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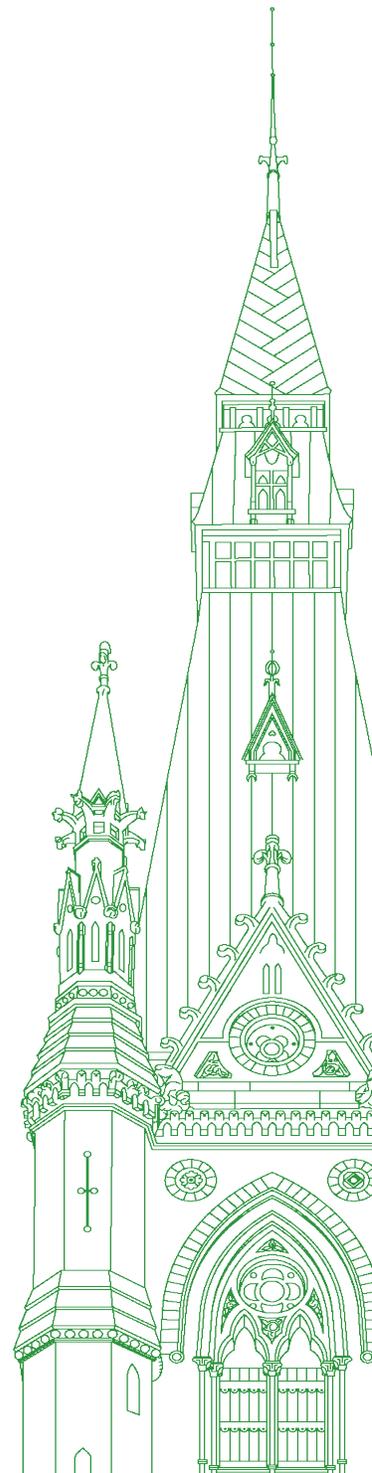
Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

EVIDENCE

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Thursday, October 29, 2020

Chair: Mrs. Sherry Romanado



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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Sherry Romanado (Longueuil—Charles-LeMoyne, Lib.)): I now call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number two of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology. Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the House order of September 23, 2020.

The proceedings will be made available via the House of Commons website.

So that you are aware, let me say that the webcast will always show the person speaking rather than the entire committee.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I'm going to outline a few rules to follow.

Members and witnesses may speak in the official language of their choice. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice at the bottom of your screen of either the floor, English or French. For members participating in person, proceed as you usually would when the committee is meeting in person in a committee room. Keep in mind the directives from the Board of Internal Economy regarding masking and health protocols. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the video conference—

A voice: I don't think any of us can hear, just so we're all clear.

The Chair:—please click on the microphone icon to unmute.

For those in the room, your microphone will be controlled as normal by the proceedings and verification officer.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Michael MacPherson): May I interrupt? I'm sorry, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Yes?

The Clerk: We're not getting the sound through the Zoom application.

I'm going to ask at this point that you please suspend, and we'll regulate the sound issue.

• (1110)

The Chair: Okay, I'm going to suspend for a few moments.

Thank you.

• (1110)

(Pause)

• (1115)

The Chair: We will resume, with my apologies for the technical difficulties.

When you are not speaking, I ask that your mike be on mute or your microphone in the room be turned off.

With regard to the speaking list, I have the list and will make sure to give you the prompt when you are up next. As is my normal practice, I will hold up a yellow card when you have 30 seconds remaining in your intervention and will hold up a red card when the time for your intervention is over.

Just before we get to our witnesses, we have a small committee item that we need to dispose of.

Members should have a copy of the first report of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure. If we could have it quickly adopted, we can then proceed to today's witnesses.

Do I have agreement for the adoption of the report of the Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Perfect. It is adopted.

Pursuant to Standing Orders 110 and 111, the committee is meeting today to consider the order in council appointment of Lisa Campbell to the position of president of the Canadian Space Agency, referred to the committee on Friday, October 2, as well as the order in council appointment of Marsha Walden to the position of president of the Canadian Tourism Commission, referred to the committee on Friday, September 25.

I will now invite Ms. Campbell to present.

You have up to seven minutes, after which we will have our second witness, Ms. Walden, present, and then we will go to our rounds of questions.

With that, I turn the mike over to Ms. Campbell.

You have the floor for up to seven minutes.

Ms. Lisa Campbell (President, Canadian Space Agency): Thank you very much.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you virtually. I hope that each of you and also your families are doing well.

I joined the Canadian Space Agency, or CSA, in September of this year. A lawyer by profession for almost the past three decades, I've worked in both public and private sectors. I have experience in the areas of competition enforcement, data regulation and procurement, among others.

I'm joined today by my colleagues, Luc Brûlé, vice-president, science and technology, and Mary Preville, acting vice-president, space program policy.

If you will bear with me, I'll just change the language for the interpreters.

[*Translation*]

The CSA has accomplished extraordinary things, and we believe that the space sector can contribute enormously to Canada's economic renewal during these unprecedented times.

[*English*]

The CSA's work focuses on three areas.

First, and perhaps most visible, are activities in space exploration. We lead Canada's participation on the International Space Station, the Canadian astronaut program, and scientific missions to explore our solar system.

Second is a growing area of investment and interest worldwide, which is the rich data from earth-observation satellites that help us understand our planet, how to manage our natural resources and more. Increasingly, we can maximize high-quality space data to serve and protect Canadians and spur innovation and economic development. The speed of commercial satellite deployment, implementation of faster communication technologies and onset of interplanetary missions are augmenting the role of data in space industries. Our RADARSAT constellation mission is part of this trend. Its three-satellite configuration provides data for climate research, security and commercial applications. Unlocking the power of this data is vital to Canada's competitiveness globally.

Third, we work to support science and technology in a multitude of areas, including optics, health, robotics, satellite communications and radar. We're growing this innovative sector in Canada and preparing for new missions.

In 2019, the government launched a new space strategy for Canada: exploration, imagination and innovation. With the brilliant CSA team, we're advancing the space program in Canada and, internationally, positioning our domestic space industry for success. The return on investment in space is massive, and it's a growth sector. In the next 20 years, the global space economy will nearly triple in size, reaching a trillion dollars. At the CSA, we're committed to positioning Canadian researchers, entrepreneurs and investors to seize their share of this new, emerging global market. We want to help them contribute to the global economic recovery, while continuing to secure socioeconomic benefits here at home.

In recent months, we've been doing extensive outreach with industry, academia and international counterparts. We've participated in international conferences of the G20 space community and the International Astronautical Congress. Like the rest of the world, we're gearing up for exciting missions to the moon and beyond.

We're proud to have secured Canada's participation in the next large-scale international space collaboration—the lunar gateway program—by contributing our Canadarm3. We're also among eight nations to sign the Artemis Accords a few weeks ago, which we believe will help create a transparent environment for space exploration, science and commercial space activities. We're continuing to support cutting-edge space-exploration technologies, such as artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, health and more, which will be demonstrated on future missions to the lunar surface.

These investments have allowed Canada to play critical roles on internationally led missions, such as OSIRIS-REx, which some of you may have seen in the news recently. We just collected a sample from the surface of an asteroid. Canada's crucial contribution was recognized worldwide, with our expertise ensuring the success of the mission.

In a country as vast as ours, observing earth from space helps us support Canadians, exercise sovereignty and manage our natural resources. Advances in machine learning, big-data analytics and data integration techniques are revolutionizing the field of earth observation at a time when there is more demand for detailed information about our planet.

[*Translation*]

We are daring to imagine a future where Canadians across the country, from any sector, have unlimited access to easy-to-use digital platforms; where data is turned into information to, for example, issue advance warning for air quality and disaster management; where cities can plan greener infrastructure projects more efficiently; where regulators or industry can detect infrastructure failures; and where farmers can visualize crop conditions and crop yields, predicting market pricing and perhaps leading to better management for anticipated transportation bottlenecks.

● (1120)

[*English*]

Today we have elements of this vision in place. Our experience with the RADARSAT program, which today is capturing 250,000 radar images of the earth, means we have a great base on which to grow. We'll equip Canada with the data and analytical tools needed for the future.

Like sectors across the planet, the space sector has been impacted by COVID-19 and the measures needed to contain the pandemic. We've reprioritized some of our activities and funding to ensure that industry and academia can continue to innovate and seize opportunities.

Since March, we've doubled short-term financial investments in our science and technology programs, representing an increase of \$25 million over existing plans pre-pandemic and a total investment of \$52 million over 2 years.

These efforts will benefit up to 90 projects in large, medium and small companies, as well as 12 universities from coast to coast. It will advance promising space technology, and support R and D and the development of innovative concepts, helping develop talent and positioning the sector for success.

Space exploration technologies are at the epicentre of scientific development. Among the many motivations for space exploration, advancing scientific knowledge and understanding is increasingly crucial for our society. Intrinsic value flows from it, and space science is a rich avenue because of the challenges it poses, forcing us to look up and out in completely novel ways. Increasing access to space innovation and research with the new environments and situations, the vast unknowns, that space offers stress tests our systems and beliefs.

Improvements in science inevitably lead to progress in other areas, and as we start employing them wherever science gets used, it generates public good and creates new industries.

I see the time signal. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Through space exploration, we better understand ourselves, our planet and our universe.

Thank you for your time.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Ms. Campbell.

With that, we will now move to Ms. Walden.

Just so you know, you do not need to switch the language any more. With the latest version of Zoom, you can just keep it on interpretation or whatever language you're speaking. If you're going back and forth, keep it on "Floor", and then you can just go to whatever language you choose, but please pause during the switchover.

With that, Madam Walden, you have the floor for up to seven minutes.

Ms. Marsha Walden (President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Tourism Commission): Hello, everyone.

Thank you for inviting me to speak to the committee today.

I'd like to acknowledge that I'm joining you from the traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples today—the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam nations.

I'll be providing today's remarks primarily in English, but I'll also say a few words in French.

[*Translation*]

French is my second language. As part of my appointment, I have committed to improving upon my French skills—it's a commitment that I take very seriously.

Both official languages are spoken widely throughout the organization. I am exceptionally proud of the team, 35% of whom are bilingual.

[*English*]

I have spent seven years, so far, serving the tourism sector, first at a provincial level and now federally.

Never has our country or the world faced such a dire situation across a sector, a sector that employs 1 in 10 Canadians or 1.9 million people in all corners of our country, contributing \$44 billion in annual GDP.

While I recognize that my invitation today is to introduce myself and to address my recent appointment as Destination Canada's president and CEO, I feel it is important that I share some of the background of our sector as a whole because it's why, in part, I chose to serve this sector and what compelled me to apply for this position.

My career spans executive leadership roles in strategy and organizational renewal, marketing and communications, corporate social responsibility, operations management and business innovation. I've worked with enterprises in many of Canada's flagship industries, but I found my true calling in tourism.

I joined Destination British Columbia as president and CEO in 2013. At that time, it was a newly formed provincial Crown corporation. I led ground-breaking strategies for tourism development and nationally recognized data-driven performance-marketing programs.

These efforts were done very much in collaboration with Destination Canada, as well as our provincial, regional and city partners, all of us part of team Canada in the tourism space.

● (1125)

[*Translation*]

When the position of president and CEO came up at Destination Canada, I was compelled to put my name forward, knowing the challenges that lie ahead for the sector. But I would say an even greater motivator are the opportunities at hand.

[English]

I genuinely believe that tourism improves the quality of life for all Canadians. It supports the restaurants and the entertainment we enjoy, the art galleries and museums we visit, the festivals and aquariums we take our kids to, and a huge diversity of local jobs that cannot be exported. From hotel workers to helicopter pilots, tourism is Canada's biggest employer of young people and women.

Right now the sector is at risk of losing more than half of the jobs in the visitor economy. After five years of growth—and having been poised for a decade more of strong growth—we are forecasting that the sector will not recover to 2019 levels until 2024.

Tourism revenues are uniquely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The summer season represents the core revenue generator for the industry, and it was devastated. The impacts are extremely far-reaching. Consider wonderful events in our social sphere, such as the Calgary Stampede, the Just for Laughs festival in Montreal, the Sunrise Festival in Inuvik and so many others that have been cancelled.

Consider the wider set of sectors that are integral to tourism, including airlines, cruises and hospitality. Those are largely closed or operating at huge losses. These sectors fuel the florist, the farmer, the fisher and the festival-goer. Tourism creates a ripple of economic, socio-cultural and environmental benefits, in communities big and small, all across our nation.

Since the onset of the pandemic, the work at Destination Canada has evolved very quickly. Normally, it is our role to focus primarily on the export side of tourism's service economy, to lead international marketing, to drive demand and to provide research for industry and government intelligence.

We immediately realized that recovery would begin at a very hyper-local level and made \$30 million available for domestic marketing by providing funds to our provincial and territorial partners—who matched it dollar-for-dollar—to maintain our presence and support of local communities.

[Translation]

We have also shifted focus domestically working with our partners.

We know that, in 2019, Canadian travellers injected \$40 billion abroad. Our current environment presents a huge opportunity to capture what is typically taken offshore.

[English]

We've continued to supply our industry and our government with timely data and forecasts to support their decision-making and policy-making. Internationally, we are now focused on maintaining our key account relationships to ensure that Canada remains top of mind in our supply chain when international travel can safely resume.

For tourism, recovery presents a national challenge that calls for deep collaboration at all levels of industry and government to fully realize and regain its future potential. Today we can reimagine our industry to be a more competitive sector in future, one that can be

an even more powerful force for good for communities and people across our nation.

Thank you.

• (1130)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

With that we will start our rounds of questions. We'll start with the first round.

Our first MP is MP Baldinelli. You have the floor for six minutes.

Thank you.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to say thank you to the witness and congratulate her on her appointment as president and CEO of Destination Canada. She's assuming this position at a critical time for our travel and tourism sector.

I had the pleasure of reviewing the state of the industry report. Within it were some staggering numbers, to say the least. You're indicating that if the border remains closed until the end of 2020, you're forecasting a 61% drop in tourism revenues. In my own community of Niagara Falls, that's about 70%. Again, you're forecasting that we shouldn't recover until 2024 from the high in 2019. Your report is specific in stating that it would be "a catastrophic loss for our economy". Those are your organization's own words.

We've lost about 354,000 jobs. Statistics Canada says we could be losing up to 500,000 by the end of the year. Your report says that "without significant intervention, more jobs will be lost."

Ms. Walden, has Destination Canada—your organization, working with the federal government—reached out to you to consult with you on the development of a sector-specific tourism recovery plan?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Thank you for your question.

Yes, we've been developing strategies throughout the period of what we call immediate response and relief and are looking forward to the recovery and resilience phases of reigniting our sector. We've been providing a lot of research and sector intelligence to support the decisions and policy-making of ISED and our ministerial colleagues. We've been working very closely with our board to develop strategies that will enable our sector to recover most quickly.

In short, I would say we're working very closely to help support policy-making that is really tourism-specific and helping to drive decisions that will enable recovery.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Going back to your report, it indicates that we need to “provide a light at the end of the tunnel” and that the November to March period has some of the lowest overall visitation numbers, with many businesses facing decisions about whether to stay open. It seems to be a call to action for the federal government to take specific actions for this sector, as we have been asking since March.

I would like to know from you now: Do we need a sector-specific tourism recovery plan?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Like all sectors, we are currently working on specific initiatives that will enable tourism here, domestically and internationally. It's Destination Canada's role to ensure that we have strategies that address all market conditions. Certainly, the current ones are extremely challenging, but we definitely have a plan of action to take us into the recovery. We are working closely with government to ensure that we are aligned in how we do that.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Thank you.

The majority of stakeholders I'm speaking with are saying if we are to chart a path forward, we need to begin implementing and adopting rapid testing as a critical tool to help us achieve this tourism recovery.

Do you agree?

Ms. Marsha Walden: I think that most elements in our sector are looking for innovative solutions to try to reopen the borders in the safest possible way. Where there are opportunities for testing different approaches, I believe the health authorities and government are examining all of those.

We would not specifically become involved in any of that type of policy-making, but I am encouraged to see that our sector is proposing innovative solutions to government that are being considered.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: In your remarks, you had mentioned the role of Destination Canada. You had started in August—the \$30-million fund—working with the provincial and territorial destination marketing boards, which is great. It is a start. You were also saying that you're going to be targeting that \$40 billion that had been previously spent abroad by Canadians to kind of stay home.

That's why I was kind of surprised when I was looking at the supplementary estimates (B) for 2021 and noticed that no new money was committed by the federal government to the Canadian Tourism Commission, which is now known as Destination Canada.

What is your reaction to that?

• (1135)

Ms. Marsha Walden: We work with the appropriations that we are provided. We make the best possible use of those in the markets where we feel there's the most opportunity.

At this time we do not have any insight into changes to our budget. We feel that we can do good work with the appropriation that we have.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: What kind of signal for incoming relief and recovery efforts does that send when tourism businesses and

workers, who are looking for a sign from the government, see that it's not committing additional funds to this organization?

I come from a community that has 40,000 tourism employees. They no longer want the Canada recovery benefit; they want to go back to work. I have 4,000 casino employees alone who have been off work since March.

What is that path forward and how best can Destination Canada help?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Well, these are policy decisions that Destination Canada has an opportunity to contribute its thinking toward. We do not make the decisions.

However, I know that many of our sector associations, some of whom I believe appeared before this committee earlier, have made representations to government about what they believe is most needed and where funding may be helpful.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Also, there are several stakeholder groups that have been advocating and putting forward suggestions to the federal government. For example, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada has put forward that the federal government should develop and implement a tourism incentive program.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. Baldinelli. That is your time.

Mr. Tony Baldinelli: Do you agree?

The Chair: That is your time, unfortunately, but she might be able to answer that in the next slot. Thank you.

We will now move to MP Ehsassi. You have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'd like to start my questioning with Ms. Campbell.

First of all, Ms. Campbell, I would be remiss if I didn't say congratulations on your appointment a couple of months ago. Given the wealth of your experience, I am sure you will do an extraordinary job.

Since 2015, we've seen the government invest approximately \$2.5 billion in CSA, but prior to that—especially given that you were explaining to us its social and economic benefits—we saw CSA suffer cutbacks and employee layoffs.

Could you tell me what the impact of those cutbacks prior to 2015 were on the CSA?

Ms. Lisa Campbell: I wasn't there then, but I have heard from people how difficult any cutbacks are.

I will share with you that when we look at our funding over time and at the spending happening around the world, it really is a new space economy, with governments and the private sector, as you've seen, investing heavily in all sorts of areas: space exploration, low-earth orbit, acquiring sources of data. Canada needs to position itself to keep up with that, in our view. That means having sufficient in-house expertise to oversee contracts when we hire services but also sustaining the pace we have set for ourselves internationally.

Canada really punches above our weight. If we think about some of the tables we are invited to, I was recently at the International Astronautical Congress, and for a relatively small country, Canada has a great reputation for what we bring to the table, including our deep expertise in robotics and artificial intelligence. We are a reliable and trusted partner and we want to preserve that, not only for the work we are able to do but also for our economy.

The Canadian space economy generates close to \$6 billion a year in revenue, \$2.5 in GDP, and employs directly 10,000 people, mostly in STEM jobs, which are, as you know, very high-paying jobs, and then indirectly another 11,000 people.

As I mentioned in my remarks, this is a sector of the economy that's expected to grow. We do worry about spending in the future. If we look at G7 countries, we had been around the middle of the pack and now we're toward the bottom. It is something that I hear a lot about from very dedicated people who work at the agency.

Thank you.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Now, could I ask you about the Artemis Accords? You referenced them in your opening remarks. I was wondering if you could tell us what led to those accords. We are one of the charter signatories of the accords, so what is their significance domestically and on the global stage?

• (1140)

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Yes, we announced that at the International Astronautical Congress that I participated in. We announced our signature there.

There are a common set of principles, led by the U.S., developed in consultation with Artemis Accords' partners, which are designed to guide the exploration and use of outer space in a safe and sustainable manner and in accordance with our international treaty obligations. They are a political commitment to safe and sustainable space exploration activities. However, more work is going to have to be done, as I mentioned when we signed them, within the UN structure, to ensure space exploration continues to be for the benefit and interests of all humankind.

We worked with the United States very closely on these to ensure that the Artemis Accords reinforced the principles of the core space treaties, in particular the Outer Space Treaty, and provided guidelines for safe and sustainable space exploration activities and operations.

Right now, if you look at our website, we are consulting with Canadians. We want their views. A lot of the existing treaties were developed in the sixties and seventies when much of the activities we are engaging in now couldn't even be conceived of. We hope to get their feedback as we continue to work with partners on what is the right long-term framework to shape our activities.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you.

Here is my last question: Could you just explain to us, and elaborate, how the 2019 national space strategy is informing the work that you and CSA are doing?

Ms. Lisa Campbell: It has five goals and 18 objectives. It's really to help ensure that Canada remains a leading spacefaring nation by joining the lunar gateway mission that I talked about, a very ex-

iting project that is the next iteration or evolution from the International Space Station.

It also is designed to help inspire the next generation of Canadians to reach for the stars. We work a lot with students, trying to plan for succession and get people interested in space, not just from an astronaut perspective but also in terms of engineering, as well as lawyers, project managers and IT specialists.

We're also working to harness space to solve everyday challenges for Canadians. There are a lot of direct benefits here on earth, from health, connectivity, security and sovereignty, enhancing access to nutritious food, and managing disasters.

We want to position Canada's commercial space sector to help grow the economy and create jobs for the future and to ensure Canada's leadership in acquiring and using space-based data to support science excellence, innovation and economic growth.

Thank you.

Mr. Ali Ehsassi: Thank you, Ms. Campbell.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lemire, you have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Walden.

I'd like to start by thanking you for speaking French. I wanted to say that because I sincerely appreciate your efforts.

Now, I'm curious as to how satisfied you are with the programs in place.

In June, Minister Joly announced assistance specifically for the Atlantic provinces and Quebec. Of the \$30 million earmarked for Quebec, \$13.5 million was for small and medium-sized businesses in the tourism sector. As we all know, they have been deeply affected.

In your answer, could you also talk about your level of satisfaction with the wage subsidy program? Should it be expanded to cover a full year? Clearly, tourism businesses make most of their revenue in the summer. Now that the summer is over, the tourism industry has to be ready to respond when the 2021 season starts.

Last, do you think the regional relief and recovery fund measures were adequate?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Sorry.

[English]

I did not receive any interpretation for that question. I'm very sorry.

The Chair: Okay, wait one moment. We're just going to check.

We didn't receive any interpretation for that.

Is anyone else having difficulty with the interpretation?

Ms. Walden, are you on the English channel on Zoom, or are you on "Interpretation", "Floor"?

Ms. Marsha Walden: I am currently on what's called "Off", which I believe to be the floor.

The Chair: Okay. In order to get interpretation, you'll need to put it on "English". Otherwise, you will just get exactly what you're hearing on the floor, so if someone's speaking French, you'll only hear it in French, and if someone's speaking English, you'll only hear it in English.

Ms. Marsha Walden: Oh.

The Chair: If you'd like the interpretation from French to English, you must put it on "English".

Ms. Marsha Walden: I'm sorry.

The Chair: What I will do is restart the clock because Mr. Lemire's question obviously didn't get interpreted for you.

• (1145)

[Translation]

Go ahead, Mr. Lemire.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Many thanks, Madam Chair.

First off, Ms. Walden, I want to commend you on your efforts to improve your French. I want to recognize that.

My question has to do with how satisfied you are with the programs in place.

In June, Minister Joly announced millions in funding for the tourism industry, especially in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. Of the \$30 million earmarked for Quebec, \$13.5 million was for small and medium-sized businesses in the tourism sector.

As I see it, what they earn during the summer season is their lifeblood. This season was good, but they have to prepare for next year. Their economic viability is largely dependent on the summer season.

Are the measures in place, especially the wage subsidy program and the regional relief and recovery fund, tailored to the industry's needs?

What could the government do to expand supports for tourism businesses to ensure they survive?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Thank you for your question.

[English]

Certainly, there have been a wide variety of programs that have been very beneficial to the tourism industry, with everything from the emergency wage subsidy, which has really allowed many businesses across the country to remain open and strive to be profitable,

to what we've seen with the Canada emergency business account, of course, which has been a very helpful credit availability program, and also the commercial rent assistance.

The collection of all these programs is very much targeted at helping small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the vast bulk of the tourism industry, to survive those very lean months. The summer, as you said, had some bright spots, but for most businesses it still remained very difficult, because the capacity that accommodations and restaurants were able to achieve was severely limited by the need for social distancing.

As we look ahead, we can expect that the next four to five months will be extremely difficult for our industry. All our partners across the country are continuing to develop programs that will ensure a very strong restart, both domestically and internationally should borders reopen and our health authorities consider it safe to do so.

Certainly, for Atlantic Canada, there's been a lot of domestic activity, some of which has been strongly supported by federal programs, including Destination Canada. While I think there's almost nothing that could solve every problem our tourism industry is currently experiencing, this broad range of programs that have come from government in general have been very helpful. I think we are hopeful that we can survive these next few months and get a good start, if health conditions permit, come early spring.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you for your answer. I'm still quite concerned about the support these businesses are getting to cover their fixed costs. They're dealing with a huge challenge—a lack of cash flow. The next few months will determine whether many of them can keep the lights on.

What is the relationship between Destination Canada and regional tourism agencies? What kind of support is your organization able to give them? Tourisme Abitibi-Témiscamingue, the agency in my region comes to mind, as does Alliance de l'industrie touristique du Québec. They face huge hurdles when it comes to human resources, the coordination of efforts and funding sources, making it difficult to develop tourism programs for the regions. Do you provide regional agencies with any support?

[English]

Ms. Marsha Walden: You're quite correct, in that liquidity remains the number one challenge that tourism businesses are facing in the coming months. A lack of cash flow and the need to cover fixed costs is really the driving force behind the current challenges. I know that industry associations such as the Hotel Association of Canada and the Tourism Industry Association of Canada have made their views known on how government can best support liquidity for the industry, and I know that a number of those supports are being made available through the Business Development Bank of Canada and other sources.

In terms of regional supports, we work extremely closely with the provincial and territorial destination marketing organizations to ensure we are putting money towards supporting the domestic marketplace, which is our nearest and best opportunity at the moment to stimulate demand, and that we're putting the funds in the hands where they can best be applied. In the case of this summer, it was clear that funds needed to be made available at a very hyperlocal level, because our city DMOs had been devastated by the loss of revenues in the hotel sector, from which they derive their funding, and hence we made sure that funds were flowing into communities and cities in order to support those.

Is it enough—

• (1150)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: I'm going to stop you there, Ms. Walden, because I have a quick question for Ms. Campbell.

First, though, congratulations on your appointment, Ms. Walden.

Ms. Campbell, congratulations on your appointment, as well.

Something in your statement struck me. You mentioned farmers. I think it's crucial for farmers to have access to real-time images of their fields. Have you committed to making those data available to farmers? That information is essential when they try to access payments through farm insurance programs.

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Thank you for your question.

We do indeed believe that satellite data hold tremendous potential. We work with Environment and Climate Change Canada as well as Natural Resources Canada, and we are looking for other champions. Generally speaking, everyone understands the huge potential—

The Chair: Sorry, Ms. Campbell, but Mr. Lemire's time is up. You may have a chance to finish what you were going to say later.

Ms. Lisa Campbell: All right.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Our next round of questions goes to MP Bachrach, who is replacing Mr. Masse.

You have the floor for six minutes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

As you mentioned, I'm filling in for my colleague Mr. Masse. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to catch the presentations, but I'd like to offer my congratulations to both of the appointees.

Certainly, in the region I represent in northwest B.C., tourism is a very important part of our economy. It's a spectacularly beautiful part of the world, which I know Ms. Walden is familiar with.

My question has to do with reconciliation. The COVID-19 crisis has, in many ways, brought together indigenous and non-indigenous communities to safeguard our citizens. In other ways, it has created tensions. We have seen indigenous nations in northwest B.C. announce the closures of their territories to protect their com-

munities, and at times doing that has had impacts on the tourism industry.

I wonder if Ms. Walden could speak to the role of federal leadership, which has been quite silent in these situations, in working through these challenges and helping arrive at scenarios that are beneficial and safe for everyone.

Ms. Marsha Walden: This has certainly been a topic of great interest as we've seen communities reopen and welcome visitors. Certainly, the concerns of indigenous communities across our nation have been ones that everyone is trying to be extremely sensitive to, and those concerns extend as well to all communities, I would say. I think that it is not unique to our indigenous communities to want to protect their citizens and to be very concerned about their elders or their elderly. These are concerns that all Canadians share.

I will say that my experience in British Columbia to date has been that there have been very effective dialogues going on between local tourism stakeholders and local first nations communities to ensure that the health and safety needs are the first and foremost considerations. With respect to reopening community borders and welcoming visitors, negotiating time frames and conditions that work for everyone has been, in most cases, extremely amicable. While those have ebbed and flowed a little as health conditions have changed in various parts of our country, I think that, as an industry, we've been very successful in making sure that the health and safety needs of communities are first and foremost.

I will say that along the way, because we have a strong partnership at the federal level with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada and at the provincial level with other associations, they too have been extremely helpful in guiding those discussions and ensuring that the needs of everyone have been met.

• (1155)

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: With that, we'll go to the second round.

I know we were a little delayed because of technical difficulties, but I want to make sure people have a chance to ask their questions. We'll start with MP Cumming.

You have the floor for five minutes.

Mr. James Cumming (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Thank you.

Congratulations to both of you on your appointments. I will start with Ms. Walden. Can you follow up or confirm whether you have requested additional funding given what's happened in this industry, and whether you support TIAC's request for an incentive program for the industry?

Ms. Marsha Walden: We're in constant discussion with our ministry about the needs of our industry. Currently, we're in the throes of developing our corporate plans and budget needs for the future. Since those are still within government for consideration, there's not much that I'm able to share at this time.

Mr. James Cumming: I want to shift to Ms. Campbell.

Once again, congratulations on your appointment. I read through the departmental plan. This department is under new leadership, your leadership. It struck me that there's lots of discussion of dollars and people in the departmental plan, but not a lot related to direct outcomes as a result of the spending within the department, other than potentially the value of exports in the Canadian sector. Will there be a drive, under your leadership, to try to create more outcome-based analysis for the departmental plan?

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Indeed, we know that we need to communicate more with Canadians on why to invest in space, particularly now when, quite frankly, the world is seized by the pandemic. We know that, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, it advances science in all its aspects. It also has direct, immediate benefits here at home.

In health care, for example, exploring space and sending astronauts to the International Space Station—and soon the moon—help advance medical science. Space is hard on our bodies, and it actually accelerates the aging process. By studying how astronauts adapt, we've learned a lot about zero gravity, cardiovascular issues, aging, osteoporosis and the psychological effects of isolation and living in confinement. Many benefits have flowed to Canada, particularly given our vast territory and people living in the north in more remote environments. We've developed technologies that are used in medical centres right now, for instance, robotic arms for neurosurgery, breast cancer detection and astronomy cameras that can detect cancer cells. We have a deep-space health advisory council that is helping push how we can deliver health care services in isolated communities; that can be improved upon through lessons we've learned in space.

We learn a lot about emergency management security. Satellites, as I mentioned earlier, are used to detect and manage critical events, including events such as floods, forest fires and surveillance of oil spills from vessels. We own and operate satellites that measure the impact of climate change, monitor environment and help us manage food distribution and crop management. The systems that would be essential to sustain human presence in space for food production can also be used in our remote communities.

Mr. James Cumming: Thank you.

We have limited time, so I want to squeeze in some more questions.

I'll turn the floor to Mr. Nater.

Mr. John Nater (Perth—Wellington, CPC): Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Campbell, for being with us.

What I'm noticing, unfortunately, seems to be a bit of a disconnect between the 2019 space strategy and the departmental plan for the Canadian Space Agency. Certainly, one of the objectives of the space strategy is connecting Canadians everywhere. For rural com-

munities, rural broadband is a major issue, but there's no mention of that in the departmental plan. I'm curious about that.

As well, you mentioned nutritious food and access to it very briefly. Certainly, groups at the University of Guelph are doing exceptional work on harsh and different environments, yet that's not mentioned in the departmental plan. Often, if we're not measuring something, if we're not making something a priority, we're not going to be achieving the results. I'm curious as to why things like connecting Canadians through rural broadband or growing nutritious foods—which is something that Canadians have great expertise in—are not included in the departmental plan.

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Our core mandate and mission is the peaceful use and exploration of space. With regard to connectivity, it really is ISED that is the lead on that. We are promoting, as I said earlier, greater use, collection and generation of space data because we know that—not just for Canada, but globally—that it really is something that increasingly is a core part of so many services: climate management, agriculture and food production, as I mentioned. We are hearing from industry. We just did an industry day on space-based earth observation, and we heard from the space sector that they want more access to data, both in Canada to help them innovate and globally so that they can sell their wares.

Thank you.

● (1200)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We'll now go to MP Erskine-Smith.

You have the floor for five minutes. I'll quickly remind you that when you see the flags, you have 30 seconds, and then time's up.

Thank you.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thanks, Madam Chair.

First, congratulations to both of you on your appointments.

I certainly agree with my Conservative colleague that we need rapid testing for our economies to reopen more safely, but on August 10, Charlotte Bell, president of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, came before us and said that because of the pandemic the tourism sector was first hit, and hardest hit and will be the last to recover. The hand-waving to suggest that somehow it is the fault of government rather than the pandemic is frustrating to me at times, especially when you see the first recommendation on August 10 that Ms. Bell gave to us. It was to extend the wage subsidy until next summer, which is exactly what this government has done. Another recommendation was, “For now, we need incentives for Canadians to visit their own country”.

Ms. Walden, when you look to your own approach at Destination Canada to encourage Canadians to travel domestically, how can we support those activities?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Certainly, as Canadians, we all have the opportunity to demonstrate by our own behaviours that travel can be done safely. In each part of the country, the health advisories are a little bit different, so we take the opportunities where we can. We very much have an opportunity domestically to rekindle and restart our tourism economy. When one considers that almost \$40 billion a year is spent by Canadians in what we call outbound travel—they're taking their money and spending it in other parts of the world—that alone could be a significant impetus to regaining lost ground here at home.

We do anticipate that domestic travel is our nearest and best opportunity, so we're working with all of our key partners at the provincial, territorial and city levels to make sure that we're stimulating travel within Canada first.

Mr. Nathaniel Erskine-Smith: Thanks, Ms. Walden. I apologize, but I'm short on time and will be sharing it with Ms. Lambropoulos after I ask one question of Ms. Campbell.

I hear my Conservative colleagues ask about commercial opportunities, and what about non-space-related benefits, whether it's in broadband or more?

With regard to the Artemis Accords, you did note in your comments commercial space activities. There's a press release from October 29. I was unclear about this, but the press release, in relation to the \$3.3 million in funding from the Canadian Space Agency, said, “These innovative technologies will enable new commercial opportunities and position the Canadian space industry for the future economy created by Moon exploration.”

I wonder if you could explain to us your priorities as they relate to commercial activities, versus the core mandate of space exploration and the lunar mission specifically for 2024.

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Thank you very much. That's a great question.

I think you might be referring to the lunar exploration accelerator program. It's \$150 million over five years, which is happening in conjunction with our involvement on the lunar gateway. It really is the way that we operate. Because so much of what we do is at the cutting edge of science and technology, we know we need to support firms.

Much of the space sector is small and medium-sized enterprises—very innovative—and they need our help at the beginning so they can become that robust supply chain that will then beckon Canadian primes and primes from around the world. If you look at our contract for Canadarm with MDA, part of it is the industrial technological benefits policy being applied to ensure that much of the work happens here in Canada. With RADARSAT constellation mission, 125 companies from seven provinces are part of that.

We really try to make sure that we are investing constantly in both the research and the cutting-edge science, so that it's ready when these opportunities come along.

Thank you.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): I'm just going to ask a quick question.

First of all, congratulations to both Ms. Campbell and Ms. Walden on your appointments.

I also went through the “State of the Industry” report and saw that obviously, based on evolving treatments and on vaccines, things will improve. I believe that the only way the economy will completely restore itself is once we have a vaccine and enough people have taken the vaccine. I think that's the consensus across the board.

I am wondering, Ms. Walden, if you would work with industries, or at least encourage industries, to try to get people to take the vaccine or to make it mandatory in certain sectors. The people I've spoken to all know that we need to get the vaccine and that most people need to take it, but most of them wouldn't do it themselves.

I'm wondering what your take is on this.

• (1205)

The Chair: Be very quick.

Ms. Marsha Walden: I think the most critical thing is that we restore confidence in travel. People need to feel safe in order to continue to travel, to get on airplanes, to stay in hotels. That would be our primary concern.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Unfortunately, that's all your time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lemire, you have two and a half minutes. Go ahead.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you, Madam Chair. Two and a half minutes isn't much time.

I'd like to know whether Ms. Campbell has anything else to add on the matter of farmers. I asked her the question quickly before because I was worried we wouldn't have time for a second round.

I'd also like you to comment on the relationship between the Canadian Space Agency and industries across Quebec and Canada. You touched on the research happening at the university level. How does that benefit Canada's GDP? Is there really a procurement policy to support industries domestically?

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Thank you for your questions.

In response to your question about farmers, I'll give you an example. FarmersEdge, a Winnipeg company, combines satellite data with data collected on the ground to provide farmers with greater precision to support their operations. This helps farmers obtain more with less, using less water and fertilizer, for instance. They are the same data Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada uses. The company is able to leverage the data to deliver greater efficiency.

As for Quebec companies, I mentioned the industrial benefits policy. We make every possible effort through each procurement process and the innovation fund to support small and medium-sized businesses in Canada.

As you may know, our headquarters are in Saint-Hubert. I should point out that 90% of our staff live in the area. That's true for me as well. I just moved from Prince Edward Island to Saint-Bruno. It's wonderful to see companies with artificial intelligence expertise directly benefiting from the work we do. We see it every day. This week, I was talking to people from a company that grew by 100%. The company is here, in Quebec, and has clients all over the world. We take great pride in that.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: You also mentioned that the Canadarm3 was under development. You piqued my curiosity. What will it be used for? What can we expect?

Ms. Lisa Campbell: The project leverages all of our robotics expertise. I'm not sure whether you've had a chance to look at the Gateway project. It will be a lunar space station 400,000 kilometres from earth. It will house astronauts for 30 days, but will be uninhabited after that. The Canadarm3 will be able to perform various repairs and tasks, supporting the lunar outpost Gateway when no humans are aboard.

What we are working on is very impressive, and it is thanks to all the expertise we've acquired. We are seeing our investments bear fruit. This is truly a sign of confidence from our international partners.

Mr. Sébastien Lemire: Thank you.

Again, I wish you all the best in your first term.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

Our next round will go to MP Bachrach. You have the floor for two and a half minutes.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Ms. Campbell, again, my congratulations to you.

I'm very curious about two things related to satellites, one being the low earth orbit satellites and their potential for delivering rural broadband in regions such as the one I represent—which I think that's probably the main one. The other concern related to satellites is that there's currently a communications satellite managed by

Telesat that delivers Internet to northwest British Columbia and other rural parts of Canada and that service is being discontinued at the end of December. I'm wondering if you could comment on both of them and how we best utilize satellite programs to deliver rural broadband service.

• (1210)

Ms. Lisa Campbell: I'll reiterate what I said earlier, which is that our core mandate is space exploration. Low earth orbit satellites, and satellites generally, are obviously an area that we're very interested in for the data they generate. Connectivity is one of the important benefits. Telesat is a commercial community, and they are very active in this space, as you know. Connectivity for Canadians is obviously something that we know is important. We're seeing this through our work, and the pandemic, unfortunately, has highlighted some of those issues, as we've even seen here today. We are very interested in growing the potential uses of satellite data, as I mentioned.

Mr. Taylor Bachrach: Thank you for the clarification.

I'll pass it back to Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We will go to MP Nater for five minutes.

Mr. John Nater: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, again, to our witnesses.

I want to follow up. Again I recognize what Mr. Bachrach was talking about, the points I raised earlier, and that these might not be part of the core competencies of the Canadian Space Agency, but obviously, satellites are a point of interest for the Canadian Space Agency. We hear of large government investments in Telesat, for example, but then we look south of the border and SpaceX seems to be eating everybody else's lunch. They're ready to flip a switch and serve massive swathes of Canada with high-speed Internet tomorrow, whereas other domestic Canadian companies are not quite there yet. I'm curious for your opinion on where Canada is as an industry in competing on the world stage and whether or not we're lagging behind.

Ms. Lisa Campbell: We need to create a favourable regulatory framework; it needs to be a good place to do business for space companies, and be favourable to Canadian companies. We happen to think that the current framework is a bit dated. It needs to be easier for people to access high-quality data so they can use it. People often ask us why we still need to invest in building and owning satellites. Our current RADARSAT constellation is good until 2026, after which we want to think about the next option. We've let contracts to companies to help us with that, so they're brainstorming now and will come to us with proposals.

We know this is an area where there is a need for government presence, because a lot of this data has public use, and many countries are seeing massive returns on investment from opening up the data, making it available to businesses and then seeing lots of downstream benefits. It's also true, though, as you point out, that commercial companies are entering this space and creating a lot of data that they then sell and commercialize. Nonetheless, we're seeing around the world that both are happening at the same time, because they have different end uses. We want Canada to be well-positioned to take part in what is really a new space economy. My colleague Ms. Preville has called data the "new workhorse of space".

Mr. John Nater: Thank you for that. I think I would probably agree that we do need an updated regulatory structure in place to deal with that, because I do think that right now we're actually blocking SpaceX, for example, from coming into the Canadian marketplace, which would have benefited....

I think everyone on this call would agree that we'd all prefer to see Canadian companies taking the lead on that, but when you have an American company that's able to deliver the product that's needed by so many millions of Canadians, the fact that our regulatory environment is actually blocking that I think is unfortunate. That's not a question, just more of a comment, but I do want to go on to a question.

The lunar gateway project is obviously a major priority for the agency. It's \$2.05 billion over 24 years, I believe, and is obviously a massive investment and a priority for the space agency, but, like anything, when you focus on one thing, other priorities are obviously less focused on, shall we say. Again, I want to go back to growing good nutritious food. How much is the impact of that investment forcing us to have a lesser investment on growing conditions in harsh climates? That's where where I think Canada has a great deal of expertise, but it seems to me that we're lagging in terms of focusing on that side of things while focusing on robotics and the development of the astronaut program.

I just want to get your thoughts on whether we're placing less of a priority—I don't want to say neglecting—on those issues while focusing on robotics and the lunar mission.

• (1215)

Ms. Lisa Campbell: Thank you.

Actually, data is one of our priorities. We are making sure to unlock the economic potential that satellite data offers, both in areas where we traditionally think of it and in many other areas as well. I mean, there are probably applications we haven't even conceived of yet, but once we unlock the data and make it available to companies, they'll come back with solutions for us.

We do need to prioritize, though, and build on our strengths, and we know that for us in Canada it is robotics. It's artificial intelligence. It's our expertise in health care. We bring huge value to the table with our international partners, which is why they keep asking us back.

Thank you.

Mr. John Nater: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I saw you wave the 30-second banner at me, which means that I really can't get into my next line of questioning, other than to thank our witnesses and relay to them the fact that there's a four-year-old future astronaut at home who's quite interested in the work you're doing.

Thank you again for joining us.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Nater.

Our last round of questions will go to MP Jaczek.

You have the floor for five minutes.

Ms. Helena Jaczek (Markham—Stouffville, Lib.): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I'll be sharing my time with MP Jowhari.

Congratulations to both appointees.

My question is for Ms. Walden. I have to confess that I'd never heard of the Canadian Tourism Commission or Destination Canada before today's meeting. You have a long history, obviously, with Destination British Columbia, and I'm sure that in that role you did engage in trying to attract international tourism, obviously, to beautiful British Columbia.

My question is a very basic one. What sort of value does Destination Canada add to the individual provincial efforts and individual municipal efforts that I think we're very familiar with? In your new role, apart from your difficulties with COVID, obviously, do you see any other areas that Destination Canada could engage in to assist local efforts?

Ms. Marsha Walden: Thank you so much for the question.

The tourism ecosystem is a very complex one of different partnerships across our nation and, really, across the world. When I was with Destination British Columbia, which was one of the provincial partners in Team Canada, we very much worked with Destination Canada and our provincial and territorial counterparts to ensure that where we had overlaps, they were productive overlaps.

We are the leading entity for international marketing. We work with our partners to ensure that specific interests of our provincial and territorial demand stimulation programs are represented. Traditionally, those partners would invest in programs that we take internationally, where we have key account relationships in key markets around the world. Those have proven to be extremely beneficial for Canada as a whole, but also for individual regions within Canada.

In terms of where we see our future role, one of the key elements of being competitive as a destination within a world where growth is, or was, very much a part of our future was to ensure that we had a product on the ground that remained competitive, that remained innovative and that was responding to the changing needs of travellers every day. That's where we see a more important strategic role for Destination Canada going forward—taking the demand-side information and market intelligence that we have and helping industry understand where the private and public sector can come together to make our product more competitive on the ground. That will be a new area for us, which we see as critical to our competitiveness as a nation.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Over to MP Jowhari.

Mr. Majid Jowhari (Richmond Hill, Lib.): Thank you to my colleagues.

Once again, congratulations to both of you.

Madam Campbell, in the last parliamentary session, this committee heard testimony about how foreign investment can undermine our national security and reduce innovation. As a lawyer who has established a name in both defence procurement and merger evaluation—and you've also highlighted the fact that data as well is part of your portfolio—do you think Canada's legislative framework and its administration provide sufficient protection against foreign investment?

• (1220)

Ms. Lisa Campbell: That's a big question. Speaking in my current capacity as president of the Canadian Space Agency, I will say

that we view data as inherent to sovereignty. It is part of our security. Understanding our vast territory and being the owners of and being able to wield the data about our territory helps us support the people wherever they are, from coast to coast to coast.

We also know that having a presence with our allies in space is important. We promote the peaceful use and exploration of space. We know that not every country views it that way. That's why we're signing up to things like the Artemis Accords, which in our view are consistent with international law in this area. We will continue to work. Canada has a very special place in the world. We have credibility, which we need to maintain, so we work hard to keep an international presence for the benefit of Canadians but also the world.

Thank you.

Mr. Majid Jowhari: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Our time for this part of the meeting has come to an end. I'd like to thank our witnesses for being here today and to welcome Ms. Campbell to the south shore of Montreal, where I'm from. I'm looking forward to a visit at CSA.

I'd like to thank everyone who was here today.

We will suspend while we prepare to move into this next session of the meeting.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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