posh Mayfair district for almost \$530 million.

What value does this sale and those like it present to taxpayers?

**Hon. John Baird:** Actually, it was greater than \$530 million. I think it ended up at \$562 million because of currency fluctuations in our favour. This is going to be a phenomenal thing.

Canada House has been derelict and virtually empty on a permanent basis for decades. The Canadian Olympic Committee used it during the London Olympics. Some people moved out of there years ago. But you have this great historic building in Trafalgar Square that's become derelict, rundown, not kept up, and then you have our main mission in Mayfair.

The department made the decision before me that they wanted to get out of Mayfair. It required a lot of upgrades, and it's filled with asbestos and the like. What we've done is we've purchased the building that abuts Canada House, and what we'll be able to do is have some of our folks there and some in the main Canada House building. They will be able to break through the wall so it will be one team with everyone together. We also will be able to rent the top three floors and have a source of income. Even after fixing up Canada House, after purchasing the new building and remodelling it to fit our needs, we're going to be able to send about a quarter of a billion dollars back for taxpayers, which is important. This is, I'll be frank, one of the only examples where I can say it's a home run. We're going to do more with less, and we'll have everyone working together.

For the clients we serve—travellers, students—it's right in Trafalgar Square, one of the hearts of the world, so it is a

phenomenal win. The residence was in Macdonald House, and now the high commissioner will take the former residence of the number two, and the number two can rent an apartment like everyone else in the department.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ministers, thank you very much for taking the time to be here today.

We're going to suspend very quickly to go in camera so we can deal with some committee business.

Thank you very much.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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