

**OPENING STATEMENT**

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**TO**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND ESTIMATES**

**MARCH 8, 2016  
3:30 pm – 5:30 pm**

Good afternoon Mr. Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for inviting us to speak to you today.

I am accompanied by Ms. Karen Cahill, Executive Director of the Finance, Planning and Administration Directorate of the Corporate Services Branch, in the Privy Council Office.

It is a pleasure to be here and I look forward to answering your questions about PCO's 2015-16 Supplementary Estimates (C) and PCO's 2014-15 Departmental Performance Report.

Before that, if the committee members do not mind, I would like to take some time to provide a quick overview of the Privy Council Office, or PCO as we call it.

I'd like to begin with some context by briefly explaining the mandate of PCO and its three principal roles.

The mandate of the Privy Council Office (PCO) is to serve Canada and Canadians by providing professional, non-partisan advice and support to the Prime Minister, the ministers within the Prime Minister's portfolio and Cabinet. The Prime Minister is responsible for this organization.

PCO supports the development of the Government of Canada's policy, legislative and government administration agendas, coordinates responses to issues facing the Government and the country, and supports the effective operation of Cabinet. PCO is led by the Clerk of the Privy Council. In addition to serving as the Deputy Head for PCO, the Clerk also acts as Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Public Service.

PCO has three main roles:

First, we provide non-partisan advice to the Prime Minister, portfolio ministers, Cabinet and Cabinet committees on matters of national and international importance. This includes providing advice and support on the full spectrum of policy, legislative and government administration issues faced by the Government.

Second, PCO is the secretariat to the Cabinet and all of its committees except the Treasury Board which is supported by the Treasury Board Secretariat.

And third, PCO fosters a high performing and accountable Public Service.

We deliver all three roles through our people who provide advice, coordination and support. Unlike many other departments, PCO doesn't deliver programs. We spend the funds that Parliament appropriates to us on salaries, operating costs and services received from other government departments. As such, PCO is governed by the same financial and administrative requirements under which all departments operate.

I would also add that like the Department of Finance and the Treasury Board Secretariat, PCO is something called a central agency and as such, has a central coordinating role across the Government of Canada to provide advice to the Prime Minister and Cabinet and to ensure policy coherence and coordination on their behalf.

Now I will continue with some remarks about the *2015-16 Supplementary Estimates (C)* for the Privy Council Office.

In these Supplementary Estimates, PCO is seeking \$4.2 million for the following items:

- \$1.6 million to both complete the work related to the coordination of a government-wide communications approach for Canada's Economic Action Plan (EAP) under the former government and to begin to modernize the Prime Minister's digital presence.
  - \$1.0 million is for the operation of what was the communications component of the Economic Action Plan which ended following the 2015 Election. The EAP funding supported a team of five (5) public servants within PCO and the focus of their work since the election has been on properly archiving the appropriate records, both digital and analogue, and closing out the EAP. As well, this team continues to provide support to the communication of government priorities.
  
- \$0.6 million is for activities relating to the support of the Prime Minister's official web presence. The Privy Council Office provides support for the maintenance of the Prime Minister's Government of Canada website, as well as all publishing to the site and to the Prime Minister's Government of Canada social media accounts. The requirements for the site have grown and become more complex with steady increases in volume and new features such as video, richer digital content, livestreaming and enhanced social media. These represent an additional pressure for PCO's web operations and associated IT support. The funds will be directed to meeting these requirements in support of the Prime Minister's web presence.
  
- PCO is seeking \$1.0 million for activities related to the continued implementation of Canada's Migrant Smuggling Prevention Strategy. The Special Advisor on Human Smuggling and Illegal Migration took office in September 2010 and was charged with coordinating the Government of Canada response to mass marine human smuggling ventures targeting Canada. Since then, Canada has implemented a whole-of-government strategy to prevent the further arrival of human smuggling vessels as a priority national security file. Budget 2015 approved funding in the amount of \$44.5 million over three years (2015-16 to 2017-18) to continue Canada's coordinated efforts to identify and respond to threats associated with marine migrant smuggling ventures targeting Canada. Reporting to the National Security Advisor, the Special Advisor's mandate continues to be

the coordination of the Government of Canada's response to marine migrant smuggling. This includes working with key domestic partners to coordinate Canada's strategy, working with key international partners to promote cooperation, and advancing Canada's engagement with governments in transit countries and in regional/international fora.

- PCO is also requesting \$0.8 million for activities related to the continuation and advancement of the Border Implementation Team in support of the Beyond the Border Action Plan. By way of background, in February 2011, Canada and the U.S. issued a Declaration on a Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness. The Declaration established a new long-term partnership accelerating the legitimate flow of people and goods between both countries, while strengthening security and economic competitiveness. It focused on four areas of co-operation: addressing threats early; trade facilitation, economic growth and jobs; integrated cross-border law enforcement; and critical infrastructure and cyber-security. This led to the announcement of the Beyond the Border Action Plan in December 2011. Consequently, concrete benefits have begun to accrue to industry and travelers through an increasingly efficient, modernized and secure border. Continued central coordination and oversight of Border Action Plan implementation has been important for ensuring the success of Border Action Plan commitments.
- PCO is seeking \$0.2 million to support the creation of a new non-partisan, merit-based Senate appointment process. In December 2015, the government announced the establishment of a new, non-partisan, merit-based process to advise on Senate appointments. Under the new process, an Independent Advisory Board for Senate Appointments was established on January 19, 2016 to provide advice to the Prime Minister on candidates for the Senate. The Independent Advisory Board is guided by public, merit-based criteria, in order to identify Canadians who would make a significant contribution to the work of the Senate. The criteria will help ensure a high standard of integrity, collaboration, and non-partisanship in the Senate. The Government is moving quickly to reform the Senate and the new appointments process will be implemented in two phases. In the first phase which is transitional, five appointments will be made to improve the

representation of the provinces with the most vacancies (i.e., Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec). The second phase will implement a permanent process to replenish the remaining vacancies, and will include an application process open to all Canadians. The funding for PCO allows it to support the operations of the Independent Advisory Board and its secretariat in its work during the first transitional phase to provide advice and recommendations to the Prime Minister for his consideration.

- In addition, PCO's statutory forecast increases by \$0.1 million for the salary and motor car allowance for the Minister of Democratic Institutions. Following the election in the fall, the Honourable Maryam Monsef was appointed to the position of Minister of Democratic Institutions. To reflect the addition of this full ministerial position that includes both the salary and motor car allowance, a new item was included under PCO's statutory forecasts.

This completes the explanation of PCO's *2015-16 Supplementary Estimates (C)*. I will now briefly summarize PCO's Departmental Performance Report for fiscal year 2014-15.

Please note that while PCO's Departmental Performance Report for 2014-15 was signed by Prime Minister Trudeau, the activities reported for this period at PCO were undertaken in support of the agenda and priorities of the previous Government, under the Right Honourable Stephen Harper. This is duly reflected in the Organizational Profile section of the Report.

Between April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014 and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015, the Privy Council Office carried out the mandate that I described earlier while implementing a number of initiatives to strengthen its internal management practices and to realize increased efficiencies and effectiveness. PCO met its planned level of performance in support of its four organizational priorities in 2014-15. I will now take this opportunity to mention progress made against these four priorities.

To support the Prime Minister and portfolio ministers in exercising their overall leadership responsibilities, as I have said, PCO provided professional, non-partisan advice and support to the previous Prime Minister and portfolio ministers on a wide range of issues and policies, including those pertaining to social and economic affairs, regional development, international

affairs, national security, development assistance, defence, intergovernmental relations, the environment, democratic reform and legal matters. PCO also provided support and advice on communications matters. PCO provided advice on economic measures, notably in the lead-up to the 2014 Update of Economic and Fiscal Projections and Budget 2015. PCO provided timely, quality advice on the constitutional principles of our system of government and the prerogative responsibilities of the Prime Minister, such as machinery of government changes, including two Cabinet shuffles and two subsequent changes to the ranks of Parliamentary secretaries. PCO also supported the development of all ministerial mandate letters, which outlined the expectations of the previous Prime Minister. PCO supported the Prime Minister's engagement with world leaders during 12 visits abroad and helped to welcome 11 world leaders to Canada.

In order to support the deliberations of Cabinet and its committees on key policy initiatives and coordinate medium-term policy planning, PCO supported a total of 130 Cabinet and Cabinet committee meetings, as well as five meetings of the sub-committee on Ebola. In addition, a total of 93 deputy minister meetings were organized over the course of the year to support interdepartmental cooperation and collaboration on the Government's agenda. In the 2014-15 fiscal year, PCO initiated an intensified government-wide, medium-term planning process in preparation for the October 2015 federal election.

PCO supports the Clerk of the Privy Council as the head of the Public Service and thus, PCO provided advice and support on sound government administration and support for the agendas of Public Service renewal, business transformation, and the management of senior leaders. PCO supported the Clerk and Deputy Clerk in leading government-wide engagement through webinars, the national Career Boot Camp, the ADM Forum and visits to Regional Federal Councils. PCO provided advice to the Deputy Ministers on achieving the Blueprint 2020 vision, with a focus on three areas for modernization, namely people, process and technology. Our organization led the development of the Clerk's *Twenty-Second Annual Report to the Prime Minister on the Public Service of Canada* and also provided ongoing secretariat and analytical support to the Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on the Public Service. Finally, PCO advised the Clerk on the management of senior leaders through active succession planning and

by supporting the Committee of Senior Officials in its responsibility as the human resources committee for the senior executive cadre of the Public Service.

Finally, excellence in internal management practices continued to be a priority at PCO as we strove to provide efficient and effective Internal Services.

In closing, I would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to make these remarks and to appear before you today. We would be pleased to address your questions.