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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, May 30, 2019**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Michael Levitt**



## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Thursday, May 30, 2019

• (0850)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone. Thank you all for being here. We're here for the 144th meeting of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

The committee is continuing its examination of the main estimates 2019-20. We're hearing from the Minister of International Development, followed by officials from Global Affairs Canada.

I'd very much like to welcome, for her first time before our committee, the Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of International Development. With her today are Deputy Minister Diane Jacovella, and joining us once again, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Planning, Finance and Information Technology, Arun Thangaraj.

Minister, as is our practice, if you would like to take approximately 10 to 12 minutes for opening remarks, followed by which we will open it up to colleagues and have some questions.

I will remind colleagues that we're going to try to stick as closely as possible to the six minutes per question.

With that, Madam Minister, the floor is yours.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister of International Development):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Good morning, colleagues.

*Boozhoo. Aaniin.*

*As-salaam alaikum. Ramadan kareem* to our Muslim colleagues observing Ramadan.

[Translation]

It's a tremendous privilege to be here, on traditional Algonquin territory.

[English]

I'll begin the conversation by talking about my three hats.

I am, proudly, the member for Peterborough—Kawartha. It shapes who I am and what I do and will connect the local aspects of the work we do here in Parliament to the international work we're doing, both in my capacity as minister for women, but more importantly for the purpose of this committee, as Minister of International Development.

"The world needs more Canada." We all cheered when we heard President Obama say that to us in the House of Commons three years ago. Why? He elaborated on it, but we need only to look at our communities to understand why. The people in my riding are kind, they're generous, they care about each other and they most certainly care about what happens to our neighbours around the world. Whether Irish refugees, Vietnamese boat people or more recently our Syrian neighbours, my community, much like the rest of Canada, has a proud tradition of opening its arms and growing because of the diversity of perspectives, but also because when somebody's in trouble, we step up.

Why is Canada so invested in international development? We can all agree that a strong middle class, support for those working hard to join it, smaller gaps between the rich and the poor, basic safety, choice, voice, opportunities are good things that lead to stronger economies and greater stability. That prosperity and stability are good for all of us. It's a good thing at home; it's a good thing abroad, and we all know that at its very basic, fundamental levels, we all want the same things for our kids and grandkids. We all want a better future for them. It's what my mom wanted for my sisters and me when she brought us to Canada 23 years ago; it's what I want for my nieces, Leila and Ellia, and I'm sure you feel the same way. For us in Canada, our international development efforts, our peace and security efforts, the work we do with trade and economic development are all intertwined.

Four years ago, we promised Canadians a government that would build an economy by investing in the middle class. Our approach was to take immediate and key policy choices, like the Canada child benefit, pay equity, parental leave, day care spaces—upwards of 40,000—to name a few, and all designed to provide Canadians with some breathing space so they could make the plans they needed to; so they could match their skills to available jobs and move into and upward within the Canadian economy. Three and a half short years later, the plan that Canadians have invested in has produced one million new jobs; 825,000 Canadians are lifted out of poverty. We have the lowest unemployment rate on record. Child poverty rates have been cut by 40%; that's 300,000 Canadian kids no longer going to bed hungry.

Starting at home, with a world-class public service who are here with me today, we implemented progressive economic and social policy and have achieved real results, not to mention that all of this happened in Canada while the rest of the world has decided to become more protectionist.

The progress we've made in Canada didn't happen easily; it didn't happen accidentally. It happened because we are building a strong and resilient Canada, and we're focused on a plan. We've embraced fact-based decision-making; we've unmuzzled our scientists; we focus on equality, and we are prospering because of it. Our plan is working because we are focused on Canadians and Canadians are working. More women are working now than ever before, more young people, more newcomers, more persons with disabilities, more youth and indigenous people. In a time where many throughout the world question the role of government, we need to only think about those 300,000 kids having decent meals every day, the clean water flowing through indigenous communities, the plan to fight climate change, to see that government policies matter.

Internationally, Canada's leadership on the global stage has perhaps never been more important. The coordination of our feminist international assistance policy; Canada's proud tradition of peacekeeping; our strong, secure and engaged military interventions; our focus on free and fair trade; and the focus on growing the middle class and supporting those working hard to join it are all part of the work Canada is doing around the world. Rules-based order, free and fair trade, protecting human rights and human dignity—that's what will grow the economy and build greater stability.

We have a strong team doing this. You've seen some of them here and you've seen many of them in your own daily doings: the Prime Minister; Chrystia Freeland; Jim Carr; Bill Morneau; Ralph Goodale; Karina Gould; Marie-Claude Bibeau, my predecessor, with whom I know you've had many conversations; Carolyn Bennett; Kirsty Duncan; Catherine McKenna; François-Philippe Champagne; Harjit Sajjan; Mary Ng; Navdeep Bains and Mélanie Joly. We are making a difference because it is a whole-of-government approach.

I want to talk about the focus we're bringing to equity through our government's focus on international assistance, which has an intersectional feminist lens applied to it. Through this policy, we have made immediate and deliberate policy choices that impact the health, education and socio-economic security of women and girls around the world. These investments in development are strategic. They're intended to make more effective use of every dollar to see women and girls be healthy, to be in control of their bodies, to have access to education, and to be safe and secure and prepared to lead their communities. When women and girls are doing well, their families are better off, their communities are stronger, their countries' economies are more stable and peace is more enduring. Gender equality matters because everyone benefits.

If we continue this focus on advancing gender equality, we are tapping into a \$12-trillion economy over the next decade. If we do it right here in Canada, we could expect \$150 billion of that right here over the next decade. Our approach should be no surprise. When she's healthy, when she controls her body, when she has access to education, something that can never be taken away, you see real change. These issues are borderless as basic human rights are borderless.

Let's talk about the work we're doing in Cox's Bazar. We're investing our international development dollars differently, as you know. One of the tangible ways in which we see our feminist international assistance policy at work is with the Rohingya situation. Many thanks go to Canadians who have gone there,

including my own brilliant parliamentary secretary, who has just come back, and Bob Rae.

Canadians have invested \$300 million over the next three years to help ease the challenges there. One of the things that our teams are doing is investing in 38 women-friendly spaces in the camp. What does this mean? It means that she has a safe haven to go to where she can receive support. It means that she can just be herself and not be on guard wondering how she's going to watch over her back. When we made this investment and when it started working, other countries stepped up, and the number has now increased to upwards of 70 safe spaces for women who are experiencing challenges. Remember, 85% of those in the camps are women and children. There are upwards of 70 spaces, half of which also provide psychological, social and counselling support for those who have experienced sexual and gender-based violence. I know that this committee knows how frequently those women and girls are abused en route to the camp and once they are trying to get their life back together.

In Venezuela this is making a difference. We're seeing that when we focus on women and girls, there is a difference. When we take a deeper look we see that Venezuelan migrants.... The world is having a hard time calling them refugees because they don't have the proper documentation. When Canada steps in with \$50 million and says we are here to work with you with specific investments in neighbouring countries, those dollars are going far and ensuring that neighbouring countries don't feel overwhelmed by the sudden surge in arrivals within their new communities.

● (0855)

I have spoken with some folks in Washington from Colombia, and they are happy. They may not have much, they said, but they were happy to open their arms to their sisters and brothers because, if they were in trouble, they would want the same thing.

We're also doing something that very few do. About 2% of the world's ODA goes to women's organizations. We've invested \$150 million—this is the first time we're doing this—to do that work because we know the most effective way to advance gender equality is by investing in organizations that are doing this work.

Just like our plan at home, our plan abroad is working. It's evidence-based. It's comprehensive. It's effective. It's what separates us from previous agendas and from some of our international colleagues.

● (0900)

In bringing my comments to a close, Mr. Chair, I want to speak to an issue that I expected to be discussing internationally but I'm astounded to find myself addressing domestically. As a starting point, in this country we settled the abortion debate 30 years ago. It's 2019. We can't afford to go back to politicizing women's bodies, and it's a regressive debate that I challenge us to shift away from.

If we care about women, let's focus on doubling the number of women entrepreneurs over the next two years. If we care about the women in Canada, let's increase by 100,000 the women in manufacturing over the next five years. If we care about women, let's make it so that another woman is not killed every two and a half days that go by, because that's what happens even here in Canada.

We can't afford to roll back on a woman's fundamental rights, because those fundamental rights—whether at home or abroad—are directly linked to her sense of self, her sense of worth, her dignity, the economy strength and the overall stability.

I thank you for the opportunity to be here today with all of you.

Mr. Chair, I'm happy to take any questions that colleagues may have.

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

We will now move straight into questions.

We will begin with MP Aboultaif, please.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC):** Good morning, Minister. Welcome, and by the way, thank you for listing the names of your cabinet and your colleagues and their achievements.

The topic is international development and we know that the international development section of budget 2019 was very thin, so despite levels of official development assistance being at near-historic lows, your government won't commit to any additional funds until 2024-25, which is five to six years from now.

Was this your government's way of indicating that you are giving up on Canada's Security Council seat bid?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I can assure you that the work we're doing around the world is a whole-of-government approach. That's why I brought up colleagues who are moving this agenda forward with me.

I can also assure you that our bid for the UN Security Council seat is alive and well. It was unfortunate that we lost that seat in the first place. The world needs more Canada, as we all agree, and so we're still working on that.

In terms of the main estimates and the overall budget for international development, could you clarify what you mean by all-time low?

We have increased development dollars. We've also increased the way we are investing these dollars through an intersectional gendered lens. I find it ironic that colleagues are asking us to invest more. When we did invest, when it was in a budget, colleagues rose in the House and voted against it.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Minister, I was at the UNGA in September 2017, and I ran into a minister of social affairs of a country that I am not going to name. The first thing she said when I introduced myself as Canadian was "Where is Canada?" The Prime Minister at that time was present at the United Nations building.

You said we have lost that Security Council bid. Can you—

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** No, I did not say that. I said it was unfortunate we're not in that seat anymore, that we don't have that seat anymore.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Okay, would you be able to explain the process? How do we get to the point that we can secure that bid?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** There are many people working on this, including our ambassador, Marc-André Blanchard, in New York. One of the ways we can do that is by stepping up and showing leadership. For about a decade, Canada stuck its head in the sand and pretended that we don't play a role on the international stage. That's changing.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Canada's relations internationally haven't been worse: China, United States, the complete Middle East, and then we hear those complaints from ambassadors of the Middle East area. The Middle East has been neglected completely in your international relations, as well as India. The disastrous India trip....

These all show us that we've lost so many friends around the world. How are we going to really pursue that seat, unless your government has already given up on this and there's no way you want to pursue it further? This way, we have relationships that have been broken with many influential parties around the world. Here we are; we're trying to say that we're making efforts; your government is making efforts. You're trying to say that your ministers are working hard, but all that is down on the real ground. We have had relationships with so many strategic countries out there.

I'm not sure how you think you're going to achieve the right result by securing a bid on this Security Council seat.

● (0905)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** There are three trade agreements in one mandate in an era of protectionism: The proof is in the pudding. If our international relations cannot be shown to be working through those three trade agreements, I don't know what will.

We have increased in budget 2019, \$926 million for the Middle East. I know this is a particular area of the world that you and I care deeply about. We also saw in the previous budget \$3.5 billion added to the budget at international development.

While I appreciate anecdotes about unnamed sources that you ran into at UNGA, and I'm glad you were there, I think it's more important to look at the results that show our relationships are leading to results that are good for Canadians.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Minister, you mentioned free trade. We have a problem with India and trade. We have a problem with China, unheard of now. As I said, with the Arab world, Saudi Arabia is a great example.

We have so many crises out there. Where is the free trade among all that? Where is it? Please, explain it to me.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** One million jobs, the lowest poverty rate on record—

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I'm not talking about [*Inaudible—Editor*], I'm talking about where the free trade is.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —NAFTA—

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** You mentioned free trade.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —CPTPP and CETA—

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** You mentioned free trade.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** These are three examples in three years of trade agreements that have been signed.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Where are they?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We tabled NAFTA yesterday to begin the

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Yes, I know. I'm aware of that.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —ratification process.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I'm aware of that, but I'm talking about India. I mentioned India, I mentioned China and I mentioned the Arab world. The relationships with all of these are broken.

Can you explain?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Are you saying that the relationship with the entire Arab world is broken?

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** You know how important—

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I've met with colleagues from the United Arab Emirates—

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Saudi Arabia is a leader in that area.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —over the past few days. I've met with folks from Palestine. I've met with the international co-operation body made up of over 50 Muslim countries that are saying that they need more Canada and are very much happy to be part of the work that we're doing—

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** And who is the leader of the Muslim world?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We hosted them for an Iftar in New York last week, and we had good conversations on the hate that happens on social media, the political rhetoric that tends to intensify that hate, and some work that we can do with their women entrepreneurs through our development dollars. I can assure you that we're there.

Do we have opportunities to do more? Absolutely, and I really hope that you'll step up and help us.

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

We shall now move to MP Vandenbeld, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you very much, Minister, for being here. Thank you for all the work you are doing.

I'm very happy you mentioned sexual health and reproductive rights in your opening remarks. This is something we know: There is retrenchment on this, and backsliding, south of the border and in many countries around the world, in the last few years.

I'm reminded of when I was working, in 2010, during the Harper government, on a global project on women's rights. I had regional centres on different continents. The head of the sub-Saharan Africa program who was working with me—her name was also Maryam, by chance—looked at me one day and said, “Anita, Canadians are hypocrites.”

I was stunned, and more than a little embarrassed. I said, “Why would you say that?”

She said, “It's because I studied at McGill, and I know that Canadian women have reproductive rights, but with your government”—this was the Harper government—“you don't believe that we African women deserve the same thing.”

In her hometown, there had been a clinic for 40 years, funded by CIDA. It was a Canadian clinic. Overnight, with no warning, that clinic was closed, for the sole reason that they provided abortion, as one of the options they gave to women, on reproductive rights.

That was probably the first moment I realized that if I was really going to make a difference in the world, I needed to come back to Canada and run. I did run, in the 2011 election, because I realized that our global reputation regarding what we espouse, in terms of where Canada was on rights, was being undermined.

In the nine years that have intervened since that time, and particularly since we came to power in 2015, what have we done to change that situation, so that Canadians are no longer viewed by the world's women as hypocrites?

• (0910)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I'm glad you ran. My experience entering politics also happened because things weren't happening, and Canada could be better.

A few things have changed. Our approach to ensuring that sexual rights, health rights and reproductive rights are protected, and exist in the international communities where we work, is different from what existed over the past decade, because of three things: it is evidence-based, comprehensive and, because of those two things, more effective.

This is not just about making sure we do the right thing, and that she has the dignity to be able to choose when, with whom, if she has children and how many she has. We're also investing in things like contraception. For every dollar invested in contraception, we are able to save \$2.20.

These investments, when done strategically, based on evidence, and when they focus on what she really needs on the ground, happen to pay dividends, both financially and for her.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** One of the things that we know from this committee is that sexual violence is used as a weapon. In this particular country—this was in Mali, in the rural area she was from—she told me that many of the women who were accessing these clinics were there because they had been gang-raped by warlords. Some of them were teenagers, and they were being denied their reproductive rights, because of that previous government policy.

We have just completed a study on women human rights defenders in the subcommittee on international human rights. We know that those who fight for the rights of women to live in peace, and to prosper in their countries—those very defenders are also targeted, often violently, through sexual violence, but also by states, through imprisonment and disappearances.

What are we doing, as part of our international policy, to support those human rights defenders? I'm hoping, of course, that when our committee report comes out shortly, you'll have a chance to look at some of the recommendations of our committee as well.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I very much look forward to that report.

Yesterday was peacekeepers' day. Peacekeeping is a proud Canadian tradition. It takes a really special person to decide they're going to give up the security and stability of their own home, go abroad and help bring some peace or, at the very least, help conflict resolution between people, often in a very volatile situation. That work comes with trauma—significant trauma. It also places them in grave danger.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Some of the work we've been doing with our peacekeepers is to provide that training so that they know how to take care of themselves, but also, so that they know how to intervene in those situations.

The Elsie initiative is a really good example of how we're stepping up, along with other partners around the world, to do this right, to ensure that there are also more women choosing to be in these roles. I'm happy to talk more with you about this, but I'm running out of time.

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

We shall now move to MP Duncan, please.

**Ms. Linda Duncan (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP):** Thank you.

Thanks again, Minister. I look forward to talking with your officials in the next hour.

Madame Minister, in follow-up to my colleague's question, I'm a little stunned at the response. One of the named sources that have castigated Canada for failing to deliver its fair share of aid is the OECD. In the development co-operation review of 2018, the OECD severely criticized Canada for the drop in percentage of GNI of aid. Have you provided a response to their concerns, and if so, could you provide that to the committee?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Linda, many thanks for your advocacy on this front.

The OECD is a partner with whom we welcome collaboration on a range of things. Have we provided them with a response? I'm not sure. Let me follow up.

However, in terms of increased spending, Canada's ODA has gone up by 8%. The way that adds up, where we were in 2016 was at \$5.64 billion, and we are at \$6 billion now. This is also due to the fact that we are investing differently.

We've established FinDev. Other countries had similar instruments to leverage financing; Canada didn't. We have that now and it has \$300 million invested in it.

The ODA-to-GNI ratio has increased by 0.28%. It has gone up from what it was the year before. We are also investing differently and providing leadership that others are following—

• (0915)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** I have some questions about that, which perhaps I could ask you.

If you have responded to the OECD, I would appreciate you providing that to us. It's an issue of concern raised by every development organization in Canada.

A concern that has been expressed to me is that the department, to its credit, did consult with Canadian civil society on how it plans to deliver the action items under the feminist international assistance policy, but there has been no response. They're wondering when they can expect the guidance.

There was another independent review by the Canadian International Development Platform. They also had the same criticism: When can we expect that there will be some level of guidance?

Where the concern really exists is less so in the organizations that are interested in delivering increased assistance to women, the ones that historically have delivered assistance in things such as sanitation, agriculture and water. When can Canadian civil society expect to finally receive that guidance?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I know our team has been hard at work. We unveiled part of it in Washington in April, the feminist international humanitarian piece. That has been unveiled, and the rest is coming shortly.

I do want to pay particular attention to the time and the hard work of our stakeholders who helped shape the policy as a whole. We couldn't have done it without them.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Thanks. We look forward to getting that guidance.

We're currently reviewing how Canada could support democratic governance, and we're hoping that before Parliament closes we might have some type of recommendations to you. I noted in your feminist international assistance policy that one of your action items is actually on that. There has been some disagreement about whether they relate to the SDGs.

I notice in your report that your policy specifically addresses SDG 16. Can you advise me whether it's your understanding that SDG 16 also includes support for democratic governance; and if so, do you intend to move forward to provide more assistance in that area?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Having lived in a non-democratic nation and then being here, I appreciate that democracy is a gift. Here in Canada, we benefit from a healthy democracy. We are working, for example, with the interventions we recently made in the Ukraine, to help ensure that greater stability is driven by a stronger set of institutions that protect democracy.

Yes, you're absolutely right; the feminist international assistance policy does commit Canada to supporting democracy through international development initiatives such as those that help to increase the political participation of women, including young and marginalized women.

We're also working with governments to ensure that their level of engagement with women and girls includes meaningful participation in decision-making processes. We're also investing in advocacy and programming to address discriminatory laws that prevent women and marginalized individuals from realizing their full economic, social and political rights.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Madam Minister, I want to follow up on what my colleague asked about with respect to the SRHR. There is concern expressed that we don't know yet if the government's committed to going beyond the three-year pilot. Is there an intention going forward to give long-term commitment to the SRHR?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We are always going to stand up for women's sexual rights, health and reproductive rights at home and around the world. We did make a commitment in 2016 of \$650 million over three years to do this work, and we are actively working with partners, including those who help shape our feminist international assistance policy, to come up with a smarter, more sustainable and long-term approach to this work. There's more to come.

• (0920)

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

We shall now move to a guest with us in committee today, MP Ludwig, please.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** Thank you.

Thank you, Minister, for being here today. There's an expression that I like to use that "You cannot be what you cannot see", and I think it's invaluable to see a strong and articulate woman in an international development lead role. When you're travelling around the world, women see you as a beacon of hope. Thank you for that.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** *[Inaudible—Editor]*

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** I represent the beautiful riding of New Brunswick Southwest, as you know. You've been there. We have many organizations that would like to do more work, and everyone's looking for opportunities for funding.

I'm wondering what you would tell someone in my riding if that individual were in front of you asking, why do we invest so much internationally when we have so many needs at home? And possibly, what more can we do as Canadians at home and abroad?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We need to be true to ourselves and take care of things at home while we look out for others around the world. The two are intertwined. What if we had been better, more strongly engaged, with what was happening in Syria years and years ago, for example, when the drought started? What if we had intervened with our development dollars? What if we had worked to coordinate and bring together international partners at a critical moment way upstream? Would the bodies of those little boys and girls still wash up on our shores?

There is a direct link between our doing our part around the world and providing leadership, particularly now that we have a feminist approach to what we're doing, which is more effective. There is a direct link between those interventions and greater safety and security for us, but there is also an economic advantage. Canada has, for example, technology around water and waste-water management, and we need to ensure that indigenous communities here have access to clean drinking water. We've made the right investments. The decisions on how to go about providing that clean drinking water for indigenous communities are in their hands, and to date we've lifted over a half of those boil water advisories. The other half will be lifted over the next two years. That means we have the expertise. We have

the engineers. We have the technicians who can go around the world to places like the African continent and share that expertise and create economic development opportunities for Canada and for our partner countries. They're directly related.

As far as women's organizations in Canada go—and I'll put on my women and gender equality hat—we've invested historic amounts, over a half a billion dollars, over the last three years for women's organizations in this country. This includes investments in those who are working to address and prevent sexual and gender-based violence. This includes historic, never seen before capacity-building dollars. What I would ask you to share with all of your constituents, for those who are working to advance gender equality, is that there's an additional \$160 million in budget 2019 over the next five years, beyond an election cycle. We're going to work really hard to make sure that we get to come back and that we're able to provide those dollars to communities. I hope that every government from here on is going to take the needs of women's organizations at home and abroad seriously, because they are the most effective way to advance gender equality.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Thank you for that.

When I did my first graduate degree, I did my thesis on, essentially, women's choices. One of the comments that came through during my 2015 campaign, at a door, was about abortion. I hadn't planned on raising it, but you raised it as your last comment in your presentation. One area that I said that I think we need to do more work in is really by respecting and encouraging the other options that are out there as well. It's abstinence. It could be early education when it comes to sexual activity. Young women choose to have their children or women choose to give their children up for adoption. I do believe that if we look at all those early choices, if we have more of a cultural shift to respect those, the choice for abortion, as long as it's accessible, would be very rare.

I'm wondering what our government is doing in Canada and abroad on some of the other choices that are out there.

• (0925)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We know that, particularly for adolescent girls, they are at an age where they're making critical, life-changing decisions. Evidence shows that abstinence doesn't really work. What does work is sexual education and investing in planning. It's why we're investing in Planned Parenthood, for example, in Canada and abroad. Evidence shows that access to contraception helps immensely. I talked about the 1:2 ratio in terms of dollars invested and the return on that investment.

**The Chair:** You have thirty seconds.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** The right to choose is to choose whether, how many, if and with whom to reproduce, and also whether to adopt. Some women are coerced to not have their babies and that's wrong. Most importantly, investing in women's organizations, so that they can continue their advocacy—because the work is far from over—is also an important part of the work we're doing at home and abroad.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** MP Saini, please.

**Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.):** Good morning, Minister. It's always a pleasure to see you. Thank you very much for bringing your colleagues around.

I want to reference something that you said in your preamble. You talked about the situation in Cox's Bazar and the plight facing the Rohingya people. This issue is important to me personally because I have a very small, but a very strong Rohingya community in my riding. We know that the people who are living in that part of the world are facing horrific acts of violence perpetrated against them. We know that the army is involved in a lot of these killings, this burning and bulldozing of homes and in separating families. This is a tragedy that can only be conveyed as a humanitarian crisis.

Could you please update us as to how Canada is responding to this crisis, specifically in terms of the feminist international assistance policy?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** The image of the women and children with very little on their backs walking to find safety is going to stay with all of us. The idea that some of those women—too many of those women—on that journey were carrying the results of incest and rape is horrendous and Canadians were outraged. Canadians stepped up and our government is investing \$300 million over three years to provide the humanitarian assistance needed.

I think it's really important to talk about why three years is important. We hear this from all organizations that are dependent on dollars. Without predictable and sustainable funding, the work that those hard-working individuals do on the ground becomes more challenging. First and foremost, we provided stability and peace of mind to the individuals providing services.

We have been the strongest in our condemnation in terms of the genocide. Colleagues in the House all stood and agreed that what was happening was wrong, and more importantly, that it was a genocide.

We are also grateful to the people of Bangladesh who have welcomed a million refugees. That's a significant number. We also know—just as we heard from folks in Colombia with the Venezuelan crisis—that there are economic opportunities for Bangladesh to be welcoming these individuals, but we thank them for doing this work.

We are working with the World Bank and the Government of Bangladesh and we're providing \$16.3 million to implement an innovative mechanism where every dollar we put in unlocks \$5 in grant funding. That means we're leveraging over \$81 million from the World Bank to support health, nutrition and basic education services for Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar. I talked about those safe women's spaces, but this comprehensive, wraparound support is particularly important.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** I'm going to change topics for a second.

The other committee I serve on is access to information, privacy and ethics. I'm sure you're aware that we wrapped up two days of meetings with the international grand committee. One thing that we discussed during the time was online platforms and the numerous disinformation and false information that can be conveyed on those platforms. We also know that an independent free press is extremely important for conveying accurate information and to protect the foundations of our democracy. We also know that journalists around

the world put their lives at risk making sure that we get the truth. They chase the stories that need to be told.

Could you please update us on what the government is doing to make sure that journalists are kept safe and how we are supporting their important work?

● (0930)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Following the Christchurch shooting, the Prime Minister stood in the House and called on the international community to come together and to address the online violence that is part of the spectrum of terrorism that leads to massacres in Canada and around the world. The international community did come together.

We've introduced a charter around what's happening online. We're working with our international allies and the platforms themselves to address misinformation but also terrorism that occurs online. That's work that Karina Gould and Nav Bains and the Prime Minister, as well as Ralph Goodale, have been keenly focused on. I think it is exciting. It's uncharted territory, and if we don't step up to do something, the violence that happens online will continue to spill over into our communities.

World Press Freedom Day was a few days ago. I made an announcement of an investment of over \$11 million to ensure that Journalists for Human Rights continue to have the funding they need to send journalists from Canada, who put their hands up and choose to go abroad in some of the most distressing situations, including in the Middle East and including parts of—

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —Africa to basically teach journalists there how to fish with a specific focus on women journalists telling the stories that may not be told.

When journalists' rights are threatened and when their lives are lost—we lost some 90-plus just last year—protecting human rights and human dignity becomes more difficult.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** The second-last question in this round goes to MP O'Toole.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole (Durham, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here, Minister.

I have to say at the outset that I was rather disappointed with your remarks. You had 10 minutes of remarks for your first time before committee, and almost eight minutes of it used “the middle class and those working hard to join it”. You used that line twice. You recited the list of names of all members of cabinet, and it was only in the last two minutes that we actually got into international development. So I'd ask you to take that back for your next appearance. We'd like to see a robust discussion of the issues under your portfolio.

The Rohingya have come up both from Mr. Saini and in discussion. The plight of the Rohingya was first advanced by then-ambassador Bennett in 2014 and 2015 when he travelled to Myanmar. He was the ambassador for religious freedoms, an office your government cancelled and replaced with the Office of Human Rights, Freedoms and Inclusion. The budget was tripled, but we've heard nothing from that office. Can you give an example of when you partnered with that office on a development issue around the world?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I'm sorry you were disappointed, but I have to say that a strong middle class at home and abroad is what we're striving to achieve, right? Why are we investing development dollars all over the world if not for that? It's really important for me to share that.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** You'd have to agree with me. That's one of the tag lines of your government, so the first eight minutes—

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** It's also good economic and development policy.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** —sounded more like an election ad than an appearance at committee.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** That's why I spent a little bit of time talking about it, but I also talked about what's happening at home, because we have to make sure Canada is strong and resilient while we do that work. That's sustainable development.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Did you have to list the names of all your colleagues, leaving out Jody Wilson-Raybould, I note?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Those who are doing work internationally ought to be recognized. My goal was to show that our government takes this portfolio particularly seriously. It's not just on one minister's shoulders, but it is a whole-of-government approach, and that's how it should be because, as colleagues mentioned, there is a lot happening all over the world that requires all sorts of eyes.

In terms of religious freedoms, to answer your final question, we believe in religious freedoms and religious rights, and we're always going to stand up for them. We are the country of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We like to have that freedom to worship at home, and we expect that freedom to be protected for others around the world.

That office that you referred to is working within Global Affairs Canada, and it is doing really good work.

• (0935)

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Can you name one example?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I'll let my colleagues here name an example.

**Ms. Diane Jacovella (Deputy Minister, International Development, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** The office works very closely with the development side of the department. The feminist international assistance policy actually has adopted a human rights-based approach, everything we do now in humanitarian assistance, so we collaborate very closely.

One example is human rights defenders. We task all of our missions around the world to make sure they advance these issues. They look at how they can promote the protection and the rights of those defenders. We are—

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Specifically perhaps about the Rohingya or the Uighurs. Has that office been involved in any way in those very troubling circumstances with those groups?

**Ms. Diane Jacovella:** One other thing in our strategy for the Rohingya is to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. As you know, it's very difficult to do. This office has been collaborating very closely with the UN to try to find a mechanism to record the incidents of violence that many of these peoples have experienced, doing it in a way that protects them. Sometimes it may take years for that information to get to prosecutors, but we're working very closely together to make sure this is done.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** I appreciate that.

Minister, if there can be any follow-up, I would like some case examples from that department because the budget was tripled, but I see it doing virtually nothing compared to the work Dr. Bennett did.

Let me turn to the developing world. In the last two weeks it has been launching the garbage flotilla headed back to Canada. It appears in recent years that the developing world, as we've seen in Malaysia and the Philippines, is very upset about containers of garbage and recycling being sent to their countries from Canada.

Since they are development partners in some projects, what are we doing to alleviate those projects? It's never good when Canada has garbage flotillas headed to our shores from the developing world.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We are invested heavily in ensuring that we protect the environment and address climate change all around the world. We have invested \$2.65 billion to ensure that happens.

In the case of the Philippines, for example, we're working on clean water with indigenous women in the Philippines. These efforts are really important because, as you know, climate change knows no borders.

**Hon. Erin O'Toole:** Are these high-profile things with the garbage blanking out the good work, or making people disregard the good work we're doing on development?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** No. We're taking accountability for others' mistakes and working to address them.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Seeing the time, this will be the last question.

We are going to MP Sidhu, please.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu (Mission—Matsqui—Fraser Canyon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you for being here this morning.

You mentioned a couple of times that the world needs more Canada. You touched on the issue of fundamental rights for women and girls, 70 new facilities created where they can get help, but the next thing is about the kids. No matter where they are born, they deserve the equal right to education.

I was wondering if you can you update the committee on what we have been doing around the world so kids can have a level playing field when it comes to education.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** For most, whether we've spoken with our Syrian neighbours when they were coming in or those in refugee camps or those who are displaced not in a refugee camp abroad, when you ask them what they need, more often than not they are worried, and rightly so, about their kids' education. That's certainly the case with our partners around the world.

I'm going to give you an example of how Canada's investments and leadership in providing education to boys and girls is making a difference and rallying supports. I think you have some numbers.

When we had the G7 meeting with world leaders, for the first time ever we had renowned feminists from around the world, including Canada, providing advice to world leaders. One of the asks they made was for education.

Canada invested about \$400 million. The Prime Minister shared that. We saw the team members and the staff to the presidents and the prime ministers around the room start exchanging notes, and sharing numbers back and forth. By the time they were done that meeting, that \$400 million had leveraged close to \$4 billion in education for women and girls in conflict zones, the single largest investment of its kind ever.

That is important because the goal for most displaced people and refugees is that they can go home. There is no place like home. Everybody wants to go home, with the exception of a few. How are they to go back and rebuild what's been broken if they do not have the tools to do so? Education is one of those really important tools that ensures that what has been broken is pieced back together by the people who know the place best and are most invested in it.

● (0940)

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Good to know. Thank you.

Next, you talked about sustainability and stability around the world. I am wondering what we are doing as a country to promote our shared interests and values to make sure going forward that our children and their children have a safe and fair place to live around the world.

Could you touch on that issue?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I think one of the best parts of the job for MPs is being able to talk to young people, and visit them in schools and so on. There are a lot of schools working on sustainable development goals. Young people are particularly keen and aware that what happens at home is connected to what happens around the world. They're driving the conversation. They're driving the change.

I think it was in a room like this just a few days ago where a bunch of kids—not from my riding, but somebody else's—had come here. They were asking us to do more and to work better together to accelerate progress, to address what's happening around the world by achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030.

I'd say that young people care. Young people are aware. They're actively doing their part. With the sustainable development goal around climate change, for example, they are pouring into streets here at home and around the world and asking decision-makers to

take seriously their future, not to leave them with instability and the disasters that could happen if we don't take action.

I'd say that young people care. They're inspiring the rest of us to step up and do more.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** I want to thank Minister Monsef for being here and answering questions from around the table today.

I want to thank all colleagues for their questions.

With that, why don't we suspend for a couple of minutes? Then we'll reconvene with departmental officials and go from there.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Mr. Chair, can we remind the minister that we'd appreciate that report, her report that was given to OECD.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Sure, so noted.

With that, we shall suspend.

● (0940)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

● (0950)

**The Chair:** We are reconvening.

This morning the committee is continuing its examination. We have departmental officials here from Global Affairs Canada for the final hour of our consideration of the estimates.

We have a wide array of officials whom I would like to welcome to the committee. There's a large number of you. I'm wondering if each of you could maybe introduce yourself and tell us your role. Then we can open it up to questions.

**Ms. Sarah Taylor (Director General, North Asia and Oceania, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Sure.

[*Translation*]

Good morning.

[*English*]

I'm Sarah Taylor, Director General for North Asia and Oceania.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj (Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Planning, Finance and Information Technology, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** I am Arun Thangaraj, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Financial Officer for Global Affairs.

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky (Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security and Political Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** I'm Mark Gwozdecky, Assistant Deputy Minister, International Security and Political Affairs.

**Ms. Heather Jeffrey (Assistant Deputy Minister, Consular, Security and Emergency Management, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** I am Heather Jeffrey, Assistant Deputy Minister for Consular, Security and Emergency Management.

**Mr. Troy Lulashnyk (Director General, Maghreb, Egypt, Israel and West Bank and Gaza, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** I am Troy Lulashnyk, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Europe, Middle East and North Africa.

**Ms. Cheryl Urban (Director General, South America and Inter-American Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** I'm Cheryl Urban. I'm the Director General responsible for South America and Inter-American Affairs.

**The Chair:** I welcome you all. Thank you for attending the committee this morning.

Let's go straight into questions. We're going to begin with MP Aboultaif.

Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Good morning and thanks again for being here in front of the committee.

The feminist international assistance policy is basically a natural extension of our former Conservative government's Muskoka initiative, funding for which will still be in place until 2020. I have met with civil society organizations, which have expressed concern about this funding being extended beyond 2020.

Would you be able to brief us as to whether there are any plans to extend that initiative past 2020?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** The funding for the previous maternal, newborn and child health initiative remains within the Global Affairs budget and forms part of these main estimates. As with any priority area—and you see in the feminist international assistance policy the commitments to spending on health, including sexual health and reproductive rights—the forward-spending plans for those initiatives are currently in the early stages of formation. The intention, as the minister said in the previous hour, is to provide stable and ongoing funding for health and sexual health and reproductive rights.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Is that a commitment to continue funding beyond 2020 at the same level or at a lower or higher level?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** In the main estimates, you have an amount for health. It's remained stable. Currently we're looking at the various priority areas, as articulated in the feminist international assistance policy, as well as the needs that are in the countries that we program in, to determine what the spending level for those interventions should be.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** I'm asking because I know that stability means something. "Certainty" is a better term. I've heard from a person from an association and from CSOs that the FIAP is chronically underfunded. There have been questions about how you have gotten the results that you have claimed given that you haven't provided public data.

Again, we need solid information or solid data to at least communicate and understand how far this is going and why, as we say, there is a lot of noise but not so much wheat. We've seen a lot of noise, but there are no results to be seen. If the CSOs are complaining and they are saying the FIAP is underfunded, we need to understand from the department where you are going with this.

Changing the gender levels at your discretion from level zero to level one is, in my opinion, sometimes like changing a financial

statement in a way to change the bottom line. I would like to hear from you if that is the case and where you are going with this.

Again, clarity is very, very important so we are able to communicate those results to CSOs.

• (0955)

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Maybe I'll address this. The feminist international assistance policy articulated a number of commitments and spending targets that we do report on. We report on them through our departmental results report as well as through the Official Development Assistance Accountability Act. The reporting on how we spend our money and the commitments and the targets that are there are published on a regular basis.

With respect to gender coding, one of the things that we do—and this falls under my area—is that there is an insurance function such that whatever code, whether it be a gender marker or a code against a sector, is validated before reporting. In the previous hour we talked about reporting to the OECD. We have a strong oversight function to ensure that codes are not just changed or applied randomly, and that there's rigour. For example, on the gender side, we have gender specialists who will provide assurance that an investment or an accounting of an initiative towards a gender marker is accurate and warranted.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** That's what is not being translated for civil society or even for ourselves as opposition parties. When we look at it on paper, it doesn't seem to be explained properly, or at least to be understandable. We seem to get all these answers only at committee, and we're trying to get them from you today.

Why is the department not embracing that ethos—the Prime Minister is supposed to be called transparent by default—and publicly providing the information that parliamentarians and civil society require to hold you to account?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** We need to bridge that gap somehow, and we need to explain. Transparency is just a motto, but really nothing is being translated on the ground. That's what we've been hearing from civil society, and that's what we've been feeling as parliamentarians, too.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** We provide very detailed accounting of our spending every year through the OECD, which provides the standard for how all of our development dollars get spent. We report through the ODAAA report. We also make datasets available publicly through the international aid transparency initiative as well as on Government of Canada websites.

**Mr. Ziad Aboultaif:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We will now move to MP Vandenberg, please.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you very much.

As was mentioned earlier by my colleague, this committee is in the final stages of putting together a study on Canada's international democracy promotion. One of the things we heard from the witnesses is that when we're looking at democratic development, democracy promotion and election observation, we're not necessarily looking at the least developed countries, yet when we formulate our aid policy, it's primarily focused on those poorest of poor countries. On the other hand, it isn't really diplomacy either. If you look at the Global Affairs side, in some cases democracy promotion and the work that we would be doing might actually be at odds with some of the diplomatic efforts.

Where does that actually fit? We talk about democratic development and diplomacy. Governance and democracy used to sit under CIDA. Where would you see the best fit for Canada's efforts on democracy promotion in Global Affairs, and could you perhaps elaborate a little bit on what we are doing in this regard?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** I think the simple and short answer to your question is that everybody owns the democracy file at Global Affairs. It's not something for which we want to create a silo and give entire responsibility. My colleagues who deal with the geographic components of the department all have programs supporting democracy in one way or another in the key fragile states they are investing in. The Middle East is a good example where, through the support the government announced for the Middle East strategy, we are helping to rebuild a stable, unified, pluralistic functioning democracy in Iraq, which is really beset by the challenges of many different ethnic and religious groups.

We have a number of programs, some of which are led by my colleagues in the geographic...and some by my branch, but we all are expected to work together to manage the democracy file. It's too diverse and too vast a portfolio to confine it to a single entity in the department.

• (1000)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** When you look at the technical assistance that Canada provides, whether it's on election monitoring, parliamentary development, rule of law or justice systems... When we look at the actual institutions of governance, we see that there was at one time a section on governance that was really a clearing house for the best practices, for ideas, for coordinating the crosscutting that you were talking about around the different departments. Is that kind of challenge function or gathering of best practices...?

Globally, of course, I know that we have a number of areas, the UNDP and others, that gather these kinds of best practices and have that in-house expertise. Is there a place...?

For example, the last time we did the estimates in this committee, I spoke of electoral observation. It's one thing to send people abroad and do one election, for instance in Ukraine, which I know we've done a very good job of, but to be able to have that in-house expertise... Do you have a place where that kind of expertise is being gathered, as opposed to in the different geographic regions? If not, is that something that you think would be helpful?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** Thank you. I now understand where you were going with your question.

Indeed, we received some new funding in the budget to deal with democracy promotion, and in particular, electoral observation. For all issues we always have a focal point in our department so that there is one place that civil society can call, and then that focal point can ensure that all the arms of the department that can play into it are going to be integrated. That focal point lies in my branch and is responsible for administering the issues.

You mentioned Ukraine where recently we invested up to \$24 million in supporting not only the electoral observation mission that we sent there, but any number of other ways that we helped the Ukrainians produce a fairly credible election. Helping them with this information was another area in which we supported them. Yes, indeed, we do have a focal point in the department for democracy and electoral observation.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Under the feminist international assistance policy, of course, democracy promotion is one of the focus areas.

How does that intersect with the feminist international assistance policy?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** It's a core component of the feminist international assistance policy. It stands alone with all of the other elements, and all of those elements are meant to be integrated when we go abroad. It's an area, as I've mentioned, that has received new funding. We've clarified the lines of authority and reporting in the department to ensure that we can deliver on that.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** MP Duncan, please.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Thank you very much.

Thank you, all, for appearing.

I prefer to say "Your Excellency". We're very grateful for how kind you were when we had our delegation to Ukraine quite some time ago. I didn't realize you were in the department, and it's great to see.

I'm not going to ask you a question about it, but I do hope that there will be follow-up. We are doing this study, as my colleague Ms. Vandenberg has said.

I'm deeply troubled that, several budgets back, only 4% of the budget was on democratic development. I think you can anticipate that we'll be asking for more. It is one of the action items in the policy, and it obviously is not delivering properly if it stays at that small percentage.

I would like to ask, first of all, two questions related to emergencies and humanitarian assistance.

A number of issues have been raised with me by civil society organizations since I gained this portfolio. First, consistent with the feminist international assistance policy, have you established or do you intend to establish a dedicated pool of aid for gender in emergencies? In other words, a dedicated pool, not just giving money.

Second, Canada has committed that 25% of its aid is supposed to go to local actors; in other words, organizations in the receiving countries for humanitarian assistance. Have you tracked the money going to local groups, and if so, can you release that?

• (1005)

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Quickly, yes, we do track. As part of our previous question on data, we do track the type of organizations that we work with in regard to partnering with them, be they multilateral or local. We are having an increase in the number of local partners that we use. Even through our normal, traditional humanitarian assistance, we often use large international NGOs, such as Oxfam, and we'll use a local implementing partner to deliver their assistance.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** My first question was: Have you established or will you establish a dedicated pool of aid for gender in emergencies as opposed to the one-off like Rohingya?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** One of the key pillars in the policy was to apply a gender lens and a gender-responsive approach to humanitarian assistance. The minister provided the example of what we were doing in Cox's Bazar, and that is one element of it. All through the policy in humanitarian actions, we will look at how women specifically are impacted, nutritional support for malnourished children and access to health services, including sexual health and reproductive services as well.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Is there a dedicated pool of resources for that?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** With respect to humanitarian resources, all of our humanitarian action is responsive. When we allocate funding to a humanitarian initiative, that is the lens that we apply, so we don't say for all of the humanitarian resources, we'll allocate a specific amount.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** You can see why I asked the question. This is a broader question that many are asking—many who have provided emergency assistance and many who have provided engineering assistance and water and sanitation. You've now got this feminist international assistance policy that supposedly overrides everything. The question is: Is there a set-aside, dedicated fund for that, or is all aid now only going to be about assisting women?

I think people are seeking greater clarity. The answer you're giving is exactly why people are puzzled about how that matches up with the new policy.

I won't push it any further but I think there still isn't certainty. There was an earlier question that I put to the minister and it's related to that. Questions have been raised about when we will actually see the more detailed guidelines on how we're delivering the action items under the new policy. That's one of the areas.

My other question is about international assistance for climate change and sustainable development.

The responsibilities in the cabinet appear to have gone from....The statute imposes the duty on the Minister of the Environment, with some responsibility now for the President of the Treasury Board. It jumps from minister to minister. Sometimes it is Minister Monsef and then it's Minister Duclos, who went to the UN meeting.

So far as the feminist international assistance policy is the override, and part of that deals with climate change and environ-

ment, who has the budget and who is taking the lead on delivering our commitments on sustainable development?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** The Minister of International Development has responsibility for climate change projects, as part of the \$2.65-billion commitment, that take place in developing countries. Those are the projects that we deliver either bilaterally, country to country, or through our multilateral channels with development banks. We work very closely with Environment and Climate Change Canada on the overall approach. We often have to go to my colleagues at the Treasury Board Secretariat for approval of those initiatives, but it is a very coordinated approach. The Minister of International Development has specific responsibilities for the investments that fall under or that pertain to developing countries.

• (1010)

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** The Minister of Environment and Climate Change signed the international—

**The Chair:** That's time.

**Ms. Linda Duncan:** Okay. If I have more time, I'd like to follow up.

It remains confusing.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We shall now move to MP Baylis, please.

**Mr. Frank Baylis (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to ask a question about foreign aid. I'd like to understand how we do a breakdown by geography of our foreign aid. Where are the pockets in that?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** We report on that through the OECD report. That's where we break down all of the government's official development assistance spending by country.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Okay. What are the top three countries where our foreign aid is going?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Afghanistan is the largest recipient. Ethiopia and Haiti would be second and third.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** I'd like to understand this: Do we have some types of measures to decide the impact of that investment? What are the measures that we use to say we're giving  $x$  number of dollars to Afghanistan and  $y$  number of dollars to Haiti? How do you measure the impact of that money?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** As to the decision to even work with a country, there's an approach that analyzes the individual country context to determine what sectors we should be working with and what level of expenditure there should be, by country. We also look at what our colleagues in other donor countries are doing and what the local government is doing in those various sectors.

For each investment in a specific area—take health, for example—every initiative has a results framework that sits around that, that's embedded and that we report on. That rolls up into our overall departmental results framework, which is also aligned with the sustainable development goals. All of that foreign assistance spending and international development assistance spending is aligned at the very project level with higher-level results.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** On those countries that are big spends, was that a decision taken at the political level or just something that percolated up through the demands that came to your department, and your department decided this is a priority area? Is it top-down or bottom-up? How is it that Afghanistan is one, Ethiopia is two and Haiti is three?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** For every country, as I said, there's analysis based on what the country's needs are, by looking at our entire development assistance budget and what we can allocate across the portfolio of countries that we're involved in, and where our official development assistance makes the most difference. It's really that type of assessment—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** It's not a political decision that says, "We want  $x$  amount of the money being spent in Afghanistan, or  $y$  amount."

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** The allocation of resources is really based on that individual country analysis and a country strategy.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** It comes from the bottom up, then.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Yes.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** I'm trying to get my finger on the idea of how we are measuring that impact. I can see what you're saying within the silos. For example, Afghanistan has asked for this, Ethiopia has asked for that and Haiti has asked for a third thing. One asks for health, education, I don't know, development of a different type.

Are you measuring it against OECD criteria? You said for that \$100 spent in place A or place B... How do we actually measure the true impact across countries and across needs, if you will? One's in need of education; one's in need of health. So \$100 goes to education in Ethiopia, another \$100 for health in Afghanistan. How do we measure which is having a bigger impact, to make a decision on where to give it? I'm trying to get to the core of how you decide that this is what you're going to do, and this is what you're not going to do.

• (1015)

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** In terms of an individual investment or an overall country—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Yes, you have  $x$  amount of dollars.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** A specific investment has to be consistent with the country strategy. If we have  $x$  amount of dollars, if we're looking in Ethiopia, for example, we'll look at what their needs are, and what other donors do. Then we look at what investment will make the greatest impact. If it's in health and in a specific sector of health, we look at the results that we will achieve from this, and we work with our civil society partners or multilateral partners to determine what the impacts of those investments are.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** To simplify, you know that if you're going to give money here in Canada, they have these measures to ask. Is this a charity where 90% of its money is going through the system, or is only 50% making its way to the beneficiary? There are certain criteria that I would use when I'm asked to give money to one charity or another to see if my money is actually being put to work or being wasted. That's what I'm trying to get to, that measure.

**The Chair:** Thirty seconds.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** That efficiency measure, the input and output, is done as part of the financial analysis of a specific

investment to see what the overhead is, the direct costs and what the end result is—

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** A number?

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Do you mean an overall result number or an overall financial number?

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** A comparable number. It had 50% effectiveness here, 77% there.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Again, I'd have to go back to say that all of those project results will roll up into an overall result by area. Yes, you can compare them, provided they're similar enough projects, because an education project, for example, in Ethiopia will be completely different from an education project in Senegal. The results may be different. They may roll up into a larger indicator, but they're not directly comparable given the country context.

**Mr. Frank Baylis:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** MP Saini, please.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Good morning, and thank you all for coming.

I have one very broad question and two very specific questions.

We live in a global world and things happen very quickly, whether it's a humanitarian crisis or a natural disaster. How do you decide where you're going to respond, because it's infinite, and what will be the appropriate level of response?

**Ms. Heather Jeffrey:** I can tackle that one. I would say all of our humanitarian assistance is delivered first and foremost based on need. It's about the very real needs we see in different situations across the world. The need is always greater than any one country could possibly respond to. We prioritize based on a series of metrics about access to food, water, shelter, sexual and gender-based violence; and on a whole range of concerns that arise in emergencies, whether they are short-term emergencies caused by natural disasters, or whether, as is most common right now, long-running emergencies and slow-onset emergencies that develop over time and are caused by conflicts that can last decades.

We no longer prioritize based necessarily on the urgency of the moment, because we find that we're giving year after year. For situations in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, where we know that the needs are long term, we have to invest in a sustainable and long-term approach. We now are able to offer multi-year assistance in these countries, which really has made a difference to the efficiency and effectiveness because we can plan over the longer term. We can hire qualified staff over the longer term. The investments allow us to invest in the people of those regions so they can take control of their own development and advancement.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Let me just be specific in two areas.

Over the last few days, we've been speaking about the plight of the Rohingya people, especially in Cox's Bazar. Sometimes aid can be delivered but it's very difficult to deploy it. In Bangladesh you can deliver the aid, but how, logistically, are you able to deploy the aid, and can you give us some examples of the type of aid you've deployed?

**Ms. Heather Jeffrey:** It requires a creative and flexible approach. There is no-one-size-fits-all solution.

In conflict areas, often our access is restricted or limited, so we have to work through trusted multilateral partners—for example, the Red Cross or the World Food Programme—which have access, work with local staff and are able to reach the most vulnerable as quickly as possible.

In other areas we have to look at innovation, the use of mobile payment systems and the use of cards, so that we don't undermine local economies by funding food deliveries but rather enable local clients to purchase their own food from local markets and sustain farmers from their own local economy.

There is a wide variety of tools. We work through Canadian NGO partners that have long-standing relationships with local partners. Local delivery is the most effective. It's not always possible, given the security context, but that's the goal we strive for. It's a quite a wide range of very diverse tools.

• (1020)

**Mr. Raj Saini:** As you can appreciate, the other place right now is the tragedy and the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. If we look there, we see it's a different situation, because aid is not being allowed to get into the country itself, so aid is being delivered to the front lines in Colombia. How do you adjust to that factor?

You have one situation where the country may be poor and may not have the capacity to actually receive and deploy the aid because of circumstances or infrastructure that's on the ground there.

However, you have a different circumstance where the country is not allowing the aid to come in. You're sitting on the other side of the border. How are you able to get that aid in?

Say whatever you can. Some of it you may not want to say publicly, but just give us an idea of how you are doing it.

**Ms. Heather Jeffrey:** I'll defer to my colleague Cheryl Urban to respond to that.

**Ms. Cheryl Urban:** Yes, it's very much so....

Let me just say that Canada is very seized with the humanitarian situation in Venezuela and also the migration crisis, which is the largest outside of Syria right now.

Canada is using a number of different tools at its disposal in order to help Venezuelans. Some of it is humanitarian assistance and some of it is development assistance, and both of them are working together in regions. It is a mixture. The majority of our assistance is provided for Venezuelans outside of Venezuela.

Canada hosted the Lima Group meeting on February 4 in Ottawa, and Prime Minister Trudeau announced \$53 million for Venezuelans at that time. A large share of that was going for Colombia specifically. That was a Canadian contribution of about \$17 million toward a World Bank policy loan for Colombia in order to absorb the migrants, because the influx of migrants, which in Colombia alone is over 1.5 million people, is putting—

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Displacement within Colombia itself—

**Ms. Cheryl Urban:** Right. Colombia has been extremely generous. It's been very progressive in its immigration policies with regard to the Venezuelan migrants. Part of what Canada is doing is helping countries like Colombia, which are absorbing large

populations, in order to ensure that their services for all people, including Venezuelan migrants—

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Ms. Cheryl Urban:** —are able to meet the demands.

I would just add that there is a small portion that does go into Venezuela, but it's restricted because the Maduro regime does not allow access. There are some local organizations. They have an absorptive capacity but they are delivering, where they can, aid to Venezuelans inside the country.

**Mr. Raj Saini:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** MP Alleslev, please.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev (Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, CPC):** Thank you very much.

Has a report on exports of military goods from Canada been tabled in Parliament since 2017?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** I'll have to give you the answer to that later, where—

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you.

The follow-up question to that is that usually an annual report on export and import permits gets tabled in the House, as well, and I'm wondering if there has been one since 2016.

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** The government has made a commitment to adhere to the Arms Trade Treaty, and under that commitment, which should be made official in a matter of months, there will be an annual report.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** There has been one in the past, so I'm just wondering what is the most recent annual report of export and import permits that's been tabled in the House.

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** I'd be happy to provide that answer to you.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Thank you very much.

Could you give me an idea of the annual value of our export of military goods?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** I'll also have to provide that answer to you later.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Perfect. That would be fantastic.

With that, could you tell me the number, approximately, of permits that are applied for every year?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** We'll certainly provide that to you later on.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** Then, could you also give me an idea of the number that are approved and the average time frame for approval?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** Yes.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** The reason I asked that is because obviously our defence industry is critical to our sovereignty and our security. Being a small country of 37 million, our defence industry has about 80% of its revenue driven from exports, not from sales specifically to the Canadian government and in support of the Canadian Forces. So export permits, obviously, are fundamentally important to that revenue, and the numbers from 2016 were that it's over a billion dollars annually.

What I understand is that there has been a significant increase in approval times for export permits, even to those countries that are on the automatic firearms country control list and are even NATO allies. Our defence industry is suffering at the moment because of this increase in the time frame it takes to have these export permits approved.

I'm wondering if you could give me an idea of why there is an increase, and if there has been any kind of policy or delegation of authority approval change in the process in the last three or four years.

• (1025)

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** I'm not aware of any change in the approval process or any delegated authority that is different from previous years, but I'd be very happy to provide additional detail later.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** That would be really fantastic if you could.

My understanding is that the practice within the ministry is that many of those routine export permits could be approved at the public servant level for the countries that are on the AFCCL. However, now it appears that for NATO countries, and even for countries on that AFCCL, it needs to go personally to have the minister sign off on it. That could perhaps be a result, then, in terms of the delay.

Can you comment on that?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** I don't believe there's been any change in that practice.

The vast majority of all decisions are taken at the officials level when they adhere to our policy. A very, very small number go to ministers. However, I will validate that statement for you. I do not believe there's been any change in that practice.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** All right.

That's critically important, and if you could provide that information....

Obviously, we would like to understand the result of this additional time frame delay, even the fact that it's jeopardizing certain contracts and these companies' ability to deliver on these contracts that they've entered into. It's also what we can perhaps advise companies to do to mitigate that risk, but also what we, as elected officials, can advocate for to support the department in terms of being able to process these permits more quickly.

Could you give us any idea of what perhaps could be some of the challenges, and some of the things we might be able to help you with?

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** As I say, I believe that the practice remains the same as it has been in many years.

The only difference that we are now engaged with is our adherence to the Arms Trade Treaty, which will embed the criteria of this international treaty in our decision-making processes. However, the fact that we are and will adhere to the Arms Trade Treaty doesn't mean that we will suddenly start not issuing export permits.

We will provide you with data on exactly what the state of play is on that, but as I say, there has been no change, to my knowledge, in the practice of how decisions are made.

**Ms. Leona Alleslev:** I would appreciate it if we could have data over a five- or six-year period, so we can see the change in that.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** I thank colleagues for providing me with some time in the last question to focus on an area that's a particular interest of mine, and I know of all members of this committee: Canada's Arctic sovereignty. Challenges are emerging in the Arctic, and in the north, in part as a result of climate change and shifting geopolitics. Our committee had the opportunity to visit four communities in the Arctic, in October of last year.

The main estimates include a vote of \$6.13 million, related to enhancing Canada's global Arctic leadership. Measures under the new funding initiative include enhancing indigenous and northern peoples' participation in international Arctic initiatives. Our recent report on Canada's Arctic sovereignty focused on recommendations that the Government of Canada should provide stable and long-term funding to the Canadian permanent participants in the Arctic Council.

What other Arctic funding is included in the estimates? How do these initiatives respond to the issues raised in the committee's recent report on the Arctic, which expressed a dual vision of nation-building at home, as well as remaining vigilant, in terms of the geopolitical issues emerging up there?

• (1030)

**Mr. Troy Lulashnyk:** Thanks very much. I'll take the question, and my colleagues can jump in as required.

As you very rightly point out, the Arctic is an area of critical importance to us, and extraordinarily vulnerable as well. I think it's a very positive development that the budget did provide additional funding to fulfill a number of those areas where we needed to work. Sustainable development was one of them. You mentioned ensuring the permanent participation of the indigenous organizations, so that we have a very inclusive process as we go forward in developing our approach and strategy.

Part of the money will go to a permanent secretariat for the sustainable development working group. We also have money to engage and support youth in the region, so that's a big step, and will help us. There's also money to engage UArctic, which is a sort of consortium of universities and institutes that will really help us build structure and intellectual foundations, as we go forward.

I'd also mention that we're renewing the Arctic policy framework. This is all with a view to an inclusive process where we engage northerners first, indigenous groups and all levels of government in order to militate toward a really sound basis for our strategy. As you said, climate change is presenting a very real threat to us in that region, which is disproportionately affected by what is happening. All of these efforts are meant to buttress and support how we can move securely into the future.

**The Chair:** Mr. Gwozdecky, do you have anything to add on the broader vision? Okay.

MP Sidhu, you're up next. There are about two and a half minutes left, if you would like to finish up.

**Mr. Jati Sidhu:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'll share my time if there's any left.

I have a general question on the budget—on the operating expenditure. The budget is around six figures, and the expenditures around \$2 billion. How do you come up with that? Is it based on the previous year's expenditures?

I'm asking the question because World Vision and Red Cross spend about 80% of their budget on their management fees, and people have that concern. I'm concerned about \$2 billion. I'm not challenging it, but I need to know the procedure.

**Mr. Arun Thangaraj:** Our operating budget is based on a number of factors. One, we're unique in federal departments because we're in 110 or 111 countries. We have 174 missions. You have, in that operating budget, a very significant percentage of operating costs that are very much fixed, and determined by leases, utility bills and all those things. Those are essentially just the fixed operating costs of the organization.

In terms of how we arrive at the remaining budget, it really is based on a program analysis. We look, program by program, at what the cost is to deliver that, whether it be a development program or a diplomacy program. We look at the level of IT support required, and if there are specific IT applications there. We also look at the human resources required for that.

• (1035)

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Thank you.

There's that famous expression, "Give a man a fish, he could eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, he can eat for a lifetime".

I'm wondering if any one of you could comment on the capacity-building that's done in different countries when Canada invests.

**The Chair:** It's going to have to be a very brief answer because we're right at the end of time. I know it's a big question.

**Mr. Mark Gwozdecky:** We certainly adhere to that concept of training and capacity-building. This is why we are a government that no longer engages in any significant amount of infrastructure building, for example, because that would not be focused on building up the capabilities. We have any number of programs across the department that address capacity and training needs. The vast majority of the things we do are aimed in that direction.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** I want to thank our officials for being here this morning, providing answers. A couple of items were requested for follow up, so please submit them to the clerk.

With that that we now have to call the votes required to complete the committee's consideration of the main estimates.

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$1,743,383,063

Vote 5—Capital expenditures.....\$103,090,143

Vote 10—Grants and contributions.....\$4,191,984,964

Vote 15—Payments, in respect of pension, insurance and social security programs or other arrangements for employees locally engaged outside of Canada, or in respect of the administration of such programs or arrangements..... \$68,874,000

Vote 30—Administration of new free trade agreement measures and steel safeguards.....\$11,446,936

Vote 35—Protecting Canada's National Security.....\$1,252,387

Vote 40—Protecting Democracy.....\$716,099

Vote 45—Renewing Canada's Middle East Strategy.....\$250,000,000

Vote 50—Enhancing Canada's Global Arctic Leadership.....\$6,133,109

(Votes 1, 5, 10, 15, 30, 35, 40, 45, and 50 agreed to on division)

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE

Vote 1—Payments to the Centre.....\$142,907,117

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION (CANADIAN SECTION)

Vote 1—Program expenditures.....\$9,726,454

(Vote 1 agreed to on division)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the votes on the main estimates, less the amounts voted in interim supply, to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you for your co-operation, everyone. I'm going to ask us to go in camera. There is one item we have to clear up.

Thank you to our officials who were here this morning. We'll suspend for a minute while we clear the room.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]







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