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Chair: Ms. Marilyn Gladu





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• (1100)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** Welcome, everybody, to meeting number 19 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Today we are continuing our study on unpaid work.

We're lucky to have with us today, from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, Jacqueline Neapole, who is the executive director, and from the International Labour Organization, Laura Addati, who is a policy specialist for women's economic empowerment.

Each of our witnesses will have five minutes to make their opening remarks, and then we'll go into our round of questions, where today we are upgrading to use the 30-second warning. When people come to the end of their talking time, I will gently and kindly cut them off.

With that, we will start with Jacqueline.

You have five minutes.

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole (Executive Director, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women):** Thank you for inviting me to contribute to this committee's very important study on women's unpaid labour, on behalf of the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, CRIAW-ICREF.

CRIAW-ICREF is a national not-for-profit women's organization founded in 1976. We conduct and support feminist research and analysis on women's social and economic situation in Canada, using an intersectional approach in all our work.

Obviously, the issue of women's unpaid labour is not new. Even going back 50 years to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, this has been an ongoing issue, raised then and over many decades by feminists in Canada.

Unpaid work takes place in and out of the home and includes all the activities people do to look after each other and manage their household, such as caregiving, looking after children and other family and household members, dependent adults and seniors, and other related domestic work such as cooking, cleaning and laundry.

This unpaid labour continues also out in the community and does not just include women with children. Senior women also provide a significant amount of this unpaid labour as volunteers in their community, as well as assisting others with care, such as the unpaid care of grandchildren, their spouses, partners and friends. We often look at seniors as needing care, but senior women provide a signifi-

cant amount of unpaid labour. Women by and large provide the bulk of this unpaid labour, which supports the economy and fills the necessary gaps in social services and infrastructure.

The problem is the unequal distribution, intensity, lack of recognition and lack of choice. That is what undermines the rights of women.

Pre-pandemic, in 2015, 25% of women reported caring for children as the main reason for working part time, compared to 3.3% of men. Now, a recent study, which was conducted during the pandemic, found that the average mother in Canada spent 13.5 hours per day on child care in late April and early June 2020. This also includes women who reported being employed full time. Those were the averages, and that was just the child care aspect of unpaid labour.

When you look at the case of single mothers especially during the pandemic, you are looking at 24 hours a day for weeks on end with no other options. It was a heavy load before the pandemic.

The impacts are clear. On one side, this unpaid care work is so intensive that some women remain out of the paid labour force to be at home, while others move in and out of the paid labour force to accommodate this unpaid labour. Many women take jobs that minimize conflict with unpaid responsibilities and work part time. This has long-term impacts for women throughout their lives and has a significant impact on senior women's pensions and financial security.

Women have increased their participation in the paid workforce for decades. Despite this, women continue to provide a disproportionate amount of unpaid labour. There has not been a significant redistribution of this labour.

Women also face significant health challenges related to stress and burnout. For many women, in order to participate in the paid workforce, unpaid labour is done as a second shift, or even a third shift for some women.

For some women, unpaid labour can be offset by paying others to do it, predominantly other women. Black women, immigrant women and other racialized women are overrepresented in the paid sector. They're extremely low-paid jobs and very precarious. Valuing unpaid labour requires evaluation of paid care labour. They are interconnected issues.

There are also very real financial barriers limiting the ability of women to transfer or offset their unpaid labour. It is a false choice for many women, especially women who have low income, to basically contract out this unpaid labour.

It has been well documented that the lack of social infrastructure intensifies women's unpaid labour. In the absence of publicly funded options, these are very real financial barriers for women in paying for this labour, not to mention that in cases where there is insufficient infrastructure, people's lives literally depend on unpaid labour. We see this right now. Many aspects of our social infrastructure are inadequately resourced. For example, many long-term care residents relied on family members to provide supplemental unpaid care labour.

COVID has perhaps shown more clearly how our society as a whole relies on this labour. In fact, it keeps our society afloat. However, while it may be unpaid labour, it comes at a very large cost in the lives of women.

This is not for free. The state needs to shoulder its fair share of this responsibility. This can be remedied by ensuring that there are strong universal public services and that workers, predominantly women, are well compensated.

I'll end there.

Thank you.

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

Laura, we'll go to you now for five minutes.

**Ms. Laura Addati (Policy Specialist, Women's Economic Empowerment, International Labour Organization):** I would like to thank the committee for this opportunity to share with you the findings of our research on this topic.

We hope it will contribute to transformative policies in Canada, as the leading champion for gender equality at home and in foreign policy.

You have some slides that I prepared. I prepared a presentation of more than five minutes, so I will try to summarize to complement the beautiful presentation that Ms. Neapole just shared.

The report uses a comprehensive definition of care work including unpaid activities for the household and the community, and paid work that we define as care employment, which is care workers providing care work for pay or profit.

The innovation of this report is that we tried to analyze how unpaid work impacts gender equality in the labour market. Learning more about and measuring unpaid care work can tell us about the persisting and stubborn gender inequality at work and how to address it.

What's really innovative is that the concept of unpaid care work is based on a new international labour standard that typifies unpaid caregiving and domestic services for household and family members as a new form of work. This is from the ILO. Unpaid care work is work. It represents a crucial dimension in the world of work. What we measure matters. It's part of this process that we want to further recognize its value and make unpaid care work a key part of decision-making.

The ILO has made estimates of the extent of unpaid care work. It represents 16.4 billion hours, which is equivalent to two billion people working eight hours per day with no remuneration. We gave a value to this work and applied methodologies that would pay this work an hourly minimum wage. It would represent 9% of the GDP globally and 26% of the GDP in Canada, with women making up almost two-thirds of the total unpaid hours.

We find there has been some progress in men's contribution to unpaid care work. Actually, Canada is performing relatively well compared to the countries for which we have data. Men's contribution has been improving, but based on labour force survey data in 2010, there is still a 10% gender gap in unpaid care work. Effort is still needed there.

The persisting inequalities in unpaid care work have direct impacts on inequality in the labour market. We also found that unpaid care work is the main barrier to women's participation in the labour market globally.

Also, there is an employment penalty for mothers living with young children. We can look at the situation in Canada to see there is still what we call the parenthood employment gap, which is the difference between the employment-to-population ratios of mothers and fathers. This gap was still 20 percentage points in 2018. Meanwhile, the gap is only four percentage points for women and men who live without young children. As we heard already, this results in a motherhood pay penalty, which directly impacts the gender pay gap. There is also a leadership penalty, with mothers being underrepresented in the number of managers and leaders. Meanwhile, we see a consistent fatherhood premium in employment, wages and leadership.

One important result of the process which, in 2019, culminated in the adoption of the ILO centenary declaration for the future of work was a call for investing in the care economy. It means putting public and private investment in transformative care policies. This pays off in terms of labour force participation, health—

• (1105)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Laura. We're at the end of your time, so we're going to go to the first round of questions.

Ms. Wong, please go ahead for six minutes.

**Hon. Alice Wong (Richmond Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to both presenters.

First, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of both of your organizations nationally in Canada and internationally. I have read part of the report which the ILO produced and I was really impressed by the 500-plus pages. It provides a very good overview, evaluation and excellent recommendations. I'm glad that Laura is with us this morning.

For the other research work by Ms. Neapole, CRIAW highlights the importance of care service and recognizes the value of unpaid care work.

My question is related to productivity and is directed to both of you.

You both talk about the impact of unpaid care work in the economy and the caregiving economy. You mention the definition of care economy and care sector. Both of you have already said it very clearly.

What do you think the government should do to help these women balance their paid work and their unpaid work. Also what about their future? For example, you mentioned pensions.

• (1110)

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** I didn't get to my clear recommendations. One very significant thing that can be done is to implement a national, universal, publicly funded child care system. That is one huge thing that can be done, and it would help women in two ways.

First, women could access child care without financial barriers, so they wouldn't have to be making a choice. It would be available. It wouldn't be a financial barrier for women to access it, regardless of their income.

Second, it would also help the women working in the child care sector to have better wages. Right now they're very precarious workers. They are underpaid. Having a national, universal, publicly funded child care system would be a big thing. Child Care Now, a Canadian organization, has a clear plan for that. It's endorsed by over a hundred, probably, women's organizations and other civil society organizations on how to do this and how to ensure that it's barrier-free.

**Hon. Alice Wong:** What about ILO? Are there any recommendations from you?

**Ms. Laura Addati:** To complement that point, the report puts a lot of emphasis on carrying out a microeconomic simulation to estimate, should countries really be serious in meeting the UN sustainable development goals in terms of health, education, gender equal-

ity and decent work, the creation of decent care jobs. What it would take to deal with all the current care deficits in terms of child care and health care? The pandemic has been such a magnifier of this care deficit, in terms of social work and long-term care.

We did this exercise and found that taking a high-road approach, so meeting care needs and creating good jobs by 2030, which is when countries have to meet the sustainable development goals, will result in the creation of millions of jobs. We estimated that 120 direct jobs and almost 150 indirect jobs would be generated by investing in education, health and social work.

We also have specific data for Canada. Should Canada take a high-road approach with the care economy, this would result in the creation of almost four million jobs in this sector. When we think about what it will take to create all of these good jobs in the care economy, we know there could be a lot of fiscal recovery from this enormous investment which is needed. That is good news. If countries are really serious in filling the care gaps for the elderly and for children, this is what it takes, doubling the investment and achieving the sustainable development goals.

• (1115)

**Hon. Alice Wong:** My next question is related to the multicultural mosaic of Canada. As we all know, our country has been enriched by people joining us from all over the world, as you can witness from our committee. Very strong women among us have different cultural backgrounds.

In what ways, if any—

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, Alice, that's your time.

**Hon. Alice Wong:** Maybe you can comment on that later.

**The Chair:** Thanks.

We're going now to Ms. Zahid for six minutes.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thanks to both witnesses for your important input on this important study that we are doing on unpaid work.

My first question is for Ms. Neapole.

Thank you for your opening remarks. Your organization has emphasized for a very long time the need to apply an intersectional lens to the challenges facing women in Canada. This is an approach that our government has also taken with the adoption of the GBA+ methodology across government.

When you apply an intersectional lens to the issues of women's unpaid work, are there relevant statistics you can share with this committee? Also, does the data lead you to recommendations for what governments can do to specifically address the challenges faced by groups such as minority women, racialized women and indigenous women?

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** Thank you for that question.

I do think it's important that we look at this using an intersectional lens, because often when we're looking at women entering the paid workforce and at that aspect, we're looking at some women. Some women can afford to pay for care, but that's on the backs of other women. We see, with the intersectional data, that it is on the backs of some of the most marginalized women in Canada, the most precariously low-paid women, and often Black women, racialized women and immigrant women.

That's why I think we need to look at things holistically. We can't just look at unpaid care. We need to look at how we deal with the paid care, because shouldering that burden are some of the most marginalized women in Canada. In fact, women working in the care sector are those women who are doing the double and triple shifts. They can't afford to pay someone else to take up some of their unpaid labour. Those are the women working on the front lines, right, working as personal support workers and working as child care workers. That's why I think that if we're going to really look at unpaid care, we need to look at it holistically, using an intersectional lens, so that we really do relieve this burden for all women.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Are there any specific recommendations you would have for our government to look into?

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** Yes. Another one that I would say broadly speaks to some of what Laura brought up, too, is that I really think we need to have federal funds transferred to the provinces for health in addition to child care. A publicly funded child care system would actually raise the wages of some of the most marginalized women workers in that sector. We know that a lot of them are immigrant women and racialized women.

That's one thing, but I think that holistically we need to look at the care economy and who is working in that sector, and we really need to invest in it. We can't keep having it be on the backs of these other women, who are the most marginalized women—low income—when we know how essential this work is. I think it needs to be for long-term care workers and for care for people with disabilities, for that whole sector, whether it's in the community or through different institutions.

We have to strengthen our health infrastructure and close the gaps on care, because we know, as I've said, that some of the most marginalized women workers are working in the care sector, and they cannot even afford to pay for care for their family members.

I wish I had—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you for that. I will go to my next question.

As you would know, today our government is hosting the second day of Canada's feminist response and recovery summit, bringing together experts and community leaders with lived experience to examine how the COVID-19 crisis is impacting the lives of women

in Canada. Yesterday, on International Women's Day, we also created a task force on women in the economy to advise the government on a feminist intersectional action plan that addresses issues of gender equality in the wake of this pandemic.

What would you advise them to focus on and what would be your recommendations to the government to ensure that women, including those from often marginalized groups, are not left behind by the economic recovery?

• (1120)

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** I really think it needs to focus on the fact that these gaps existed before COVID. While COVID really exposed this in maybe more of a collective way, and there was a collective reckoning with COVID, there were already gaps, really awful gaps in a lot of women's lives before. I don't think it's simply a matter of getting back to normal, because normal wasn't working. It wasn't working for many, many women. Maybe in individual lives, in different women's lives it is, but I think we've seen from COVID that there was a huge gap before; there is a huge gap now, and we need to create something better.

I firmly believe that means investing in public services, because we know that doing that helps women. That really helps diverse women be able to live the dignified lives that we want in Canada. I think it is also part of Canada's identity that we feel that we take care of each other. We need to live up to that.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I think my time is up.

**The Chair:** Exactly.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Larouche, you have six minutes.

**Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'd also like to thank the two very interesting witnesses who are with us this morning.

Ms. Addati and Ms. Neapole, your two organizations do essential analytical work on invisible work. This is all the more important because today is March 9, the day after International Women's Day. I think it was pointed out on that day that the pandemic has exacerbated the issue of invisible work and mental burden.

Ms. Neapole, you talked about the situation of women, particularly senior women, who do invisible work. Could you tell us why senior women are in such a precarious financial situation? You had started to talk about it. Perhaps they haven't saved enough over the course of their lives.

Could you tell us a little more about this? Of course, Ms. Addati can weigh in if she has anything to add.

[*English*]

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** Thank you.

I think the reason this impacts senior women is that if they have been working part time or not working in the paid workforce for a lot of those years, they do not have a sufficient pension. Even CPP with all of these things like OAS and GIS is very difficult to live off of. If you've been out of the paid workforce performing unpaid care for many decades, the impacts on you as a senior woman are going to be far worse, especially if you are a single senior woman. That's one thing.

The other side of that is that we're seeing the gaps in unpaid care. A lot of women actually rely on their mothers to take care of their children because they cannot afford to pay for child care, for example. You have the financial implications for senior women of a lifetime of being underemployed or unemployed in the paid workforce, but also we're seeing more and more that a lot of working-age women rely on their mothers to provide that unpaid care.

I hope that answers your question.

**Ms. Laura Addati:** I may complement this excellent point because that really gave the diagnosis of the issue.

I would mention that there are countries that are trying to tackle this issue by, for instance, providing pension credits for years of unpaid care work, so trying to reflect that in how pensions are calculated, to recognize and take those years into account. The same is also provided to men, to recognize also the unpaid care that men provide. Grandfathers in their later years may also have those years taken into account, which promotes men's participation in unpaid care work.

Also keep in mind the importance of having those non-contributory pensions at a level that really provides dignity in old age. They are a really important way to recognize those who haven't been in the labour force and who have not been able to contribute to the social security system or have a contributory pension. Keeping in mind the importance of a decent pension system is essential.

Other countries, for instance, also shape their parental leave systems or child care benefits to recognize the contribution of grandparents. Sometimes it is also possible to transfer leave or child care benefits to grandfathers or to, effectively, carers who may be other family members. If they are the caregivers, as is the reality in many countries, their unpaid work can be recognized.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** You've made some suggestions to help senior women and improve their situation. You both talk about an adequate pension plan. Perhaps some more appropriate tax credits would recognize what they do. Ultimately, it's also a savings. You mentioned earlier what that might mean in Canada in terms of GDP. It's a matter of really including it and taking it into account. Could we recognize, in economic terms, the importance of what they do?

Finally, we need to provide more funding for our health care systems and ensure that transfers are made properly so that Quebec and the provinces, which manage their health care systems, can of-

fer more choice to caregivers who do invisible work. We must therefore better fund our health care systems and recognize the work of female caregivers, in economic terms, in relation to GDP. Both of those initiatives would be very important.

Both witnesses can respond.

[*English*]

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** Go ahead, Laura.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Laura Addati:** Yes, absolutely. The purpose of our study was to see how we could also take into account the care of seniors and those living with disabilities. That is part of this study.

In fact, the message we want to convey is that long-term care, in particular, and care—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, but your time is up.

[*English*]

We have Ms. Mathysen for six minutes now.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Thank you so much.

My first question is for you, Ms. Neapole.

I'm very grateful that you raised very clearly the need for a universal, fully publicly funded, affordable child care system. It's something that I have been working for, and the New Democrats have been talking about, for a very long time.

One of the things we've heard is that the government, after 23 years, again has promised that national child care system, and they have provided some funding, so I'll recognize that.

However, within organizations that you mentioned, such as Child Care Now and all of those stakeholders, experts within the field of child care have said that in order to get to a place where they can provide adequate child care, they need \$2.5 billion immediately, \$10 billion over five years. They need a national child care act, a piece of legislation that's put into effect to provide national standards across the board to create that universal child care system fairly in every province.

Could you talk about the impacts? The government has given some money, but it hasn't given those full amounts, and what does that mean to implementing that national child care system?

● (1130)

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** I think the challenge is that we have to go all in. If we value this and we believe that a national, universal, publicly funded child care system is what we want, we have to go all in and put the money there. We have to create a strong foundation for this system. It's been a hodgepodge of funding and a market-based approach. There are all sorts of different types of child care going on in Canada in the absence of a strong, universal, publicly funded system.

If we really value this, and we know that we do, I think we have to realize we have to invest in this and view this as an investment in not just women and women's rights but also in our children. All children should be able to access quality child care. I would say that a publicly funded system would mean that it's not just affordable but it's free because it's publicly funded.

We really have to go all in is how I would put it.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** The lack of this full implementation would mean that we will continue on the path we are on now in terms of not having what truly women need. Is that what you're saying?

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** Yes. I think that if we are still underfunding what we know needs to be funded, it will still be a mish-mash of market-based spots. Maybe there will be more subsidized care; there could be more spaces that are freed up. However, it will not be the national system that we want.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Thank you so much.

Madam Addati, for the last 10 years the ILO has had domestic workers convention No. 189 on its books. Canada has not ratified that convention, which looks at the unpaid work and realities that you have so wonderfully brought to our attention today.

Can you maybe talk about governments who have ratified 189, the benefits that women have seen because of that ratification, and why Canada hasn't ratified, or why Canada should ratify, 189?

**Ms. Laura Addati:** If we look at the G7 countries, in one of the latest publications we are promoting around International Women's Day, we can see that, for instance, Italy and Germany are among those who ratified this convention in 2013. A number of countries have, around 35 overall in different regions, including low- and middle-income countries. The benefits are multiple. We have been observing that the fact that countries and legislation don't recognize domestic workers as workers is really the result of a lack of recognition of unpaid care work, work that is considered feminine and that women by nature are able to perform. This translates to how we undervalue workers in care jobs, including domestic work. It also brings in all the issues of intersectionality and migration.

It's really valuing and granting these workers the same rights, which is what the convention is calling for, and treating them like other workers. It recognizes their work as deserving the same labour rights and the same social protection rights. It goes hand in hand with recognizing the value of care work and guaranteeing the protection of the most vulnerable care workers. As well, given the fact that the occupation of domestic worker is highly feminized, we are recognizing that we are providing decent work to a large majority of vulnerable women.

There are a lot of benefits. It's really up to the countries to take up the challenge that can wait no longer.

**The Chair:** Thank you. That's your time.

We're into our second round of questions now.

Ms. Shin, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Nelly Shin (Port Moody—Coquitlam, CPC):** Thank you so much, ladies, for informing us today on this very important topic.

What I keep hearing over and over, even in the last statement, is the sense that there is a lack of dignity given to these domestic and caregiving roles. There are cycles created by that. One of those cycles is especially speaking about some cultures where they would prefer to have a family member care for their children or elders in their family. Usually they're women, such as a sister, a mother or a grandmother.

We know that socio-economically right now seniors live longer. They also work later in life. What happens in practice is that an aunt, for example, who is unemployed at a certain time picks up the gap and provides caregiving, or a grandmother who could potentially work does this as a favour because she loves her family.

Is there a way in which family members who are providing caregiving could be fairly acknowledged and compensated in a creative way? What are some ways in which those kinds of roles can be duly compensated and recognized so that we don't repeat the cycle of what the woman of the family was doing and just passing it over to some other family member to repeat that cycle? Do you have any thoughts on how that could be dealt with?

That question is for anybody.

• (1135)

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** I was going to say that Laura kind of touched on this and she could probably touch more on how other countries are dealing with this, but I do think that pension credits are important. I do think we should value this as work.

I think there are two things going on here. We do need to make sure, though, that there are publicly funded options available. It's sometimes hard to know if people are choosing these options, because in the absence of other choices.... Of course we love our kids. I have a son and I love him. But in the absence of choice, it's hard to know if people are choosing this or if they are choosing it because they do care about the well-being of their children and grandchildren or their nieces and nephews.

Maybe Laura could speak more to some of the pension credits, or the different ways in which this can be valued and that have been effective.

**Ms. Laura Addati:** We have examples of this in a number of European countries, and we documented it in the report. I think it's an important thing for family members and for grandparents.

I also spoke about the transferability of child care leave and benefits. It's a possibility. I really would like to emphasize Jacqueline's point on choice. We know, for instance, from a study in Italy, about the consequences of the increase of the minimum pension age which suddenly jumped to 67 years. For a number of parents, caregiving was not an option anymore, because they had to work. There was a sort of trade-off between losing years of contributions to meet the new pensionable age and providing the care that their daughters and sons needed. Families were facing this unacceptable choice. We have to really emphasize the importance of having a choice for families of public, quality child care systems and enabling parents and grandparents. How and how much?

There is also a matter of providing a few hours per week. On being the main caregiver, that solution for a family can be bothersome for aging parents with the responsibility and the mental load. We heard about that. It should not be taken for granted, so we have to also take that into account.

**Ms. Nelly Shin:** Thank you. I appreciate those responses.

On a similar note, what are some ways the lack of dignity given to these kinds of roles could be improved culturally?

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** I think that this is—

**The Chair:** Unfortunately, that's the time for that question.

Now we're going to Ms. Dhillon for five minutes.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon (Dorval—Lachine—LaSalle, Lib.):** Good morning, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

I would like to start with Ms. Addati.

You spoke about the sustainable development goals. I found it interesting, but because of a lack of time, you couldn't finish your testimony. Would you please elaborate on how we can best integrate these into our own system to optimize the respect of these goals and at the same time achieve the goal, which is to ensure equality when it comes to pay for women?

Thank you.

• (1140)

**Ms. Laura Addati:** In our simulation study, we looked at the targets that the international community has established for not only low-income but also high-income countries to meet by 2030 in terms of coverage of health care services, the number of teachers in early childhood education and the quality of jobs.

You will find a number in our research under the methodology. We are trying to integrate this target and trying to come up with the existing care needs in terms of the demographic projection of the population but also in terms of filling the number, for instance, of doctors who would be needed to meet those sustainable development goals, the teacher-to-student ratio in schools and child care facilities and providing a wage that is adequate with the level of qualification of health care workers, aides, child care aides, personal workers and assisted living workers.

There are all these elements in care needs which, if we are really serious, all countries, including high-income countries, have the responsibility to deliver. Also, if we want to prevent the COVID crisis that has generated what we have seen over this month from happening again, we really have to go all in with the sustainable development goals.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** That was going to be my next question.

Could you tell us how other countries and ourselves here in Canada, because we have to go with our own Canadian reality as well, if God forbid there's another pandemic or another crisis such as this, how we can prevent women from being the most disadvantaged group, the most vulnerable people? If it comes to senior women, the LGBTQ community, racialized women, how do we make sure that women don't become as disadvantaged as they are right now with this pandemic? How do we protect them in the future?

**Ms. Laura Addati:** Yes, I think the task force was mentioned. It would be important that this is being created for the COVID pandemic. It's important to prioritize the representation of women and of all the groups that have an important stake in how we want to shape the recovery and the resilience after the crisis.

A recent study by the UN has shown the representation of women on the COVID task force has been marginal. This speaks to the importance of incorporating care in decision-making. If we want this to matter, it should be at the heart of big decisions on how to spend recovery packages, how to build a future that takes the interests and the needs of this population into account. It starts by making these people's voices heard when big decisions are taken.

Let's beware that austerity doesn't kick in after the pandemic has been solved, that we go back to the suffering and the job cuts and reduced working conditions we have been experiencing over these years.

**Ms. Anju Dhillon:** Thank you for your perspective.

**The Chair:** Now we'll move to Madam Larouche.

You have two and half minutes.

• (1145)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

During my last intervention, Ms. Addati was interrupted when she was going to talk about the long-term care study, so I would let her continue. Otherwise, I'd like to go back to Convention No. 189 as a tool to recognize invisible work. Perhaps both witnesses could comment on the importance of recognizing invisible work in Canada.

For example, in 2010, a Bloc Qu b cois member moved a motion on a day to recognize invisible work.

How could this kind of recognition tool improve the situation of those who do invisible work and who suffer the mental burden associated with it?

**Ms. Laura Addati:** There are very creative ways to recognize invisible work. In the report, we tried to incorporate the value of unpaid work into the calculation of GDP. It may be a bit of a mechanical exercise, but I think it can be done seriously. There are a lot of countries, especially in Latin America, that have tried to do this. So it could be done seriously and systematically.

Now we're talking about the green economy and how to get there. I think the feminist audience needs to stay on their toes, because there's a lot of creative discussion that's going to have an impact on the future, and that's where the economy of care needs to be raised.

Now is a good time to float ideas for the care economy.

**Ms. Andr anne Larouche:** For example, the aging of the population should be taken into account more when making investments and transfers in health. Perhaps we should recognize that, in some places, the population is aging more quickly, and take that into account to support caregivers who will necessarily do invisible work with seniors and people who are sick.

**Ms. Laura Addati:** Yes, absolutely. Some countries, such as Germany and Japan, have recognized the right to long-term care in their social security systems. This is considered a universal right, just like the right to child care, for instance. They may also be recognition of the universal right to quality care for seniors. Once those rights have been codified, the social security system can be oriented toward long-term leave, and so on.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[English]

We go now to Ms. Mathysen for two and a half minutes.

**Ms. Lindsay Mathysen:** Yesterday there was the announcement on the women's economic task force, but what I've heard continually, and today as well from witnesses to this committee, is that we know the answers, what needs to happen. Your recommendations have come forward now.

To have yet another study, to put forward another task force instead of actually putting forward reasonable actions that we already know are in place, what do you think this will do? This question is for both witnesses.

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** I agree. Women's organizations in particular have been working on these issues for decades and decades. The answers are here. We know what needs to be done. Women's organizations work with all sorts of women, different demographics of women. A lot of us are supported by our members, so there is an accountability and there's the strength of our collective analysis that women's organizations bring to conversations about economic recovery.

It's good to come up with concrete actions and have them together as a holistic.... There are groups that, say, work on child care, some that work on women in law. I do think we need to bring some of this together and have concrete actions. I agree there comes to be a point where studying the same issues for decades and decades can delay action, and I am concerned about that. I'm concerned that when COVID is over, austerity measures will be put in, no action will take place and we'll be back to normal.

I think it's a balance of getting it right, making sure the right people are at the table. Women's groups have to be at the table, because of the collective knowledge and expertise they bring. But, yes, let's get it right and let's do it.

• (1150)

**Ms. Laura Addati:** I would like to add the important contribution of the world of work with social partners, the ILO. I've been working intensively with the Canadian Labour Congress but also with Canadian employers' organizations. The labour movement has been pushing for universal child care but also fighting against gender-based violence in the workplace and the gender pay gap. I think it's really important to bring all these movements together, and use this pandemic really as—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry again. That's the end of your time. This is so difficult as the chair.

I think we have time for two four-minute slots.

We'll start with Ms. Wong for four minutes.

**Hon. Alice Wong:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, I'd like to thank both the panellists for shedding so much great light on a lot of very important issues. My question is on the role of business owners or employers.

We are now talking about economic recovery. That's probably the most important piece, because we all want to go back to work and not necessarily work from home. That could be an option now since this could be the norm.

When I was visiting England some years ago as the minister for seniors I was talking to a group called the Association for Carers—so caring for the carers. They had been able to talk to employers. I would like to hear from both of you on the international situation, on what other other countries are doing to support the unpaid care workers who need a good counsellor in their own workplace to support them. Very often their own colleagues will complain and say, "How come you're getting leave again? The job falls to me."

I would like to hear from both of you, especially our friend from the ILO.

**Ms. Laura Addati:** Thank you very much.

There's been a growing business case for care policies. We've been documenting it as part of our research for the work we are doing for the UN. It's not just a matter of rights. It's also good for businesses for a number of reasons: preserving talent, retention, morale, improved business image, etc.

We also argued that it's important that businesses, recognizing these benefits, also play their roles as part of building social security systems that will integrate care needs as part of a collective answer to these issues. We have examples, for instance, from countries in Europe that were also employers and workers with the state, contributing in a tripartite way to services, to leave, to child care, to long-term care services provided through social security systems. This is also another way that can make sure that these services and leave provisions are also calibrated according to a worker's ability to pay. It's means-tested, and workers who have high incomes maybe can contribute more than those who have low incomes and for whom the service is free, but it's just the same service that is provided through the social security system. This is also a way to go, where employers also can play a part in the big sort of collective answer.

**Hon. Alice Wong:** Thank you very much.

My next question is related to that.

We touch a lot on low-income women who, really, are marginalized, but there are also high-income or middle-income women, professionals, who actually are also doing unpaid care work for their grandparents, their children, because they do care and they want to do it.

Something else to help them would be technology. Are there any other countries making use of technology to help these women?

**Ms. Laura Addati:** We have examples. Actually, we documented the case of Canada for Telecare as a good practice, so we believe that technology can help in reducing the drudgery in care work, but the human side of it will still remain the prevalent part.

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Very good.

We'll go to Ms. Hutchings for four minutes.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings (Long Range Mountains, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, both, for being here today and for the great discussion.

I'm going to ask you both two quick questions, and you'll only have a couple of minutes to answer, but remember that, for any of the questions that my colleagues have asked, you can send in some written responses to the clerk.

I'm from a very rural part of Canada. My colleagues hear me say that all the time. I have a riding bigger than Switzerland, with 200 beautiful, tiny communities. Can you share with us some of the differences between the unpaid work experiences in really rural and remote communities, as well as the reality of child care in really rural and remote communities?

We've heard a lot from many groups about how Canada should look at some form of guaranteed basic income. What are your recommendations on administering some sort of program like that? Many of our most vulnerable people don't have permanent housing or don't have a government ID. I would love your thoughts on that.

As I said, you have a couple of minutes, but please feel free to send in a written response.

Thank you again.

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** With regard to the differences between urban and rural, yes, I definitely think there are significant differences. I think it is more difficult in some cases in rural areas for different reasons. You have a lack of services in a lot of rural areas, a lack of social infrastructure, so that's going to make it difficult for women to access any social infrastructure, if it's there.

There are also issues around transportation and mobility in rural areas, especially when you intersect that with income, so it's very difficult to get around in rural areas in the absence of public transit, for example. Even access to services becomes a larger challenge.

I do think it needs to be looked at.

There are also employment issues in a lot of rural and remote communities. I think all of those intersecting things make the experience different.

With that being said, I think the same challenges exist for women in rural and urban areas in terms of accessing child care and having those necessary supports for their lives. I do think they are different, and they may need different investments. They still are a part of the same issue. Even when you're looking at caring for aged seniors in rural or remote areas, the logistics of doing that can be more difficult even because of the lack of infrastructure.

**Ms. Gudie Hutchings:** Ms. Addati, I'll go over to you for a few minutes.

Please send in some written responses, ladies.

**Ms. Laura Addati:** Sure.

I'll speak to the issue of a universal basic income. The ILO has always argued about the social protection system to provide this minimum for all residents in the country. By providing a system of benefits, and as the result of this tripartite discussion from all parties, it would build on the social needs and social contingencies.

I would like also to mention that from a care perspective, we believe in the combination of money, services and time. It's important, from a job generation perspective, to invest in quality public services, but also social infrastructure. We heard how important this is especially for rural areas. As for the composition, the design of a package, it would be money, services and time.

**The Chair:** I want to thank our witnesses today.

You have been tremendous, and have provided very interesting testimony. Thank you for being with us, and as Ms. Hutchings said, if you want to send any comments to the clerk, we're happy to hear additional information.

**Ms. Jacqueline Neapole:** Thank you.

**Ms. Laura Addati:** Thank you, it was a pleasure.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Committee members, we're going to our in camera part of the meeting. The link has been sent to you, so I'll see you on the other side.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

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