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# Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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**EVIDENCE**

## Tuesday, February 7, 2017

## Chair

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**

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● (0845)

[*English*]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** I call the meeting to order.

Good morning, colleagues. Welcome.

We continue with our study of the economic security of women. I want to welcome the Parliamentary Secretary for the Status of Women, Terry Duguid.

Welcome, and we will enjoy the benefit of your wisdom. I see that we have Kevin Waugh in here as well today, so I think we are at gender parity again. I love it.

Today we have as our guest, from the Canadian Women's Foundation, Anuradha Dugal, who is the director of violence prevention programs. We also have Ann Decter from YMCA Canada, who is the director of advocacy and public policy. We are awaiting, by video conference from Paris, France, Willem Adema, who is a senior economist in the social policy division of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, but he hasn't yet joined us, so we'll leave him to the last.

We will begin with comments from Ms. Dugal.

You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal (Director, Violence Prevention Programs, Canadian Women's Foundation):** Thank you very much.

Thank you, Chair, and honoured members. I'm very excited to be with you today and talk about gender parity in Canada and particularly, as we see around the table, the growing representation of women in positions of leadership. That's a very positive start.

However, I have to admit I'm not bringing all good news. We definitely see in Canada that there is inequality in the gender wage gap, which has not changed. We see a low percentage of women in STEM programs—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—and in upper management, and we still see evidence of much unconscious bias in the ways that women are treated and the ways in which women experience their lives professionally.

We know that economic inequality stems from systemic and structural barriers, and it persists despite the clear indications that we all benefit from gender equality. The World Economic Forum in particular points to numerous studies that confirm that reducing gender inequality will enhance productivity and economic growth. Women in Canada continue to be economically marginalized, particularly women of colour, aboriginal women, rural and northern women, women who identify as LGBTQ, older women, immigrant women, women with disabilities, and young women. Just as an example, aboriginal women are twice as likely to be living in poverty as women who are non-aboriginal.

Also, we know that there is an intersection with violence. Women are more likely than men to experience violence in their own intimate partner relationships, and this increases their vulnerability to poverty, in part because it typically leads to one partner who can't work. Most often this is the woman, as she's trying to move away from an abusive home. Single-parent-led families experience the highest levels of poverty, and most single-parent families are women led.

Many women, particularly those in intergenerational poverty or who are less educated, take multiple part-time low-wage jobs in order to successfully continue with their responsibilities, often as homemakers or in child care, elder care, or taking care of other members of the family. Therefore, they are often in the informal sector, which leads to a lack of protections, rights, and traditional social supports and benefits that could otherwise protect them. In our publication *Beyond Survival*, published in 2010, we reported that in Canada non-standard work now accounts for almost two in five workers. Forty per cent of women in the Canadian economy are engaged in non-standard work. About one-quarter of working women work part time, and they make up 70% of Canada's total part-time labour force. About a quarter of these can't find full-time work, and the rest are probably choosing part-time work to fulfill the responsibilities we mentioned earlier.

However, women are now better educated than men, have nearly as much work experience, and are equally likely to pursue many high-paying careers, so we have to look at the reasons that women, once they secure stable employment with benefits and job security, might also be disadvantaged by sexist institutional structures and fields and professions that might be dominated by men versus fields and professions that are dominated by women, which very often are the lowest-paying fields in our economic sector—not-for-profit work, the social service sector, and administrative work. As well, we still see that women are less likely to be promoted.

We fund programs in economic development. We focus on social purpose enterprise, STEM, trades and technology, and accelerating entrepreneurship for women. This is what the women told us before they entered the programs. They said 60% of them....

We're talking about wraparound processes. It's not enough to provide women with economic security through an employment course; they need much more than that. They told us, going into the program, that they need housing and social support to set up their home even before they can start thinking about their job security. Thirty per cent needed legal access to deal with family law issues, very often related to divorce or child custody or social assistance problems, and 10% needed emergency funds to deal with last-minute problems. We've also supported emergency loan funds across Canada. Some of them buy winter tires for their cars so they can get to work, which they don't otherwise have the backup funds to do. Some of them are buying computers so that they can get to work. Some of them are paying for courses at colleges to upgrade their skills.

● (0850)

Our research tells us that women's economic choices are shaped by the broader socio-economic and political context. They need supports to transition from social assistance to employment. They need to build new skills. They want to secure full-time work with a livable wage. They want out of poverty.

We've been funding programs. We do training with 100 different organizations that do community economic development across Canada. They point to an urgent need for training and retraining for women, and an investment in their employment skills that would change where they work.

It's not simply a matter of pre-employability skills but of bridging skills that will take them into further employment. It's also a matter of the training and expertise of those in the sector who are training the women. We are looking at training for women who are underemployed or unemployed, and also training for the sector that is working with those women.

There's an assumption that community economic development can be gender neutral, and we think this ignores the role that gender continues to play in shaping the lives of women, not only for the individual programs but for the entire sector. In order to really talk about women's economic self-sufficiency and enable them to make positive changes, we need to address those wraparound supports.

We offer a program that builds their assets. It focuses on long-term support. It focuses on wraparound services. It is customized for each woman, and it provides just-in-time supports, including such things as mentors, coaches, bridging programs, and, as I've mentioned, other kinds of community referrals.

As an example, for women who went through this program, by the end we were able to report that they were 83% more employable. Those who gained access to a mentor accounted for 81%, and 65% learned to navigate bureaucracies, which we know is also a big part of having to work one's way to success.

In financial assets they also gained. Those who launched a small business accounted for 65%. Those who had higher incomes accounted for 51%, and 44% increased their financial literacy, which we know is an additional need for women as they transition to economic security.

In closing, I'm going to mention four policy ideas. I have a lot more to say about them, but I'll just mention them as high points. Obviously, broadening unemployment insurance needs to be addressed. We need affordable housing for women, particularly women who are transitioning away from violence. I can't not say child care. I'll say it again: child care, and child care. We need an acceptable, adaptable, efficient child care program across Canada, and we need pay equity legislation across Canada.

● (0855)

[*Translation*]

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

Now we'll hear from Willem Adema, who is a senior economist with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Good morning, Mr. Adema. Welcome.

You have seven minutes for your presentation.

**Professor Willem Adema (Senior Economist, Social Policy Division, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you very much for having me. I wasn't quite sure what a hearing in the Canadian Parliament entailed, so I've made a little presentation—which, I hope, has been distributed among you and your colleagues—on work we are doing, basically trying to paint a picture of where Canada is standing in comparison to some other OECD countries, international comparisons being our bread and butter. I will just present these numbers, and then I am open to various questions, which I will try to answer at a later stage.

Very quickly, on the first page I have put together for the presentation some gender gaps between labour force participation and employment rates among men and women. You can see that Canada, in terms of labour force participation and employment participation, has smaller gender gaps than many other OECD countries, Japan in particular, but a bit larger than what you see here for Sweden.

Another item I would like to point to on the next page—which was already alluded to by the previous speaker—is the difference in working hours between men and women. On the first panel you will see the incidence of part-time employment across the OECD for men and women, and here again you can see that the gender gap is smaller than in some other countries. Particularly in European countries like the United Kingdom and Germany, part-time employment—less than 30 hours per week—is used as a solution by parents, but mainly mothers, to balance work and family obligations.

You see with the other chart—and this is an issue that until recently has been somewhat neglected, I think—the fact of the prevalence of long working hours. Men are much more likely than women to work for more than 60 hours per week. You can see here, again, that in Canada the gap may not be as stark as in many other OECD countries, but it is there and it is indicative of the issues around gender equality in the labour market.

These factors, together with past choices of men and women in educational areas, contribute to persisting gender pay gaps across the OECD and also in Canada, where it is just below 20%, which is a little higher than the OECD average of just below 15%. You can see that in Sweden and France the pay gaps are noticeably smaller, and in Japan the pay gaps are much wider. That is related to the fact that women in Japan are predominantly working in the non-regular sector, thereby having less access to bonus payments and support from employers. They have a fixed wage while working on a fixed contract that is renewable each year, and show far less earning progression than women in a similar job, let alone men.

On the next page we are in the process of preparing an agenda report for the ministerial council meeting we have here in May, and we're analyzing the factors underlying the gender wage gap. I've put here on the chart a Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition, which gives some insight into factors that underlie gender pay gaps. As you can see, in many countries—including in Canada, a little bit—the workers' characteristics, including education, work in favour of women and have a positive effect on the gender wage gap.

● (0900)

However, long hours by men, part-time hours by women, and characteristics around the job and occupation of women have a negative impact on the gender pay gap.

What is even more important is that with the econometrics we do, you can't cover all the unobservable factors underlying the gender wage gap. You can see that in Canada and the U.K., we can explain a lot of the gender pay gap econometrically, but not all. That gap is wider in many other countries, and that also points to—it is not equivalent to, because as I said, the econometrics are not perfect—the persistence of discrimination in the labour market.

Finally, here are some thoughts about policies.

I support the previous speaker on her call for child care. Child care is a tool that helps both parents to be working. I understand that this early childhood education care might be a provincial responsibility in Canada, so I didn't put anything in here. Similarly, parental leave is an important lever that governments could consider in order to change men's behaviour. There is some research that says that this might be most effectively done around the age of childbirth so that you can change the behaviour of men for a longer time span. With that in mind, about 10 OECD countries have now introduced, in one way or another, a period of leave that is reserved for fathers, either via bonuses, financial incentives, or by giving quota within parental leave legislation that fathers can use on a "use it or lose it" basis. Quebec has something similar to that for about six weeks, but it doesn't exist in other parts of Canada. Amazingly, or surprisingly, countries like Japan and Korea have the longest period of individual entitlements for fathers to leave, which is about a year. This is driven by their main concern about aging populations and low fertility rates. The concern is that women cannot balance work and family life without the support of the man. Therefore, policy is now promoting men to take leave to care for children.

I presume that finger means that I have to stop.

**The Chair:** Yes, exactly.

Thank you very much; that was excellent.

We're going to go now to Ann Decter, who is with YMCA Canada, and you also have seven minutes.

**Ms. Ann Decter (Director, Advocacy and Public Policy, YWCA Canada):** I'm actually with YWCA Canada.

**The Chair:** Oh, sorry.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** YMCA doesn't really advocate on these issues.

**The Chair:** No, you're right.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Good morning. Thank you for inviting YWCA Canada to contribute to this study.

Since our founding in the late 1800s, YWCA Canada's member associations have provided essential programs and services to women and girls, including being the leading provider of employment programs for women in Canada. Throughout Canada's history, we have advocated for policies that will improve the lives of the women and girls we serve.

As a federated national association, YWCA Canada's strategic priorities are set by our 32 member associations, which work in nine provinces and two territories. Our priorities reflect the needs of the women and girls using their services on a daily basis.

Our current national priorities include reconciliation work with aboriginal women; inclusion for newcomer, refugee, and immigrant women; addressing violence against women; national child care; women's housing and homelessness; and women's economic equality. Our perspective on women's economic security is grounded in these priorities.

At 51%, women are a slight majority of Canada's population, and have been for almost 40 years. Overall, Canada has an aging population. Fifty-five per cent of all seniors in Canada, those 65 and over, are women, and this increases with age. Women make up 63% of those 85 to 89 and 72% of those aged 90 and over.

Employment for senior women has nearly doubled over the last decade, but their median annual income is one-third lower than men's, and they are twice as likely to live in poverty.

Poverty rates have risen dramatically for senior women who aren't part of an economic union, tripling from 9% in 1995 to 28% in 2015. Much of that period saw government budgets in Canada's social safety net drastically reduced.

Economic security varies widely across populations of women in Canada. Aboriginal people are the fastest-growing population, and their population age structure differs significantly from the non-aboriginal or settler population. Only 6% of aboriginal women are seniors, compared to 15% of settler women; 27% are aboriginal girls under 15, compared to 16% of the non-aboriginal women population. The median age, the age at which half the population is older and half younger, of all women in Canada is 41. It's 29, 12 years lower, for first nation, Métis, and Inuit women.

Statistics about aboriginal women describe the youngest and fastest-growing populations of women in the country. For example, the number of aboriginal women in our federal prisons increased 97% between 2002 and 2012. Correctional Service of Canada has described an average aboriginal woman in prison as 27, with limited education, unemployed at the time of arrest, and a sole-support mother of two to three children.

In addition to the points that follow, strategies to ensure economic security for indigenous women in Canada will need to include everything from ensuring the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls is successful, and honouring the women and their families, and then putting the country on a course to reduce violence against aboriginal women, to implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples—including free, prior and informed consent—to full implementation of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal order to the federal government to end discrimination against first nations children, to funding of child welfare and full use of Jordan's principle. It calls for the kind of fundamental change in relationship described by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Steady increases in women's participation in the labour force since the 1950s have given Canada a labour force that is virtually gender balanced. For the last decade, women have consistently made up more than 47% of people employed in Canada. By 2015, there were more educated working-age women in the population than men. Sixty-nine per cent of women aged 25 to 64 had a university, college, or trade degree, diploma, or certificate, compared to 64% of men, yet women working full time and year-round earn about 72% of what men earn in comparable work.

In Canada, women as a population are now better educated than men, but paradoxically still have lower incomes and consequently are poorer and less economically secure.

As education is known to correlate positively with income, we are left with the question of why is this not happening for women in Canada, what barriers prevent women's economic security, and what measures can successfully address them.

There are many, and I will talk about a couple today in the time I have.

● (0905)

As stated by other speakers, Canada has a significant gender pay gap. YWCA Canada recommends legislated pay equity to close the pay gap. On October 5, 2016, the House of Commons promised to implement proactive legislation on pay equity by the end of 2018. The complaint-based model of pay equity needs to be replaced with legislation framing it as a human right, and the recommendations of the 2004 task force report are a good place to start.

To obtain economic security, women need unimpeded access to safe workplaces with workplace protections. Women are the majority of minimum-wage workers, as others have said, and make up seven out of 10 part-time workers. Regardless of age group, women are more likely to be working part time, at approximately four times the rate of men. A good proportion of women cited personal or family responsibilities as the reason they are doing this. Only 2% of men cite the same reason.

Child care is, as Justice Abella has said, the ramp to women's equality. It's also key to economic security for women with children. Child care increases mothers' access to the workforce and, as the data from Quebec bears out, is a proven anti-poverty tool. Quebec's low-cost, broad-based child care confirms child care as an effective social policy to address poverty for women, in particular for women raising families on their own, by dramatically increasing their access to employment. In Quebec, between the introduction of child care as a social policy in 1996 and 2008, employment rates for mothers with children under the age of six increased by 22%. The number of single mothers on social assistance was reduced by more than half, from 99,000 to 45,000, and their after-tax median income rose by 81%.

YWCA Canada recommends that the federal government proceed without delay to establish broad national access to low-cost child care through moving forward on the promised child care framework. Given women's education and employment status, lack of national child care is a yawning social policy gap.

Early child development for aboriginal children needs to be defined by their communities and to take into account the profound distrust of having young children in any kind of national care system.

Thank you.

● (0910)

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Ladies, the information that you presented was excellent. We do have your presentation, Mr. Adema, but I did have a request from the committee members to ask you to send your notes to the clerk. That would be wonderful.

We're going to start in to our first round of questioning with Monsieur Serré.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Serré, you have seven minutes.

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

Thank you so much to the witnesses for your presentations today and for your work. I'm just amazed, and I'm very fortunate to be on this committee. There's so much to be done, and there's some action to be taken.

Obviously, from the committee's perspective and, I would assume, over the past 30 years, we have heard a lot of what the issues are. We focus a lot on comparing provinces with provinces, but I want to turn to the OECD with my first question to Mr. Adema.

You're looking at other countries, at best practices in other countries, such as Japan. Can you elaborate a bit about the issue of the gender wage gap? You've mentioned some of the recommendations, but what specific role do you feel the federal government should play to address the gender wage gap in Canada, given your experience with other countries?

**Prof. Willem Adema:** That's a very good question, and a tough one, in the sense that governments cannot just by law reduce the gender pay gap just like that. As you will be well aware, there are lots of people in the labour force who made their educational choices 20 and 30 years ago, and their career patterns cannot just be changed overnight.

I think what governments can do is make the playing field level, so to speak. In parental leave systems, governments must try to get a greater gender balance in leave-taking. If you leave it to the parents, they will in general choose to have the partner who has the lower earnings take the leave, as the opportunity costs are lower. That is often the mother. You're not going to generate change like that.

If you want to change that behaviour, you have to think about quotas or the bonus programs to try to encourage men to take their leave as well, or to work part time as well, because as long as employers expect women to work part time or to take leave, they are likely to invest less in women than in men.

That's one thing.

Child care has been mentioned. It levels the playing field between parents. Both can then participate in the labour force. In terms of the pay gap, over the last few years we have seen some countries take measures to get more transparency on payment within companies, countries that try to force companies of a certain size, most notably, to publish what they pay their men and women. Pay transparency is one of the things that governments could directly enhance.

● (0915)

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you—

**Prof. Willem Adema:** But it's complicated, because pay is of course an issue in social partner negotiations between employers and unions. Governments can't just barge in and say, in a collective agreement bargaining system, that you have to do this or that.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

Ms. Dugal, you tweaked my interest earlier when you talked about women being more educated than men, and then you talked about a retraining program for women. Can you elaborate a bit on the successes you've had with that program?

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** Yes, absolutely. We have focused on women retraining in trades and technology. In particular, we have looked at women-only programs. One of the reasons for that is obviously the gender bias, which we have spoken about many times, in industries that have been more typically attractive to men.

We find that the gender bias can be addressed. Those industries are also higher-paying—that's one of the reasons we picked them—and have more opportunities to allow women to have stronger gains in their income over time. In Edmonton, for example, we picked Women Building Futures, which is a construction company that teaches women construction skills. WEE Society in Nova Scotia teaches women shipbuilding skills. Those organizations also have individual relationships with their provinces in terms of the skill need in that province at that time, which also pushes them to make sure they're building a workforce that is responsive to the local organizations.

However, one thing that we haven't been able to address is gender bias in apprenticeships and gender bias once work placement happens. Those things need policies. They need champions. They need women in the workforce who will continue to mentor and coach women. What we've found is that it has to be long term. You might train a woman and you might put her in a job, but if she doesn't have a support system—which, again, is a typical thing that men going into construction or going into trades build for themselves—if she doesn't have that, which doesn't typically exist, she will not succeed. Those have to be found.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

With a minute left, I wanted to get a comment on parental leave. As I indicated at the last meeting, I took 10 weeks for my children. That was the maximum I could take.

I would like to know from the three of you if there is a recommendation to have a year's parental leave for men, as in Japan. Is that specifically something that you would put in a recommendation here to the committee to remove some of the stigma? Would that be beneficial?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** A new additional paid leave for men that could only be taken by them? If it's additional, yes.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** If it's additional? Okay.

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** Yes.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Do you have any specific recommendations around that?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** I think the evidence is that if it's not leave that can only be taken by men, it doesn't get taken up to the same degree.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Shared or...?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** If it's shared, women still take more of it.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll go to my colleague Ms. Vecchio for seven minutes.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Hi. Thanks very much. I'm going to start with the OECD.

Back in December, I was at the World Forum in France, where they were really focusing on the sharing economy. Can you speak quickly about the impact of the sharing economy and the opportunities for women?

**Prof. Willem Adema:** Do you want me to talk about the sharing of paid and unpaid work?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** No, about the sharing economy. It's the opportunity to take on something like Airbnb, if you're familiar with that. These are opportunities where women can create business cycles through offering products of their own and creating community that way.

**Prof. Willem Adema:** I must admit that I wasn't at that particular forum. What I do know is that when it comes to entrepreneurship and initiatives, the role of women's networks and mentoring is very important. If you define “sharing” as sharing with colleagues and people in a similar situation, that is one way forward.

When I look at sharing in this particular case between the genders, I look at men and women at home trying to share the work in the economy but also the work at home. Various countries have undertaken initiatives in that area. We are—

● (0920)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That's fantastic. I understand that in every culture we have to look at things being different. Things are different in the country you're actually living in and the way you were raised. I know that has a lot to do with it.

I want to switch over to the Canadian Women's Foundation and ask you about your leadership cultivation programs. Can you give me some examples of them and how they might mentor people into politics, onto boards, or into becoming women entrepreneurs? Can you give me an insight?

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** Absolutely. Thank you.

We have a leadership institute specifically for women. It's been piloted over three years. Twenty-five women each year go to the Coady International Institute and do a model that is very focused on executive leadership. It is directed at supporting their leadership in not-for-profits. The reason we created it was that the community economic development groups encouraged us to try to plug a gap in training and expertise in women's leadership in not-for-profits. As we know, succession planning is not happening in not-for-profits. There 's a big turnover in staff at the higher levels.

That has shown us the importance of mentorship and coaching. They have a program at the beginning and at the end, and then during the year they run a leadership project themselves in their community. They have a mentor who offers them not only the asset-building advice that we see in the sustainable livelihoods projects but also real-time industry advice, which is really important to them. Those mentors are key to that program.

Right now we run it for mostly not-for-profits, but we find that women in those programs report to us such things as, “I now feel like I could present myself for political office on the town council”, or “I feel I could present myself for a board position at the local shelter.” They're seeing the assets growing in all areas, not just in their professional life.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Wonderful.

I want to switch over to the YWCA. As the critic for families, children, and social development, I do a lot when it comes to looking at the opportunities for child care and recognizing the difference between rural versus urban and people working shift work. I'm from a community that has a lot of that as well.

I have done a lot of looking into Quebec—I know that the minister has a plan for looking at a national child care strategy—and I have found some holes in there. I think what is happening is that we have this envy of Quebec, where we see it as the best thing, yet we see two-year waiting lists. There are not enough spots. We also recognize that with regard to taxation, people are paying small amounts at the back end because they're being taxed at the beginning to pay for this entire program. As well, one thing that's come to my attention is the quality. I know that in Ontario, where I am, there is a ratio of one to five and things of that sort.

Clearly there are some big holes in this child care program. I'm not saying it's not a good thing, but there are some holes. Can you comment on that? You seem to be a real advocate for it. I'm trying to find out what we're trying to do better. We know that it's okay, but not what it should be.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** I was reporting to you on the success of broad-based low-cost child care in Quebec in changing women's economic position, not on a detailed analysis of what's part of that program. I think it has been evolving. It started as kind of a Cadillac program, with many different kinds of child care, which no one else in the country has attempted as part of the system.

What we see in child care across the country is that in the last 10 years, after the federal government walked away from moving forward on a national plan, the social pressure for access to child care has been felt by the provinces, and they have tried to respond—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That's okay, because it should be the provinces, if we're looking at it—

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Well, it's always going to be piecemeal if it's the provinces.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** It is piecemeal, yes.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Yes, so it's not that the federal government is ever going to provide a national system and be the service provider, but it needs national leadership. You have four provinces that have responded with full-day kindergarten in the last 10 years. The pressure continues, and it's a policy gap on which we haven't seen sufficient action. It is part of women's lack of economic security, which takes them into their senior years in the position that I described.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Okay.

I just want to pull back to employment insurance. You mentioned addressing employment insurance so that we could look at other opportunities. What are those other opportunities? Currently we have the sick benefits and the maternity and parental and compassionate care benefits. What are some other things that you think we need to put in there?

● (0925)

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** I think one thing that's needed is emergency funds for women. Certainly there are emergency loan funds that are run by individual organizations. It's a lot of pressure for the individual organizations to run something like that, but whether you're experiencing a sudden economic loss or a sudden crisis in your family, the need for that emergency fund in order to jump to a new place of living or to get something done quickly—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Do you see that through employment insurance or through a federal program?

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** There used to be in a few provinces—I'm sorry, but I'm not familiar with all of the ins and outs of it—emergency funds available, particularly for women, particularly in certain situations of violence, which would help them in a few provinces, but—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Was that under the employment insurance?

**The Chair:** We're going to go now to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes. Sorry.

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** We'll have to check that for you.

**The Chair:** You may begin.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thanks, Chair.

Thanks to all the witnesses for their work.

I have a series of questions for the YWCA and Ann Decter.

Women's economic security is very closely tied to their ability to live free from spousal and sexual violence. We hear that women and girls fleeing situations of domestic violence are being turned away from shelters. Can you talk a bit about how that relates to the shortage of affordable housing for women?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Yes.

We know that there's a shortage of affordable housing across the country. There are massive waiting lists to get into social housing. Housing affordability has taken a real hit in the last decade in the major cities. It's very difficult, so one of the things that's happening is that women can't leave the shelters when they're ready to go. Depending on the province, it varies. They might be there for three weeks or for six months, but at the point where they are ready to return to the community and live safely, they can't find affordable housing, so they're left with the choice of returning to the abuser, becoming homeless, or moving into hidden homelessness with families.

It is my contention that if we expand access to safe and affordable housing for women who are leaving shelters, we could relieve some of the pressure on the shelters and it would be possible for more women to enter. As they come, fewer would be turned away.

I think that rather than immediately expanding the emergency shelter situation, we should expand the affordable housing, and then let's see how much more emergency shelter is needed.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** In the “Blueprint for Canada's National Action Plan on Violence Against Women and Girls”, issued by the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses, the YWCA was a major contributor and supporter—

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Yes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** —and many NGOs signed on to it. It notes that “the total cost of intimate partner violence has been estimated at $7.4 billion per year” for Canada.

Can you talk more about how violence against women affects women in the economy and how a national action plan—not a federal plan, but a national one—to end violence against women could help protect women's economic security?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** One thing that happens when women are fleeing violence and go to a shelter is that they lose their employment. It's not all, but I think it's about two-thirds of them. They're giving up their income and they need to start over. Obviously, it's a long path to get back to having housing for those who lose employment, and to re-establishing an income and a stable living environment for their children. There can be long-term trauma. Certainly in Canada we need more supportive housing with trauma-informed services.

I would like to defer a bit to Anuradha on this and see if she has anything to add, because she is the director of violence prevention at the CWF.

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** The one thing I would add is that we're a member of a national and international network on how violence against women affects women in the workplace, on how it distracts them and causes them to lose productivity at work. Also, they will not necessarily apply for promotions and they won't disclose at work, because they're extremely worried about how it will affect how they're seen in the workplace. Even though HR policies might be in place to support them, they won't necessarily access those HR policies.

I think that points to some of the important new legislation in places such as Manitoba and what's being floated in Ontario to give women protected leave in cases of violence against women.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** With regard to legislation coming up, Manitoba has implemented it, and B.C. and Ontario have private members' bills, I believe.

● (0930)

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** Yes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** The Steelworkers got a big win on this just a few weeks ago.

**Ms. Ann Decter:** It was negotiated in the contracts. Yes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Can you talk briefly about whether you see a federal role in coordinating and making sure that with this extra protection for women through unemployment insurance and other things, their work is not jeopardized?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** There's always room for federal leadership on violence against women, and I think it goes a long way to setting a national standard and an attitude. It sets a standard for governments to meet across the country.

I think the federal government working on sexual harassment in federally covered workplaces is key. I think that a big chunk of the unexplained reasons that women don't advance in the workplace is.... We haven't really talked about sexual harassment in the workplace as a reason that women don't advance and aren't comfortable advancing, but we've seen it. From the CBC to the police forces to the RCMP to firefighters, it's in the news all the time. Those workplaces really need to change, and anything the federal government can do to set a tone and a standard on that is really influential, I would say, across the provinces.

I give lots of credit to the Canadian Labour Congress, which has really been moving forward on the issue of training people to recognize domestic violence in the workplace, to recognize when it's happening to someone, and to be able to start to probe and get supports.

They have also been moving forward on the legislation, which, for those who don't know, gives 10 days of leave in instances of domestic violence. That's now been brought in in Manitoba. People are working on that in other places across the country, and also trying to negotiate it in union contracts so that women have some time to be off and regroup without jeopardizing their jobs. This will change the rate of job losses for women who are going to shelters. I've certainly seen personal instances of that.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I have a final question.

Women with disabilities are among the poorest populations in Canada, with an unemployment rate of up to 75% and very high levels of domestic violence also. Can you talk a little bit about how it would help to have the federal government increase operational funding to help address the situation, particularly around shelter space?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** Across the country for the most part, we have a mature social service system in the shelters serving women fleeing violence, but there are definitely gaps in the system. In northern Canada, for example, in rural and remote communities, women don't have the same access. Women with disabilities don't have the same access, because shelters aren't necessarily equipped to support them, and of course shelters are always operating on absolutely shoestring budgets.

Within the infrastructure spending that the government is doing, some funding that's dedicated to shelters and increasing access to shelters for women with disabilities would be really excellent.

I also hope that this committee is going to hear from the DisAbled Women's Network of Canada to talk about a lot of issues concerning women with disabilities.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** We will. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

We'll go now to my colleague Ms. Vandenbeld, and I'll give you extra time so you can inform the committee about the event today.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** First of all, I just wanted to inform the committee—I know most of you already know—that the official launch of the all-party parliamentary women's caucus will be today at 3:30 in room 356-S, which is on the Senate side on the third floor. I hope that all of you will be there.

I have a couple of questions.

Mr. Adema, I see that on page 5 of your slides you talk about the unexplained wage gap. I know that some have said, “Well, this is an unexplained gap, because it's based on people's personal choices.” However, what I heard you say is that there's an element of discrimination there, and also that sometimes because women are working shorter hours, bonus payments, promotions, and things like that might be less accessible to women.

I also noticed, Ms. Dugal, that you mentioned unconscious bias. I'm wondering if you could delve into that unexplained wage gap a little in terms of the unconscious bias, or discrimination, or socio-economic factors that might make up part of that unexplained gap.

Maybe we'll start with Mr. Adema.

**Prof. Willem Adema:** This is an econometrics exercise. Basically, we have various variables we can use to explain the pay gap, including the worker's education, the worker's job, and whether the worker works long hours or short hours. All those variables are included in the econometric regression, but there are other variables we cannot include. It's much harder to model attitudes towards women or their career progression. It is much harder to model social institutions. There is the tax benefit system. Is that really neutral towards both partners working in couple families? There are various factors that the econometric exercise doesn't capture.

You can see from this chart that in some countries the unexplained variable is much bigger than in other countries. For instance, in Korea a lot of workers are on annual contracts that are renewed, but their earnings progression isn't as strong as for workers who hold a full-time or a permanent contract, so to speak. Then the question becomes why we have this pay gap, since on the whole, young women in Korea are now much better educated than are young men. There's a generation gap, in that women 20 to 30 years ago were not in that strong an educational position, but there is also an element of disadvantage, an unwillingness among employers to invest in women, and there are still very traditional expectations. Korean employers still expect their women workers to either leave employment when they become pregnant or take leave and maybe not come back, so their level of investment is much lower, but it's very difficult to capture that in econometric regression.

If you ask me what that unexplained bit means, it means two things: there are a certain number of things the econometrics don't pick up, but there may also be an element of discrimination in the labour market. Unfortunately, I cannot tell you how large or small that particular element is.

● (0935)

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you.

Ms. Dugal, could you talk about the unconscious bias that you were talking about?

**Ms. Anuradha Dugal:** Unconscious bias is the idea that we all, inside of ourselves, have attitudes and ways that we behave toward people, judgments we make about people, regardless of what our higher thinking is telling us to do. We have a belief, particularly when it comes to promotion, particularly in hiring situations, particularly when we are comparing..... The idea that somehow somebody will be hired based purely on their merit...as if we can do that, first of all. Even when on paper two people look the same, there is an unconscious bias playing behind the decision between two candidates in that way. Sometimes it's way more than unconscious and it's very obvious, but that is something that I think we can address through training and HR policies.

I will go back to some of the examples that Ann used from YWCA Canada about sexual harassment and the ways in which women are treated in a workplace that tell them that they are not allowed to succeed, that they can't push themselves forward, that they shouldn't go for promotions. Those things are sometimes unspoken in a workplace also.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you. That's very helpful.

Ms. Decter, I was quite astounded by the statistics that you gave about the level of poverty for single senior women going from 9% to 28% in just 20 years. I know that increasing the guaranteed income supplement for single seniors will go some way to alleviating that, but are there other things we can do? Of course, this becomes a perpetuating cycle, in which women make less money, have more precarious work, don't have pensions, and then, once they retire, of course live in poverty. What can we do for those who are currently single seniors, and also for the future?

**Ms. Ann Decter:** What can be done currently is a little trickier, but I do think you need to take a hard look at it. Certainly more affordable housing would help. I think we need to look at affordable housing for seniors.

You also see a concentration in the population. It becomes more and more female as people get older. We need a lot of alternatives to the current system of having either to survive on your own, return to family, or go into something that's full care or fairly expensive care. If there were more options for women to generate different ways of living, of sharing, I think that would be really useful.

I do think you need to look at the CPP and what's going on with that. You can see that some of this change parallels the move from defined benefit pensions to defined contribution pensions. You're making individuals dependent on really understanding the stock market and beating the stock market to be able to be secure in their older years. I think we need to roll back to some of those other things we had in the past.

● (0940)

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** Thank you.

I'd like to give my last minute to Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Thank you.

To our friend from the OECD, you talked about Japan and the parental leave for men. Do you have the numbers on that? When I was there last year, I understood that very few men actually take it.

**Prof. Willem Adema:** This is very true. The legislation came into place around 2010, and the latest numbers for Japan suggest that about 2% to 4% of the eligible men actually take it. The main problem is that if you take leave, this is perceived as curtains for your career, or as detrimental to it.

However, there are signs that some change is happening. If you look at Korea, about five years ago about 2% of the eligible men took it. That has gone up to over 5%. What's more, once Korean men decide to take the leave, they actually take it for a long time. On average, their period of leave is about eight months, only a little bit shorter than that for women, so there are some encouraging signs there. I won't say that this is a major breakthrough, but if it can help bring about a shift in gender expectations in this area, which could do wonders in the long run.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

That's our time, panel. We thank all of you for your excellent contributions today.

We will get ready to start with the next panel.

● (0940)

(Pause)

● (0945)

**The Chair:** We'll get started with our second panel.

We have with us, from the Women's Economic Council, Rosalind Lockyer, the co-manager, and Valerie Carruthers.

The other witnesses, I think, are just coming in the door now, so I will start with the Women's Economic Council and then introduce the other witnesses as they're seated.

You have eight minutes. Please go ahead.

**Ms. Valerie Carruthers (Co-Manager, Virtual Office, Newfoundland and Labrador, Women's Economic Council):** Hi. My name is Valerie Carruthers. I'm with the Women's Economic Council. I'm here with my colleague Rosalind Lockyer.

I'd like to thank you for your time today.

My focus is going to be on EI reform. I've worked with women to sustain them to transition to employment for the last 12 years. I feel that I have something to add.

The first thing I want to talk about is EI eligibility, particularly around the non-standard work that women participate in, the part-time employment in which they form the majority. In terms of who benefits from the EI system, only 34% of women will be able to benefit. What's really difficult when you're on the ground delivering programming is that if they're not EI eligible, there's a whole host of other programs that women cannot access. It's not just about not getting the EI benefits, but it's more importantly the funded post-secondary education and training.

There are an awful lot of people who want to work. They don't have the opportunity to fund their own education or training. Some of these women are from difficult situations. In fact, at the provincial level, at the community agency level, we have to design programs that specifically include a paid employment component of our intervention just to get them EI eligible, so they can access some of these benefits for training. We have to use community resources, provincial resources, just to get them into an EI eligible status to access funded training or education, which is a shame.

I was looking up research, because quite often when we're on the ground, we don't look at the big picture. It looked at money invested in 2015-16. It mentions here that $3.6 billion was spent towards these labour market policies. In 2016-17, this was increased by an additional $125 million. This is to help EI-eligible claimants in Canada gain training and work skills, which includes funded college programs. If you only have 34% of women who can benefit because they qualify for EI, then you're leaving out the majority of women from those opportunities. That's a real shame, and I see that.

The other thing I want you to know, and it's probably been mentioned here before, is that these same women also can't qualify for special benefits when they have children. They're left out, and I have to look for alternate ways for doing that.

I guess the final thing I want to talk about is the apprehension and the fear of people who are attached to an EI system. It can also be a provincial income support system. There's a lot of fear that in choosing work, even when work is available, even when they can do the work, there will be negative impacts to not only their current benefits but also to their future potential access.

I see people go from provincial to federal systems, back to the provincial system, and a choice of work actually puts them further behind. There needs to be more coordination at the federal-provincial level, so that when you make a choice of work, even if it's outside the standard paid employment model, you are not penalized and you can actually be better off by making that choice of work.

I'm going to turn it over now to my colleague Ros.

● (0950)

**Ms. Rosalind Lockyer (Co-Manager, Administrative Office, Women's Economic Council):** I'm going to take a different focus. I've spent most of my adult life working with women who are very diverse and very vulnerable and trying to move them from that position through what I call a tool, the tool being self-employment. I work a lot in northern Ontario. That's where my paid job is, all across northern Ontario, where the diversity is huge and the geographic distance is huge. That's where I'm speaking from.

I want to commend this government for initiating their national framework on early learning and child care and their promise to do further investment of $2.6 billion up to 2019-20. That's very encouraging, but I want to reiterate what Valerie was saying, which is to not leave out the huge percentage of women who don't fit the general criteria for this kind of child care. When we're looking at this national framework, don't forget to include self-employed women. A lot of them are choosing self-employment now because of the precarious employment situation. Self-employment is part of that, and these women need high-quality, flexible, and affordable child care.

I want to zero in on the first nations women, the indigenous women, because 51% of aboriginal independent businesses are either owned or partly owned by women. They're a driver of jobs and opportunities in indigenous communities, so we have to look at where they're situated.

The reality of their lives is that they lack this kind of high-quality child care, but in the indigenous community, elder care also is a very big priority for indigenous women. If they don't have this support, they're not going to be able to move ahead in their businesses in the way that they need to. When we're looking across Canada now and at that huge potential, if we ignore it, it's just not going to happen. That's really important.

In fact, with the changing job market we have now, some of the reports are saying that as technology takes over, women are going to be the most vulnerable because of their kinds of jobs. Now if you go into McDonald's to order your hamburger, you see technology is going to take away a job, generally from a woman. In our social supports for women, which are really important, we must look at this segment of the population, and that includes self-employment.

I want to spend another brief minute talking about women entrepreneurs and innovation, because the trend now is to support businesses through the innovative incubators, the innovation centres and so on, and the mainstream business development centres. The trend is to support businesses that are from younger people, leaving out a lot of women. These are businesses in innovation, technology, and STEM. Women don't fit. These incubators are not inclusive to women, and that's going to cause a major gap in how women move forward in our economy as entrepreneurs.

I'll leave it at that and open it to questions.

● (0955)

**The Chair:** That's very good.

I'm pleased also to have with us today Women in Capital Markets. We have Jennifer Reynolds, the president and CEO. We also have, from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Jacqueline Neapole and Jane Stinson.

We'll go first to you, Ms. Reynolds. You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds (President and Chief Executive Officer, Women in Capital Markets):** Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here.

I'm going to focus on women and leadership—that's where my expertise lies—or more specifically, the lack thereof. I have a few slides that I've put together, but first I'll just give you some context around the numbers.

If you compare us globally to OECD countries, the numbers in Canada are not good. Representation on boards today is about 12% for publicly listed companies, TSX companies. If you have the graph in front of you, you'll see that at the bottom of the graph.

You're looking at other countries that are 30% to 40%. Some of those countries have gone the route of quotas. We have not chosen that. We've chosen “comply or explain”.

They also started a lot earlier. Other countries focused on the issue of why we don't have more women in leadership a lot sooner than we did in Canada. We put the regulation into place a couple of years ago.

In the U.K., comply or explain actually worked. They've gone from 12% representation on boards in 2012 to 26% today. It can work, but we haven't seen a lot of progress. In Canada today, 45% of boards have zero women on them; another 30% have one. The executive suite looks pretty much the same. If you asked those boards why they don't have any women or how they appoint, they would say, “We appoint based on meritocracy”, which obviously implies that 45% of boards decided that they couldn't find one woman who merited a board seat.

We all know that this is just a red herring. It's ridiculous. There are plenty of very qualified women for boards in this country. If anyone needs a recommendation, they can come to me. That's not the issue. It's a demand issue. That's how we need to address it in this country, and recognize that there are lots of very qualified women.

If you look at the progress since comply or explain, it's gone up 1%. We were at 11% last year; it's 12% this year. That's just not good enough. Of the 521 seats that came up last year, only 15% were filled by women, so we're not seeing corporate Canada paying any attention to comply or explain in any broad sense.

I know Bill C-25 is coming forward, and it will mimic the same sort of disclosure that we require of publicly listed companies. Bigger companies are taking this more seriously, but they have been for a long time. They've always had better disclosure. They've always focused on these things.

Canada is an economy of smaller companies. That's the reality. We need this to be broadly taken up by companies in Canada. Often you'll get the excuse, “Well, we're a resource-heavy economy, and therefore we can't because there are no women in resources.” In Australia, they managed to go from 8% on boards in 2008 to about 23% today, so other countries that are resource-heavy economies are also making progress. We certainly can in Canada as well.

Here are a couple more quick statistics on the whole board issue.

Part of the issue is that you need to have policies: do you care? Are you looking at it? Only 21% have any sort of policy around gender diversity.

The second thing is that you have to have targets. Any business in Canada has targets around its objectives. For people in Canada and the corporate world, if you say “targets”, it computes in their heads immediately as “quotas”. It's not a quota. It's a target. We always put metrics around things, and companies need to do this. We need to start thinking about that. It's not good enough for companies to just say, “We don't have a policy. We don't have targets.” We need to ask more of Canadian corporations.

The key issue here is, why should you care? Obviously, there is a social justice element here, but there is a business case. Much research has been done. I'm sure people around this table have read it, so I won't go over it all. Canada needs to care because our economy will be stronger. Our businesses will be stronger.

We're leaving half the talent pool sitting around. Women have been over 50% of the university graduates for 25 years now, and today it's 62%. We earn 50% of master's degrees, and Ph.D.s now too. All that talent is just going away. We're close to 50% of the workforce and about 35% of middle management, and have been for a couple of decades—in the U.S., women are 50% of middle management—and yet, if you look at senior officer roles, you see 18%. The numbers aren't budging. They haven't moved in a long time. We need to make sure that those numbers start moving, because that talent is just wasting away at the mid-level.

There are different ways you can get at this problem. I think too often we decide that it's the baby issue. That's what I hear from senior leaders all the time: it's just the babies. Absolutely, that's an element of the problem, but it's not just about the babies. There are all kinds of structural barriers in the corporate world today that make it difficult for women to advance.

Thankfully, I'm in an industry that, if you look at the broader financial sector, is looking at this problem very carefully. They've done some good work. A couple of the financial institutions now are at about 40% in terms of the representation of women. You can do it. That's my point. It can be done. Companies are doing a better job today and making progress on this, but it takes very formal talent management. I can go into the different types of policies if people are interested in what companies are doing and best practices, but I'll leave that for now, unless there are questions on it.

● (1000)

In particular what we need here is transparency. If you're thinking about what can you do from a public perspective, we need to encourage transparency. This comply-or-explain approach also needs some support behind it.

In the U.K. the reason it was successful is the government put in place a review called the Lord Davies' report every year, and it really was a review on pushing.... First of all, they went around and they got stakeholder engagement from the corporate world broadly—chairmen, senior leaders—and from the public sector to say they needed to focus on this, since it's a business issue. They published their report every year. There was a bit of a shaming game involved there, too. They put the list of people who were doing nothing out there, and you have to do it. I've been told it's un-Canadian to be shaming people like that, but, you know, we need to do it.

It also provided best practices, and it provided that report card every year to say how they were doing. That's why we saw real progress there, I believe, along with a few other entities like the 30% club that were pushing. We need that. The feeling generally in comply or explain is there's a frustration there, so we need more behind it.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay. Very good.

We will go then to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

Jane, are you going to begin? You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Jane Stinson (Research Associate, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women):** Thanks very much for inviting us to appear on this important topic. CRIAW has a long-standing interest and publication record on this question. I'm here with Jackie Neapole, who is our lone staff person. I'll deliver the remarks, and Jackie will participate in any questions.

We want to focus on a few things. One is the structural economic inequality for women and to recognize it as a structural problem, to see the consequences in terms of women's economic inequality and poverty, to look at the impact it has on women's caring work, and to recognize the importance of public services for women's economic security. We will end with some recommendations.

First it is essential, in our view, to recognize that insecurity for women is a structural issue. It's not just about women's choices, which is often how it gets framed. That means it is deeply rooted in many systems, programs, and policies, much as our colleague was just saying. Those include many things for which the federal government is responsible, including directly as an employer in terms of the practices it has and the example it sets across the country. I mean things like pay systems, hiring systems that may have targets—God forbid—employment systems and what they are like, the EI system, parental leave systems, and the absence of a child care system, among other things. These are the systems that make a difference for women's economic equality and security, or not. It's not just about whether or not we choose to pursue certain jobs.

Women have been entering the workforce for the past 40 years, and things have not changed. We continue to be concentrated in administrative positions, teaching, and service jobs, which are, in our experience, undervalued vertically and horizontally. Either in the sectors in which we're employed or within an organization, women still tend to be paid less, often because of where we are concentrated.

The fact that this situation has persisted for decades indicates that it's structural. We need to get deeper and deal with the underlying reasons and barriers to change. We really disagree with the focus being put on individual women having to make different choices, because that puts the burden on women to solve their own economic insecurity. Instead, those who have much more power to make a difference are governments and employers. The focus should be on things like targets to address hiring or undervaluing of women's work, the need to recognize and value women's paid and unpaid work, and social programs that are needed to support women's participation in the paid labour force and in society generally.

Women clearly have economic inequality and greater poverty in Canada. Throughout our lives we make less money than men do, and this then means we're poorer in our retirement and our older years as well. A gender-based analysis plus, GBA+, which the government has adopted and which CRIAW also calls an intersectional analysis, is very important, because we know that not all women are affected equally. There's an uneven distribution of benefits and costs, and we need to get at those differences.

For example, women living with disabilities are doubly affected. Not only do they experience lower wages generally, but they often can't find work or keep it, and so they are underemployed. Female-led single-parent families do far less well than do male-led single-parent families, and in fact, the UN committee CEDAW has recommended that Canada focus on this persistent problem.

Part of what's at the core is women's caring work. It has a fundamental impact on our economic insecurity, because women still bear the majority of domestic and caring work. It's true that men now spend more time on housework: over 20 years, it's 20 more minutes a day. At that rate, we should have equality in how many years?

Therefore, more has to be done. This conflict is serious for women, because women are often the ones who end up staying home when there's a conflict between care and paid employment. There are many things, but better parental leave provisions—something within the purview of the federal government—would help. Those, in addition to what exists for women, would give men an opportunity to also share in child care at an early age. There is evidence that if men start early, they will have greater participation throughout the child's life.

● (1005)

The importance of public services for women's economic security can't be understated either. They're important not only as a source of good jobs—although that is eroding, and it's a serious concern—but also because so many women rely on public services. We did an investigation in Ottawa, and a group of women identified hundreds of public services as needed in their daily lives. What's happening to the public sector with cuts in public services and with the growing precarity is a serious concern for women's economic security, or insecurity.

In conclusion, women's economic security over the past decade or so has worsened—the data shows it—partly because of this rise in precarious employment, which is also happening in the federal government, and also due to cuts to public services, both federally and in the reduced transfers to provinces and the cuts there.

We have a number of recommendations for action by the federal government.

One is to play a leadership role in establishing greater economic security for women in all aspects of our lives. Another is to promote an understanding of structural inequality. It's not just about women's choices. Identify where cuts and services are having a greater impact on women and on specific groups of women to get at that intersectional or GBA+ understanding.

Start with a rigorous and public GBA analysis of this federal budget. I know it's starting internally, but it should be public as well. Require GBA+ in environmental assessments. Our work in the north shows that this is an opportunity to ensure that women's needs—especially those of local women in the north—are met in the context of resource development, if such a thing were required.

Play a leadership role in creating more affordable, quality, non-profit child care spaces across the country. I think we've all talked about that. Make EI easier to qualify for and add parental benefits. Improve funding for public services. Require StatsCan to start collecting, or make sure they're collecting, data on time spent on domestic work and on gender division within the family. Canada has been a leader in that area, and it's important to keep monitoring. Finally, stem and reverse the trend towards precarity across the federal public sector through your federal collective bargaining.

**The Chair:** Thanks very much.

We're going to begin our first round of questioning with Ms. Ludwig. You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** Thank you all for your presentations.

Ms. Reynolds, on the topic of women in leadership, I recently read an article, and the quote that stuck with me was, “You cannot be if you cannot see.”

How significant is it that young women and young boys see women in positions of leadership?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** It's huge, and we do a lot of work around role models. I talked earlier about how people always assume it's the baby issue, and that's why women opt out of the corporate world. If you're sitting there at the mid-level in a corporation and you see no women ahead of you, you don't think it can be done. All you see are role models that are not as relatable. It's a bit of chicken and egg. We've got to get women into those positions so that they can see those role models.

We do a lot of work around STEM too, which I didn't talk about. It's a similar issue there. We're actually seeing declining numbers in university engineering programs today. I think a big part of the problem there is just not seeing those role models or seeing work environments. We have this problem in capital markets. They think of capital markets as male dominated and really competitive and aggressive and so on, but it's not the 1980s anymore. It's actually a different environment. I think when they see STEM professions generally, they don't have those role models. We do a lot of conferences for young women in high school and universities, trying to provide those role models and bring them in.

You can have a huge impact very quickly. I firmly believe we need to have a closer partnership between the corporate world and both the high school and university educational systems. That link for students is really missing. Most of them don't even know what these jobs are, but it's also seeing those role models and bringing them to young people.

● (1010)

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

On that, I'll just give my personal example. I'm doing a little bit of work on women in leadership, particularly women in politics in my riding. I am honoured to represent the riding of New Brunswick Southwest as its first female member of parliament. When I look around the riding, we have 14 mayors, of whom three are female. We have eight MLAs, which in Ontario would be the equivalent of an MPP. Of the eight MLAs that touch into my federal riding, there are no females.

If we look at the high school level, we're looking at principals across the riding at all levels of education. Of the 29 principals, 17 are women, so we are making some progress in one area. I would strongly argue, as you would as well, the significance of women being involved in various roles, because all people bring different experiences and different perspectives.

I also sit on the international trade committee, and that's another question I have for you. How important is it that we have women negotiating international trade agreements, particularly when we heard the earlier speaker talk about the differences in the OECD countries? How important is it that we have women's perspectives, with women not only negotiating but sitting on those boards and offering that different perspective? Is there a balance option there?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** Absolutely. I think that in leadership, whether it's political or business, our perspectives are not there as women. They are just not. Having one woman on a board or one woman on a panel just isn't enough. There's research that will tell you that it's at the 30% mark where you get a change in the dynamics around a boardroom table. There's research from many different perspectives. From a governance perspective, you have better governance if you have more women in a boardroom. Women, obviously, are going to have a different perspective on things.

If you think about the fact that 80% to 85% of purchasing decisions are made by women, I think with respect to trade or with respect to a company selling out there, you should want women there. I think it would change the world.

I mentioned there are business cases and research that tell us we'll be more competitive and more profitable and shareholder results will be better if we have more women on boards. I think we'll create a different sort of.... I think it impacts the environment, and not just the environment but everything from what's on the shelves to what your phone looks like to what the environment is like. It's going to change things dramatically if we can get women into those roles.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** I agree. I certainly think it would help us be more competitive as a country if we had more diversity on our negotiating boards and in top leadership positions.

My question is to all the panel members. We have heard across all the discussions this morning about structural barriers and unconscious biases. How as the federal government can we better inform the public and make them more aware of the structural barriers and the unconscious biases so we have more opportunities for women to be participating at higher levels within our society?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** I can start on that. Unconscious bias is a very important topic. A lot of the work I was talking about in the financial institutions starts with unconscious bias training, because people need to understand that.

I'm a positive person. I don't like to think there's some big conspiracy out there. A lot of decisions get made on the basis of "same like same". We gravitate towards people who are like ourselves, we want to promote people like ourselves, and we tend to sponsor and mentor people like ourselves, so when it comes to promotion time, those people do have better experience. They got it all along the way, so that absolutely has to happen.

From a government perspective, I think there's an educational component. I don't think it starts early enough. I actually think a lot of people think it's only old white men who are biased, but that's not true. Women are biased. Young people are biased. People of all cultures are biased. It can be a part of our educational system. We should start thinking about that.

I spent time in universities. It's so dramatically different to go into a university in Canada today and see that diversity and then transport myself to the boardrooms where I spend a lot of my time and where there's no diversity whatsoever. That's a big problem in Canada. How are we going to deal with that when we have immense diversity in our country, yet at the senior leadership level there's none?

● (1015)

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** And the global markets that we're working in.

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** Exactly, and we don't have that experience here in Canada. We need it, and we need to be able to see it in leadership positions, not just in lower-level economic ranges in Canada. I think that piece can be part of our educational system, and should be. Teachers should be thinking about this as well, certainly.

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

I'm going to give our other panel members a chance.

**Ms. Jane Stinson:** I think doing gendered analyses of the need for changes in federal programs would help. That's a great way to raise awareness, if you're introducing a change, to really make it clear what those gendered impacts are and therefore why this needs to change.

I would say also that the federal government could play a great role through advertising campaigns that help as well. I remember that when the Ontario government introduced pay equity legislation, there was a major public advertising campaign that spoke to the value of women's work. There's that sort of thing that can be done as well.

**Ms. Valerie Carruthers:** I would like to build on the GBA+, because I feel that whenever there's funding coming from the federal to the provincial government, it's earmarked for a particular thing. GBA can be part of that. Among the criteria for approving community projects when there's a call for a proposal, quite often there's no GBA requirement. It's not part of the criteria for approval. There's a lot of money coming down.

At the provincial level, when I was speaking to one of the members of the staff there, they said they find it really difficult to go it alone if it's not coming from the federal government. The money is coming down for them to manage, but unless the provincial government really institutes the GBA+, they have to go it alone there.

I think there's a role for the federal government at a very pragmatic level so that when you're putting out a call, you look at your criteria, look at your guideline for proposals, and include that in there so that it is a requirement for people to consider.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but that's your time.

Ms. Vecchio is next.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Hi, and thanks very much. I really did find the information regarding the employment insurance.... I worked as an assistant, and I recognized that there were a lot of women who were unable to get employment insurance because they were working part time over a given year. I know that we have the special benefits after 600 hours, but some people cannot reach that level.

Of course, that goes hand in hand with the social programs of the province, because in order to get to them, you need to be eligible.

What is the fix? How can we be economically and fiscally responsible as a government, yet find the benefits for the participants? Is there a fix or an easy solution?

**Ms. Valerie Carruthers:** I don't think there is an easy fix. I really feel that we need to look at how programs can be designed so that they will equally benefit women. When it comes to employment, you can't have public policy, either provincially or federally, such that when you make the choice to work, you will actually be hurt by that choice.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thank you.

The reason I asked that question first was because when we're looking....

Last week we had somebody who talked about the fact that when women were applying for loans for small businesses, there was a huge gap. I'm wondering if it's because some of these programs offer the financial literacy for starting new businesses, and things like that. Do you find that there is a measurable difference between men and women when it comes to business financial literacy?

**Ms. Rosalind Lockyer:** I would say that there is a huge difference. I think it's because the programs to grow your business are all focused around innovation and STEM technology. Women don't fit easily in there. They're more around social innovation. When they go to the mainstream incubators to get funding, they find that everything—the investors, the loans mechanism, the grants mechanism—is geared towards this very narrow focus. There is actually a lot of ageism there as well.

Women do have good ideas, but they are not the favoured trend of the day. It could be communication as well—how women communicate, what they're doing in their business. We've talked about this a lot in my world. They don't want to be seen as aggressive, so they're toning down their communication in such a way that they're not being assertive enough in asking for the dollar or explaining why their business is the kind of business that should be supported.

I think there's a big gap there that we can close using the GBA+ evaluation and by following up on funded programs so that we ensure that these programs are inclusive, because they're not now.

● (1020)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** You also brought up marginalized taxation. That's where you're switching from a non-taxable to a taxable program. For instance, if you're going from Ontario disability, you lose your medical benefits and all of those sorts of things.

**Ms. Valerie Carruthers:** Yes, absolutely.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** We're finding that people are better off staying at home than going back to work, because they're going to be paying out more. This is extremely unfortunate, but at the same time, we recognize that in the long term it's more beneficial to be employed.

What are some of the fixes? How must we collaborate to fix that?

**Ms. Valerie Carruthers:** I think that at the provincial level, if people are actually making a choice for work, there has to be more attention to some of the things that they're losing. If they are losing their drug card, there need to be programs out there so that they can get at least the equivalent coverage. If you have a medical condition or anything like that and you need medication, how can you be expected to take a job? Even at provincial level, right across the country it varies, but it doesn't usually equate to what they get when they're attached to a provincial system.

I think there's a lot of collaboration needed on that to make real incentives to go to work, because they're quite capable of going to work. In fact, just from personal experience, we know that the health care costs for women who go to work go down. Quite often you don't get data on that, because of privacy or because you're in a different department.

We know that women will come in if they're home and don't want to be home, but this is how they have to live. They're able to find a way to be productive in a different way. They're not going to the doctor anymore. They're not seeing the psychologist anymore. They're not on medication anymore. Those ripple effects are not even considered.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Ms. Reynolds, I just want to get your take on the sharing economy. I had asked earlier about it. We talk about the sharing economy, Uber, Airbnb, and those sorts of things. What do you see it evolving into, and how can it benefit women?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** The sharing economy?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes.

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** In terms of sharing of work and those sorts of things as well?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I guess that could be a part of it.

It's when we talk about renting your own personal goods. When I was in France, they were talking about home ownership becoming a different thing in Europe. People were buying their homes, or not choosing to buy a home, because they were travelling and doing things of that sort. I met a person who actually doesn't live in her home. She has a mortgage that other people are paying because she rents it out all the time and she travels for work.

What do you see happening on that, and how can that impact women in a positive way?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** The reality is that there's a giant gender wage gap out there. Women are just less wealthy. Those types of alternatives provide an easier way to fund where you live, or to fund having a car or sharing a car and all these different things.

If you go into these shared spaces where people are working nowadays, as opposed to having offices, I think we're seeing a lot of female entrepreneurs in those areas as well. It brings down the overall cost to fund your business, certainly, or to fund your life effectively too. Once you have children, you tend to be stuck in one location, though, so those benefits sort of go away.

One earlier point that I would pick up on in terms of funding for female entrepreneurs is that I spent two years in the venture capital industry. It's a massive problem. Only 4% of venture capital goes to female entrepreneurs. We need to think about that. A big part of the reason is that all of the partners in venture capital firms are men. They don't get the pitches that are coming in. I have seen them. They don't get it. They say, “I'll go home and ask my wife what she thinks.”

That's not the way we should allocate money. The government is giving money to all of these funds that I just mentioned. You need to think about where that government money is going, and whether you have any sort of diversity requirements around where the funding then goes to in the economy.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Excellent. Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

We go now to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thanks, Chair.

To Jane Stinson, I want to pick up your theme of saying very forcefully that there are structural barriers to women participating in the economy and that this is not just about women's choice.

I'm elected in British Columbia, and even getting to employment opportunities is a very strong theme in my own riding of Nanaimo—Ladysmith. People from the Stz'uminus reserve don't have any public transit. They can't get to the jobs that are there. It's especially tragically evident in northern B.C., in relation to the Highway of Tears. Women are hitchhiking, and our indigenous women particularly are killed.

Then we also have the problem in urban centres, where particularly we hear that women with disabilities who don't have accessible public transit cannot physically get to the jobs that are there.

Can you talk about this government focusing its investment more on public transit to give women the full opportunity to be participants in the workforce?

● (1025)

**Ms. Jane Stinson:** Yes.

It was surprising to me in our research on changing public services that public transportation came up as frequently as it did as a public service that women rely on. Perhaps that's because I wasn't thinking. If you think about it, it's particularly people who have lower incomes who use public transit, because they can't afford their own cars. Women have lower incomes, so it's not surprising.

It's interesting, though, and I think about how it's changed. I've been doing some work recently on the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. It's the 50th anniversary this year. Public transit was not an issue that was raised then, but it is now. It is a big issue, for some of the reasons that you mentioned.

Through our work in the Feminist Northern Network, another research project that CRIAW was involved in, certainly in the north the absence of public transit in northern communities is a major problem. It puts women at risk, as you mentioned. The Highway of Tears is perhaps the most shocking example, but I'm sure it's not alone; it's just better known. In lots of cases in the north women have to hitchhike, as do others, to get around.

In urban locations, our research in Ottawa showed that it was very serious. It was accessibility, and that meant cost—the cost was too high for people—and also lack of schedules, and sometimes where the routes went.

Again, there's a responsibility with the federal government, even in local transportation. It's a question of transfers. So much is downloaded to municipalities with so few resources that transit is something that they continue to cut.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I'm going to switch gears to other witnesses and then hope to come back.

To Rosalind Lockyer, in my riding of Nanaimo–Ladysmith, we have a lot of new immigrant women in our community, which should be great for our economy. However, we are hearing that their language skills are a barrier to entering the workforce. I'm interested in hearing more about language training that we could bring to support that as a federal government, to remove that barrier to immigrant women's economic success.

I'd also like to hear your thoughts about whether you've found that the foreign credential regulations and work visas are contributing to the economic insecurity of immigrant women, even though these women are often very highly trained and very well qualified to fill gaps in our labour force.

**Ms. Rosalind Lockyer:** Language is a barrier. Language is a barrier if you're a francophone woman and you're living in an English community. Many immigrant women coming in are francophone, and they seem to fare better. I think this illustrates the fact that if the language barrier is not there, they can move forward more quickly. Recognition of their experience and their work credentials is the biggest barrier that immigrant women have when they come into the country. Then it's being able to move forward in a way that they can get some experience.

I can give you an example. My executive assistant, Fabiola, is a young woman from Mexico. She's also an engineer. I said to her, “Faby, what can we do as an employer to make this job a job that will be good for you?” She went right to the child care, and told me that if she had flexibility to be with her children when they needed her, she wouldn't consider herself to be underemployed. She said, “I want this job because I want the same kind of experience that I will get at the PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise.” I've provided what she wants, and she's provided what I need.

I think that's what we need to get out to the workforce: hire immigrant women. Hire them. Give them a chance. Their language skills will improve. I mean, Faby right now is trilingual. Her first language is Spanish, she's learned French since arriving, and her English is not bad.

We're moving forward, and that's just one example.

● (1030)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** My time is short, so I'll move on here to Jane Stinson.

I very much appreciated your focus on gender-based analysis, on publicly asking the federal government to use a gendered lens to ensure that public services are sufficiently funded. I'd like to hear more about the impact on women's economic security if the government does not consider the consequences of its spending and its policies on women.

**Ms. Jane Stinson:** I think it continues to roll us backwards and it increases the gap of inequality, with women being the ones who suffer more. It's clear that public services have been good jobs for women, have paid well, have had benefits. That is being eroded. There's now research that shows that precarious public sector employees are far less likely to have benefit coverage and pension coverage and that they have less control over their work schedules, with fewer hours generally. The federal government as a source of good jobs, then, is becoming eroded. That increases women's poverty and inequality.

It's so clear that women rely on many public services federally, provincially, and locally. Adequate funding and transfers to provinces are absolutely essential.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Very good.

We'll go to Mr. Fraser for seven minutes, please.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Thank you very much.

Let me start by saying thank you. I thought it was awesome, every minute of your testimony, and I really appreciate your being here.

Ms. Lockyer and Ms. Carruthers, you each spoke about the need to potentially expand EI benefits, specifically to reflect eligibility for people who may work in non-traditional sectors or people who may be self-employed. I think that's fantastic. One of the issues I have, in terms of finding the right mechanism, is that I don't view EI to be the government's money. Instead, it's the money of those who pay into the fund.

Is there a different way to achieve the same social outcome that you guys have discussed without giving to other members of the community the money that certain people have paid in ?

**Ms. Valerie Carruthers:** I think there are a couple of things here. One, when it comes to looking at part II, which is the funded training part, that particular pot of money doesn't come from contributions. I think this is something that really needs to be revisited in terms of who can access it, who can be funded, who can apply to actually transition into the labour market. Where are the needs? Why does it have to come from that particular pot?

I think that's a really practical way to do that. It won't cost the government any money. It's just deciding where it belongs.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Sure.

Ms. Lockyer, do you have a comment?

**Ms. Rosalind Lockyer:** Yes. I think that self-employed people don't trust that if they pay in, they will be able to claim. That's what has been shown to them over the years. There needs to be a clear way for them to understand that if they pay in this much on an ongoing basis, and they need to put in a claim, they will actually be able to get a return. I think once that's there...and I think it's really important. I don't think the government realizes what's coming down the tube, with automation and so on, and the number of people who will choose self-employment. If they can't get sick leave or maternity leave and their business has to close.... I mean, people don't close their business and go bankrupt by choice. If that happens, they need the security of those social systems.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I appreciate the need for certainty.

Ms. Reynolds, I want to hit a couple of issues with you.

One of the words that you used that jumped out at me when you were talking about board representation was “perspective”. I know that at home when I was a kid, when people talked about diversity, we thought they were talking about Protestants, and when I come to Ottawa now, the room isn't filled with people who look like me, and it's great, and it changes the conversation that we have dramatically.

One of the things you talked about the federal government being able to do was to introduce some sort of transparency. You mentioned the Lord Davies initiative they had in the U.K. Should this be a legislative requirement for transparency that we should sort of foist upon the private sector and say, “This is going to lead to great social outcomes, so we're going to require by law that you do it,” or is there a better mechanism that we could introduce?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** I think comply or explain is that middle point. It's saying that we're putting this on the table in front of you and on the agenda, but we're letting you pick your own targets. We're letting you deal with diversity in your own time schedule. If you're a mining company and you're nowhere on diversity, we're going to let you pick that schedule. However, if companies continue to do nothing, we're kind of forced to do something, because if they're just going to do nothing, then we do have to look at it.

That's the changing tone, I will tell you, because when we first started this dialogue around comply or explain three and a half years ago, the idea of quotas was abhorrent, and now I keep hearing the word “quotas” more and more often. Corporate Canada does not want to go the way of quotas, I promise you that. There is no question about that, but I do think there are interim steps between that and where we're at today. If we don't see any uptake on comply or explain and if people aren't adopting policies and they're not setting targets for themselves, we need to encourage them in some way to do that. Is it that you say to them that they have to have a policy or that they have to have a target? Those types of interim points between where we are today and a quota are good ways to sort of push things forward.

The other thing about the gender wage gap and gender representation is that many countries are saying—generally for larger companies, because there's an expense associated with it—that they have to disclose the gender numbers at different levels and the gender wage gap at different levels. We're seeing a lot of tech companies in the U.S., such as Salesforce, actually taking it upon themselves to do this. That's another mechanism the government has to expose it, because the gender wage gap is a good proxy for where we're at in terms of women in leadership in the corporate world.

Those are a few different ways you can get at that.

● (1035)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** To follow up that issue about the gender gap at different levels, my background was primarily in the private sector in a standard big law firm, and that was the number one issue I saw facing that industry. Every year they would hire 15 to 20 articling students in our office, and every year there would be four or five partners, and maybe one of them would be a woman. We were bleeding talent at the mid-levels, and we're talking about people who were at the top of their class in respective law schools across Canada.

I'm not 100% sure what the reasons were. I'm sure there are hundreds you could come up with, but it seemed as though the business development opportunities were based around beer over a hockey game and it seemed as though the social networks outside of working hours were a very big deal.

Do you see other things being obstacles that are keeping women from making that partnership level? Are there things the federal government could potentially do, aside from the transparency issue, to help women take that next step in the private sector?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** I think the legal profession is the perfect example, because it has had fifty-fifty intake at the junior levels for two and a half or three decades now, and yet women are not making it to partners. In the legal industry, typically the partner level has about 20% women.

You mentioned a few of the things that are happening. Part of it is that sales cycle and where it happens and how business is developed, but I don't think that is the key problem. I think there's a lot of the unconscious bias piece that I was talking about: how work is allocated in a law firm, who gets the best deals, who gets access to the best clients, and who gets the sponsorship from the key partners. That's how you make partner. You have to be good at what you do—that's table stakes—but those relationships are critical in advancing to partner. I think that happens quite often.

I think there is certainly the issue of family and what happens when you're having a family. One of my firm recommendations is that when you think about parental leave, think about how you're going to get men to actually take parental leave. First of all, let's have very progressive policies around that, because until we remove that, that's a key barrier for women. Until men start taking parental leave, that's a barrier in the corporate world for women. There's a huge stigma for both men and women around it. I think if, from a policy perspective, there are ways to encourage men to take that leave, it will have a huge impact.

There was actually a good research report done by EY and the Peterson Institute for International Economics that showed there was a correlation between men taking paternity leave and the proportion of women in leadership. However, there was no correlation between the length of maternity leave, or maternity leave policies, and women in leadership, so that's something we as a country really need to think about. Other Scandinavian countries are really thinking about that.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I wish I had a half day with you guys. Thanks very much.

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

We've got time for one more little question period of five minutes with Mr. Waugh.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh (Saskatoon—Grasswood, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Why should we reinvent some of these wheels? Is there a country out there doing something that we can pick up on and adopt as a gender policy? Is one country ahead of everyone else? Is there one area?

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** Not in every area. Iceland has the lowest gender wage gap, for instance. It also has a very high proportion of women in politics, and that's changed in recent years, in particular since 2008. Scandinavia is much further ahead on the whole board issue, and particularly on parental leave policies. When I was talking about those policies earlier, those are the countries where you've seen models and you've seen that correlation between better numbers of women in leadership.

I wouldn't say there's a country out there that has solved every problem when it comes to gender diversity, but the ones I mentioned are the ones that tend to be doing a bit better. New Zealand's done very well on the gender wage gap as well.

It's sad to me that Canada.... That study I mentioned earlier was a study on gender diversity in corporate leadership. Of 92 countries, Canada was in the bottom 10. It's a big problem.

● (1040)

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Work hours are changing. It's eight to four, nine to five, but that's really changing now. We're seeing in our workforces in this country that you do lots of work from home. Can that be a major change as we go forward? I'm thinking of what you were saying, Ms. Lockyer.

**Ms. Rosalind Lockyer:** I think flexibility in the workplace is key to our moving forward, because the whole way we work is changing. This is where I think women would come in with the innovation word. Having good systems whereby people work at home but there's still accountability to the employer would make a big difference for women, because often women choose self-employment, for example, just to have that flexibility to care for their children or their elders.

**Ms. Jane Stinson:** If I may, I think it's really important that we not see working at home as a solution for women to manage paid work and child care. If any of you have ever tried it—I know I have—you know it's really hard to do both. You're not giving your kids the attention they need or you're not giving your job the attention it needs, and you get put in the middle, pulled in two different directions, so that's definitely not the answer.

I'd argue that even the move toward self-employment has created more inequality in our society. Some people benefit well, but I think if we look at the numbers, many people are struggling to make a decent income when they're self-employed, and especially young people.

**Ms. Jennifer Reynolds:** Some research has been done, and flexibility does impact retention. Flexibility does not positively impact women moving into leadership. I think the message is you might keep them because they're working, they're happy, and they want that flexibility. I know I do; I have children, and that helps a lot, but you still have to make sure there's no stigma along with that in the corporate world. If I take it, then I'm not really giving everything in my job, and then I'm not going to get promoted.

I think women tend to get stuck in middle management for a bunch of different reasons, but potentially that's one of them. It's part of the solution, but it needs to come with a bunch of other things changing.

**Mr. Kevin Waugh:** Yes, those are all good points.

I think we're running out of time here.

**The Chair:** Yes.

I want to thank all the witnesses today for your excellent contributions and I want to leave you on a moment of hope, because I'm the first female engineer in the House of Commons. I was on corporate boards and I'm now a woman in politics, so it can be done. We just need to do more.

Thanks for your help.

The meeting is adjourned.