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—
Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)): I'll call the meeting to order.

Today we're having two panels, as discussed. In the first panel, which will take us from 3:30 to 4:25, we have from the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, Lucille Harper. We have Madame Stéphanie Lalande representing Réseau des tables régionales des groupes de femmes, and Sonja Greckol representing Toronto Women's Call to Action.

The committee wants to make this an interactive session, which is why we have limited your presentations to five minutes each. After that, we will have questions. Each questioner will be given five minutes to ask their questions, and they will interact with you if you are not answering what they are asking you.

We will start off with Madame Harper. Could you give your presentation for five minutes, please?

Ms. Lucille Harper (Executive Director, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre): What I'd like to do is start with the conclusion to make sure I get it in. That's what we would like to see.

I'm here on behalf of the Antigonish Women's Resource Centre, which is a small community-based organization in rural Nova Scotia. I'm speaking as well for other women's centres in Nova Scotia that work with rural women.

We would like to see the government reinstate advancing women's equality as a primary goal of Status of Women Canada. We would like to see you reinstate social advocacy research and capacity-building into the terms and conditions of the women's program; maintain the 16 regional program officers and program offices; implement the recommendations made by the parliamentary committee on the Status of Women Canada in its third report to the 39th Parliament, which includes an increase of 25% to the budget of Status of Women Canada; and mandate Status of Women Canada to permit funding of equality-seeking, unregistered, non-profit women's organizations.

My particular interest in being here today is to deepen the analysis of the impact of the cuts on women living in rural communities and on the equality-seeking women's organizations that work with them.

On a daily basis we work with women who live in deep and persistent poverty, poverty that is often generational and racialized. We work with women and adolescent girls who experience violence and abuse, and we work with women and adolescent girls who live

in very rural communities and who are trying as hard as they can to put their lives together, to establish economic independence in a region where there are few opportunities for employment, to provide and care for children and family members with limited access to child care and support services, and to further their education and seek training opportunities where there is no public transportation system.

On top of this, as best they can, they are holding their communities together by performing many hours of unpaid community labour along with their household labour.

In our part of Canada, we are living with the devastating and ongoing impact of the closure of our fisheries and the demise of our primary industries. While out-migration has been a way of life in many parts of Nova Scotia for decades, the increased numbers of people leaving for other parts of the country has increased the dismantling of our rural infrastructure. Our small communities have lost public services, schools, hospitals, post offices, grocery stores, and banks. Our roads are deteriorating. Out-migration has taken the heart out of our communities and has left us with an aging population that is less educated and has poorer physical and mental health outcomes, shorter life expectancies, and a higher risk of living in poverty.

As I noted earlier, it is women who are trying to hold their communities together. Their task is daunting, and it is exacerbated by the creation, by necessity, of new family structures that see men in the family leaving for months at a time to earn income elsewhere. Many times the men set up lives elsewhere and do not return to their wives or to their families or to their communities.

What does this have to do with Status of Women Canada? It's not news to you that poverty is gendered. However, for rural women the challenge of moving themselves and their families out of poverty is more difficult and is complicated by both federal as well as provincial policies and programs that not only create and maintain poverty, but also privilege urban centres and urban approaches.

In Nova Scotia, funding for the women's program has enabled women in rural communities to come together to talk about and to document their experiences, to organize, and to advocate for change at the community, provincial, and federal levels.

Rural women's organizations work with a broad diversity of women; have developed a valuable expertise on and unique insight into women's social, economic, and justice issues; provide community and region-specific information about women's situations and needs; and amplify the voices of vulnerable and marginalized women to the public and the policy decision-makers. Without social advocacy, the voices of the most vulnerable women go unheard.

We need to maintain our regional offices because program officers working out of the smaller regions are better able to reflect the uniqueness of the different areas of their region.

• (1535)

This is particularly important for rural women as there are significant differences in the issues that women face in rural, coastal, agricultural, northern regions, in primary- or single-resource-based communities, and certainly urban centres.

The Chair: Ms. Harper, we have to cut off here. There will be a question and answer session, and you will have time to do your closing remarks, as well.

Madame Lalande.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande (Representative, Outaouais Region, Réseau des tables régionales des groupes de femmes du Québec): Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I appear before you today on behalf of the Réseau des tables régionales des groupes de femmes du Québec. This network comprises 432 member groups and 241 individual members working under 17 coordinating committees.

We are a women's rights collective that addresses women's interests and rights issues. Its role is to act as a liaison between the round tables and various levels of government and decision makers. I have come here today to talk to you about the reality that the women's network faces on the ground.

Over the years, members of the Réseau des tables have mobilized around the maintenance and development of Quebec structures in support of women such as the Secrétariat à la condition féminine and the Conseil du statut de la femme. In addition, we demand the establishment of a comprehensive policy and action plan for the status of women as well as the funding to implement them.

As you know, certain structures have remained in place. Last December, we produced a policy paper entitled "Equality Rights: Turning Theory into Practice".

Therefore, we are here to add our voices to those of our sisters, and stand opposed to weakening Status of Women in Canada by weakening its actions and funding.

The Réseau des tables is also very concerned about women's place in the corridors of power. We urge the establishment of a proportional representation system along with specific measures to encourage the election of women candidates to the National

Assembly. We would like this reform to take place at the federal level as well.

Political representation of women is 31.2 per cent in the National Assembly of Quebec, and 12 per cent of mayors and 25 per cent of councillors in Quebec municipalities are women—a level of underrepresentation that is still cause for discussion. Given that the Canadian Federation of Municipalities has set a target of 30 per cent female representation by 2030, one can definitely say that there's still work to be done.

In addition, we are also concerned over fair representation of women within regional development bodies. These regional development bodies, also known as regional conferences, have representation made up of only 20 per cent of women. Very few of these conferences use gender-based analyses to determine whether or not projects meet the needs of women and men fairly.

The Réseau des tables is also greatly concerned over the health and well-being of women. The network would also like to ensure adherence to ministerial objectives and action strategies for the regions.

Recent structural upheavals have left a democratic vacuum. Therefore, we are here to make sure that women's needs are being heard.

In recent years, the Women's Program has always been an important source of funds for the regional round tables. However, recent changes to the program's eligibility criteria and funding conditions are incompatible with the defence of women's rights. In fact, national actions that aim to defend rights and influence the federal and provincial governments have been excluded from this funding.

The mission of both the regional round tables and the Réseau des tables is to defend the fundamental rights of women, and our actions centre on advocacy and influence.

• (1540)

The Chair: Excuse me Madam, can you please read more slowly.

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: Yes.

The Chair: You are reading very quickly; simultaneous interpretation is difficult.

[*English*]

So go a little more slowly.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: Yes. Pardon me, I thought you were asking me to speed up. Very well.

Is this all right?

The Chair: Yes, that is fine.

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: Good.

We must stop minimizing the need to fight against discrimination against women, assuming that systematic discrimination against women is a thing of the past and that it only remains to help those who are weaker and less well fit to cope with their problems, as some people still believe.

To facilitate women's involvement in Canadian society, as is stated in the mandate of the Women's Program, cannot be done simply by offering direct services to women with problems, but also by changing the structures that govern this society.

We have handed out a table which provides a breakdown of funds for the Women's Program. You will note that these amounts are considerable, and changes to eligibility criteria may lead to a 13 to 40% decrease in funding.

In conclusion, the actions taken by the Réseau des tables régionales des groupes de femmes du Québec has an impact on improving the living conditions in our areas. Nonetheless, we do not provide direct services to women. We carry their voices, defend and assert their rights, and encourage federal and provincial governments, municipal administrations to change their systems, which failed to include women in the past.

We ask you to not force us to take a step back, and have to resort to creative semantics so that we can receive the critical funding needed to run a participatory democracy such as ours. We are not lobbyists; we are simply a women's rights collective and work to achieve greater social justice.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

We'll now go to Ms. Greckol.

I know I've given you five minutes, but you'll have to respect the fact that the translators have to listen to what you're saying so they can translate. So pace it out and try to finish it in five minutes. Thank you.

• (1545)

Mrs. Sonja Greckol (Founding Member, Toronto Women's Call to Action): Thank you for the opportunity to outline the concerns of the Toronto Women's Call to Action to this committee. We are a diverse group of women who have been meeting since 2003 in this particular forum to try to restore the visibility and audibility of women in the government of the city of Toronto.

We advocate anti-racist, anti-poverty, gender mainstreaming for Toronto. Gender mainstreaming is part of the Beijing Platform for Action to empower women and bring equality and equity to issues of decision-making, control over resources, budgets, benefits, and rewards.

We work at the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, class, ability, sexual and gender identity, and aboriginality. We do this work so that we can people and so that we can woman the policies and practices of the city government, which is, after all, one of the largest governments in the country.

We work in six priority areas: affordable housing, governance, violence, policing, child care, and the environment. We identify these priorities because each impacts women's and men's lives differently in different communities. We do what we call "Where are the Women?" surveys of policy and research documents and find that the experiences of women are not reflected.

Concretely, poor women who are disproportionately racialized women have fewer choices in housing, in transportation, and in child care. The nexus of these limited choices on a long waiting list for social housing, for example, and subsidized day care, along with single-ride transportation costs, make paid work, family work, and community work impossibly difficult for many women. Gender mainstreaming, however, requires that we bring precisely these women into the political process.

Health impacts, for example, of polluted environments on poor families disadvantage them further in the labour force and in the community. What happens to a mother's capacity to support her family when a child with asthma or environmental sensitivities requires specific care on an intermittent basis, when policing strategies don't respect women's safety needs and/or profile specific youths without recognizing their mothers' and sisters' realities? The communities are marginalized, and the women are bereft of services. What happens to mothers and daughters when a household is preoccupied with how sons will navigate the public and social world of street and school? What happens to mothers and daughters when sons are under house arrest?

Women in all their diversity of race, ethnicity, age, ability, status, and language are 52% of the population of the city of Toronto. Our representation at the policy tables is critical to the development of effective policy.

We know that Canada has signed the Beijing declaration as well as the CEDAW protocol on the elimination of discrimination against women. We know that all party leaders signed the declaration of support for CEDAW during the most recent election campaign.

Let me cut straight to the cuts at Status of Women that affect us concretely. The concrete impacts on our equality-seeking activities in our priority areas are on public education and voter engagement, and on the gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, and accountability in local government.

• (1550)

The method of this second area, gender mainstreaming, requires that governments include the voices of women in their policies through outreach consultation as well as research and data collection. These provide the tools that policy-makers can use to reflect the voices and experiences in policy-making and budgeting. How different would our elder care, our long-term care, our neighbourhoods be, if we could imagine differently the ways that communities can provide for needs of aging parents, recovering partners, and children, apart from being in single-family dwellings and apartments requiring private cars? We need the education process and we need the advocacy process to bring gender mainstreaming into the mainstream.

The Chair: Perfect timing.

We will now go on to our first round of questions. The question and answer session is seven minutes.

I will start off with Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

There are so many questions; I'm going to try to get started. I'm sure my colleagues on this side will have lots more and we'll have more rounds as we go along.

When the minister appeared in front of this committee just last week, she said that women had been funded for 25 years for advocacy. Basically, she said you've had 25 years; that's plenty. She didn't put it in those words, but that's what she suggested, because she said you've had 25 years of advocacy. She also said that advocacy and equality work and all of that can still take place. There's no reason why it can't take place; it just shouldn't be paid for by government.

Some of you have already given some reasons that this is the case, but I'd like to hear from you, because that seems to be the position of the government and the minister at this point. I'd like to hear from you, because everybody keeps asking, well, how exactly? Why can't they advocate? This is not the core. So I'm asking two or three questions.

First, tell me exactly what suffers. Some of you have already alluded to that, but tell me exactly why women can't do advocacy. Why do they need the money after 25 years? I'm being the devil's advocate here. Why do we still need money for research and advocacy after 25 years?

It's a simple question, but go ahead. Ms. Greckol can start, or Ms. Harper, and Madame Lalonde can finish up.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: I believe Ms. Greckol would like to begin.

[*English*]

Mrs. Sonja Greckol: Well, 25 years later, women are still working. We used to talk about how women worked two shifts. Now we find that women are in fact working three shifts. We do paid work, we do family work, and we do community work. The paid work and the family work are fairly self-evident. The third piece of work is the advocacy work in the community, because services don't

reflect our needs. It's that simple. So in order to get services to in fact reflect our needs, we need to continue to advocate.

We are not visible in services; we are not visible in a whole range of services. If we think about immigration services, what happens to immigrant and refugee women who come into the country? They are disqualified from many settlement programs by various kinds of limitations that we impose. Why is that? Their needs are not reflected in the policy of the government. We need advocacy because it seems governments can't understand.

Hon. Maria Minna: The minister is saying, well, you don't need the government. The government should not be funding the advocacy part. Why should the government fund it? I know why, but I just need you to put it on the record. Sorry.

Ms. Lucille Harper: Well, one reason is that—and particularly with marginalized women and women living in small communities who don't even have access to computers, etc.—coming together to do advocacy really takes a level of organization that requires support. It requires support through any number of different measures, basic transportation being one, particularly in rural areas. Photocopying, report writing, etc., really does take some basis of funding to do it.

One of the things that have been so fantastic about the women's program historically is that it has sought out and made funding available for women who have not had a voice to be able to organize and to be able to have that voice. In recent years that ability has been reduced for these very small communities, but essentially those voices then were able to identify issues that had not been previously identified.

The only funding that has been available specifically to women to do that kind of organization and to bring that voice to public attention, at whichever level, has been through Status of Women Canada. When we lose that, we really are silencing women and making it very difficult particularly for the most marginalized groups to come together.

So well-funded women's organizations, whoever they are—I don't know any of them, but whoever they are—I'm sure can do advocacy without support. But because equality-seeking women's organizations—let me be specific—are raising some of the most difficult questions, the areas that society has pushed under the carpet, has not wanted to recognize, has hoped would go away and disappear, these are not fundable through either private companies or—

• (1555)

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you, Madame Harper.

Madame Lalande, I know systemic barriers still exist for women in terms of accessing, whether it's programs or what have you. Could you give us an idea of what some of those systemic barriers still are, and how advocacy helps to get rid of them or is needed to assist in getting rid of them?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: Allow me to cite three statistics: women earn only 70% of what men earn, have only 30% of political representation, and 80% of the victims of violence are women. I believe these figures clearly show that there are collective rights to defend. We are not talking about individuals, nor are we talking about specific women, we are talking about all women. In fact, systemic discrimination is still ongoing; perhaps this is not deliberate, but the systems which have been in place historically continue to reproduce the same thing. Therefore, we have to change these structures.

I would like to add something to what I said earlier. We believe that the best services, either in health care or other areas, are those which directly appeal to women's needs. I am the director of the Outaouais round table, but we number 17 throughout Quebec. You can believe me, when we have the opportunity to get together and send out the same message, we have much more power.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go now to Ms. Demers.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Good afternoon, ladies. Thank you for being here. It is very important to us that you accepted our invitation to talk to us about the difficulties encountered as a result of the budget cutbacks to the Women's Program.

I was just appalled to see that the government still refuses to recognize that systemic discrimination still exists. The government refuses to recognize that there are rights to defend and battles that are still to be waged by women. We must do our utmost to advance the cause. To my mind, the cause is not obsolete and not over. Isn't it difficult to convince women in our own environments that these causes are still worth fighting, when our own governments do not believe in them?

The question is for all three panellists.

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: We are talking about a critical mass of female representation of 33%. We are still very far from this target. It is obvious that women working within the structures may have a

hard time changing the agenda. That is why we are working very hard to increase women's representation.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Ms. Harper or Ms. Greckol, I am very concerned about the situation of first nation communities, and more specifically the situation of women. The programs we used to have allowed us to reach the women. In Kashechewan, there were 21 suicides in the past month. I can imagine what the reaction of the mothers of these children might be, and I can very well imagine that there is a lack of resources and that this can bring about these types of situations.

I might also point out that there is a website that reveals the addresses of women's shelters. This is a site where men reveal the addresses of women's shelters. They post photographs of women's shelters and give directions for getting there.

I am wondering if the programs we used to have would have enabled us to defend ourselves better against these types of assaults since right now, advocacy groups are not being accepted for projects.

• (1600)

[*English*]

Ms. Lucille Harper: That's a really big question.

The situation with aboriginal women in this country is abominable. I think that's been pointed out very clearly by the United Nations Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; and the lack of action has also been abominable.

I do not pretend for one minute to speak for aboriginal women, because aboriginal women speak so clearly and so well for themselves, although I do think we need to very seriously listen to what aboriginal women are saying and be very clear about the absolute critical need in this country to support aboriginal women in the ways they have said that they need support, which is both for services as well as for support in the many campaigns that they have.

Violence against women in general is huge. Sexual violence is... I live in a small university town, and the sexual violence that is never reported is huge and it is increasingly hideous in many ways in the way it plays out. We do not see sexual violence as being a serious issue in this country unless it's something like the Picton case. But the sexual violence to which women are exposed every single day is huge, and it's the same with intimate partner violence. That will not be changed through services.

Do we need services? Absolutely. Do we need well-funded services? Absolutely. Will violence be changed because we provided services? Absolutely not. That's one of the reasons we need the support, and the funding, and the focus of Status of Women Canada to be able to make any imprint on this whatsoever. We've been advocating on that whole question for 25 years, but 25 years is such a small period of time when we think about the barriers and the levels of oppression, and discrimination, and exclusion, and the levels of violence that women have been facing.

One last thing and then I'll stop. When I first participated in the women's movement 30 years ago I thought, innocently, that it would be different for my daughter. I thought it was the fact that people didn't have the information, and if we provided the information, then of course policies would change; it would change. It's been a hard lesson to realize that it's not simply about not having the information, it's about attitudes of misogyny that permeate our policies.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: In your opinion, women's lobby groups remain just as important and we must continue to subsidize them.

[English]

Ms. Lucille Harper: Absolutely.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Okay.

The Chair: Would you like to add something, Ms. Greckol? You have half a minute.

Mrs. Sonja Greckol: Yes. I'm going to make an assumption that you have brought women from the aboriginal community to address this panel, to hear directly what it is that women in the aboriginal community need.

In terms of what we do in Toronto, we do outreach and we work in collaboration with the aboriginal community when we are doing our coalitions, and so on.

In terms of assaulted women, I can tell you that probably the way to ensure that we will continue to have assaulted women is to deliver services to assaulted women through the private sector. We will continue to provide them with an assured clientele for a good long time if the private sector is also encouraged to bid on services for assaulted women.

•(1605)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll go to Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Kildonan—St. Paul, CPC): Good afternoon, ladies. I want to thank you so much for coming today, Lucille, Stéphanie, and Sonja.

Lucille, I have a question for you, first of all, if you would. I thought your presentation was extremely compelling. I have worked for years with abused women and have worked for just about a decade now on the trafficking of human beings. Of course, you know that aboriginal women and women on reserves are very much at risk, and there have been incidences of this happening across our nation.

Just to give you a little background, I know of what you speak. Our son is an RCMP officer. He is married to an Ojibwa girl. Her family is in social work, and she has done a lot of it as well.

I thought some things you said were very interesting. I looked at your website for the kinds of projects you have worked on, things like workforce re-entry and workshops on issues related to health, self-esteem, and violence against women. It seems to me that a lot of very good things have been done through your organization and through your dedication. I would like to commend all the women, and especially, Lucille, what you've done with your organization and the women there.

Now, you said that you didn't need to speak for the aboriginal women, that the aboriginal women can speak for themselves but that we have to listen. I couldn't agree with that more.

The fact of the matter is that I've been on the status of women committee now for two terms, since I became a member of Parliament. I'm a mother of six children. I myself have four daughters, and I've been a really strong women's advocate. I was in the math and science field prior to that, with a master's in education in that area, so I was in a man's world for a long time. This is something I brought to the status of women committee.

When I came, I saw all the wonderful research and the stacks and stacks of research material we had. One of our members even brought the stacks in one day to the status of women. And you know, this was very credible, very good research. Do you know what struck me? What struck me was that, along with all that research—we know a lot of the problems—a lot of the programming, a lot of the things you're doing with your projects, hasn't been happening. There are a lot of reports, there's a lot research, there are a lot of motions on Parliament Hill, but for the on-the-ground work that needed to be there, the funding, wasn't always there. I think you would agree with me in that area, because it's very self-evident when you look at the history.

In looking at what you've done, I wonder if you have applied for some of these projects through Status of Women. As you know, opposition members have been touting the fact that Status of Women has been cut. I say that it's been redirected. That \$5 million is not lost; that \$5 million is going directly into women's programs, and within that project, women can still advocate and they can still do research. But those projects are designed to do what you're doing, and what many of your women's groups are doing, which is to be on the ground helping women. I wonder if you have actually applied for some of this.

•(1610)

The Chair: You have about two and a half minutes to respond—she took five minutes to ask the question—so go ahead.

Ms. Lucille Harper: One of the recommendations that have been made is that we substantially increase the funding to Status of Women Canada. Our women's centre was one of the women's centres that received core funding at one point, until that core funding was cut by the previous government. That core funding allowed us to do two things: it allowed us to provide services and to do the advocacy work.

Because such a small amount of funding is available through Status of Women Canada, and because the policy change is so critical, and because there is no other avenue to take right now to be able to do that policy change, it is equally important to our organization that we're able to do policy change as well as service delivery, because otherwise it leaves you in an absolutely heart-breaking hopeless situation in providing services. I firmly believe we need to be able to provide services.

One solution would be for Status of Women Canada to take a leap and begin to work with the provinces to ensure equal amounts of funding in the provinces, through the provinces, for a service delivery, and that Status of Women Canada holds on hard, very hard, to that advocacy and research function, because without you it's not going to happen.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Do I have a minute?

The Chair: You have about 45 seconds.

Mrs. Joy Smith: Thank you, Madam Chair.

That's the first time I've heard this put so directly, to make sure that the provincial and federal funding is matched or is enhanced, because we are federal-provincial partners in this regard. I will take that forward for you. I thank you very much for that suggestion.

Ms. Lucille Harper: I appreciate your taking it forward.

The Chair: Thank you.

We now go on to Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to ask questions of all three panellists. I thank you for your expert testimony.

I want to begin with Lucille Harper. You talked about the realities that women in Antigonish face. It seems to me that rural women face a different reality than do urban women, and part of that is that we tend to base services on population as opposed to needs. Can you explain that? Also, tell me what the impact of closing those regional offices will have on the work you do.

Ms. Lucille Harper: Thanks for that question.

Closing the rural offices will have a huge impact, because it is really with our local program officers that we are able to build a good sense of what's happening in the smaller communities and what the needs of women are and translate that back to Ottawa in a way that ensures the research and the projects and initiatives that are carried out really do reflect and meet the needs of the smaller communities. Without that, we're really relying on a lens, which in my experience has always been an urban lens, in looking at rural issues.

As I said earlier, the lives of rural women are particularly complex because of everything that I mentioned earlier, and particularly in rural areas where we have out-migration and disintegrating infrastructure. So right now, trying to have a woman's voice within rural communities is more challenging than ever. We really require and rely on our program officers to understand that, to work with us, and to be able to translate that back to Ottawa, which is where the funding and the projects are actually stamped.

As far as value for the dollar goes, the program officers work so hard. In Nova Scotia, our program officer works far beyond the actual number of hours she is paid for. The kinds of supports she is able to provide to women's organizations are really significant, particularly for organizations that are not as familiar with applying for grants, etc. She is really a valuable person in making sure that very good projects go through, particularly for communities that are less organized. The work done in some of our African Nova Scotian

communities has been absolutely critical. And it's the same with our Acadian communities; the work has been really critical.

• (1615)

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

We've heard about the dedication from the women who are working in the regional offices across the country, which of course have been closed.

My next question is for Sonja. You talked about the fact that women's experiences are missing from decision-making. What are the benefits of bringing marginalized women, or women specifically, into the decision-making process? Have you had success with that in Toronto? What remains to be done?

Mrs. Sonja Greckol: I would say we've had limited success in Toronto.

For the group that I work with, in the course of our public education work and outreach work, we have a continuing series of new women who come and go through the organization. We are coming to understand that it is in fact a necessary piece in our organization for women from the more marginalized communities who haven't been fully involved in the political process. Women have fewer economic resources and fewer political resources. We've had to adapt our structure in order to be able to make those voices present within our organization. It was the first step for us.

The second step was then trying to understand how we could mobilize those voices for the local government. One of the ways that local government can in fact start to mobilize those resources is by collecting data differently. It's one of the areas that we looked at.

When we start to break out our housing data and our homelessness data so that it reflects women's experience of homelessness, what do we get? Most often when we talk about women's experience of homelessness, we in fact get something that people refer to as hidden homelessness, and that they don't know what it is. Well, we know exactly what it is. We know that it's women having to move from family to family, from friend to friend, with their children, and so on, but that is not visible.

Our research projects need to be informed in a different way to bring back part of the picture, which the government can paint for us into visibility, while we provide the access so that women whose voices aren't normally heard are brought forward.

I want to add to your piece about rural women. The corollary of that in the large urban environment is all of the disenfranchised communities, the marginalized rationalized communities that don't have access. As we cut back outreach and make administration more efficient, in fact, the only people who can grasp at the money are people from established groups and organizations. It's the urban corollary of your rural experience.

The Chair: The time is up. We will be able to take one last question, and then I'll give you two minutes each to wrap up.

Mr. Stanton, you will be the first to ask the question for the next panel.

Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC): I appreciate that, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Stronach.

Hon. Belinda Stronach (Newmarket—Aurora, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to point out that the minister was here last week. She clearly stated that women have had 25 years to do advocacy work and women can still do advocacy work without the funding.

We all know there has been a change in the mandate of the women's program, with the removal of the word "equality" and our advocacy work no longer being funded. I am still trying to understand this. I have not come to a rational reason for why they would remove the word "equality" and prevent advocacy work. There is so much work to be done on behalf of women and on improving the quality of life for women. It's only through research and advocacy work that you can bring about changes.

What I'm interested in hearing from you is more about the future. With this change in the mandate, the inability to do the research and the removal of the word "equality", how is that going to directly have an impact on your organizations? Are there any programs on the table or any future plans that you had to grow your organization that will be compromised, or off the table, or you will no longer be able to do them?

•(1620)

The Chair: Who do you wish to have respond?

Hon. Belinda Stronach: Any one of the participants, whoever would like to go ahead.

The Chair: Take a minute each.

Mrs. Sonja Greckol: We have a very small amount of funding, through Status of Women, that was obtained just before the program changes occurred. We would be ineligible under the current program guidelines.

We spent about two and a half years going back and forth with our program officer to come up with a project that would be acceptable. That represents hours and hours of unpaid work to get to the place where we could do advocacy work for some small amount of money. In fact, we've hired a young student to do this work for us. We would go back to a very ad hoc kind of operation.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: I can tell you that four out of 17 regions in Quebec have had their applications suspended. Right now, the applications are at Status of Women Canada, and everything has been suspended following the changes in criteria. Already, these are four regions out of 17, and the applications of the network in general do not meet the criteria right now. We are not here to judge the way these criteria will be administered, but to ask you to make sure that we can continue to receive funding, because our work does impact our communities.

Thank you.

[*English*]

Hon. Belinda Stronach: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Harper, you have a minute.

Ms. Lucille Harper: In Nova Scotia currently, women's centres have been working with women on income assistance to improve social assistance policy. A huge piece of work has been done, and a lot of that work has been bringing women from 11 communities around the province to the table to talk about their experiences on social assistance and to make recommendations to government.

We are now at the point where we want to engage with government in developing a poverty reduction strategy with the Nova Scotia government. We will not be able to do that. In discussions with our program officer about what we could do next, she has said that work has to come to an end because we will not be able to do it, since it will not be fundable.

Despite the fact that we are this close, have made such good headway, and our conversations and relationship with the Nova Scotia government are very strong, we just won't have the funding to maintain that really important network of women who are living in poverty. We can't do that. There's no other source to do that.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Stronach, you have half a minute to make any comments, if you want.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: No, I wanted the individuals to respond to my question so that I have an understanding of what future programs are potentially off the table.

Let me ask this. How much consultation was done with your organizations on how the impact of the change would affect them.

Ms. Lucille Harper: None.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, panel.

You each have a minute to give your closing remarks, after which we will adjourn and bring in another panel.

Ms. Greckol.

Mrs. Sonja Greckol: This government has demonstrated that it can make policy shifts. It has made policy shifts in its approaches to Quebec, to the environment, and to income trusts. So far, though, it seems to have stayed consistently ideological in its position on national day care, on charter challenge funding, on pay equity, and so on. I would ask it to look at the proposals, the recommendations that were made by Lucille Harper. They're recommendations that we would also support.

Perhaps the policy shifts that can't get made in relation to women's issues reflect the marginalization of women. Of the elected representatives in this country, 21% are women, less than 1% of elected officials are racialized women, and less than 1% are women with disabilities. That's the marginalization that we put on the table most clearly.

•(1625)

The Chair: Ms. Harper.

Ms. Lucille Harper: I don't even know if I will take a whole minute.

I think when the United Nations committee on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women congratulates us for 100% fulfilling our obligations around women's equality, then we can sit back and have another discussion around where we may want to go next, but we need to take our responsibilities to all women across this country very seriously. I think the programs that have been most hard-hit, whether it's literacy, education and training, court challenges, and so on, are ones that have the most direct impact on women and marginalized groups; and when we're looking at marginalized groups, the most marginalized within marginalized groups are the women within those groups.

So I think our measure needs to be, if we could have one measure, how are we impacting the poorest of poor women in this country? When we have done that to the satisfaction of the United Nations, then we can come back and we can say, okay, now what?

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Stéphanie Lalande: Thank you.

Quebec entitled its status of women policy "Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait" [So that equality in law can become equality in fact], because that is where we stand today. In fact, women are not yet equal to men, as the figures I cited earlier prove.

It is still appropriate to pursue our efforts with Status of Women Canada, which has supported us a great deal in the past and helped us obtain further funding to continue our activities. That support is essential and Status of Women Canada must also continue its work within the federal government by denouncing inequality, by conducting research and by applying gender-based analysis, since this is a concept at the very heart of Status of Women Canada.

There is work still to be done, and we are asking you not to abandon us, we in the regions who are working so hard to improve the rights of women.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Thank you to the panel for being here to share your experience and your expertise with us. Your input will find its way somewhere in the report.

Madame Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): I apologize for coming in late.

As a matter of course in this committee, we don't always agree with those who present before us, but we are usually restrained in our comments. I heard, and I don't know whether others heard, a member opposite use the word "bullshit" after a presentation, and I don't think this is the time or the place for this.

The Chair: I'm sorry, Madame Neville, I didn't hear it, and if whoever said it could please refrain from saying things like that...

Yes, Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Joy Smith: I think this is just a silly political ploy, and I don't think it's appropriate at the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. I want all the presenters to know that we very much appreciated your presentations today.

The Chair: Thank you.

The meeting is suspended while we await the next panel.

•

_____ (Pause) _____

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•(1630)

The Chair: If the members could please take their seats, we will reconvene.

I'd like to welcome the witnesses. We have with us Madame Genaille, president of the Métis National Council of Women; Ms. Landolt, from REAL Women of Canada; and Shari Graydon, from the Women's Future Fund.

We haven't received speaking notes, Madame Genaille, if you have them; and Ms. Landolt, do you have any speaking notes?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt (National Vice-President, REAL Women of Canada): I gave you our brief.

The Chair: Fair enough. It just makes life easier for the translators.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille (President, Métis National Council of Women): Madam Chair, I have speaking notes and a profile for the speaking notes. I'm sorry for not getting them to you sooner.

The Chair: No problem.

As I told the panel before, you have five minutes to present.

We will start with Ms. Genaille.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: Good afternoon.

Five minutes is not all that great a time, so I'll have to just edit as I go.

My name is Sheila Genaille. I'm president of the Métis National Council of Women, which is a national organization that advances equality and justice for Métis women and their families across Canada. We were formally organized in 1990 and incorporated in 1992 as a national non-profit corporation.

We are Canada's only independent national organization structure advocating for aboriginal and equality rights for Métis women. The organizational structure consists of a board of directors filled by presidents of the provincial affiliate organizations.

We've been actively involved in multi-faceted educational, political, and legal campaigns to promote the interests of Métis women in Canada, including their equality rights since formation.

During the early nineties, the Métis National Council of Women's founding provincial associations in communities held workshops in provinces to formulate the reports to the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee and provide information on Métis women in the communities on the constitutional meetings.

As soon as the MNCW was formally organized, the president and directors attended the first peoples conference in Ottawa to speak on behalf of the Métis women's needs. In 1993, the MNCW was invited to attend the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples forums and round tables. RCAP helped fund and carry out a needs assessment study with the MNCW and its founders and constituents, and we've participated in all phases of the royal commission's consultations and work.

In its final report, the commission documented the history and functions of the MNCW as the national voice of Métis women, and made specific recommendations to the federal government on funding needs and policy contributions it should commit to the MNCW.

In particular, the commission included in its report anecdotal accounts of how traditional male leadership in the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council, and the Inuit Tapirisat have always created ongoing problems for all aboriginal women seeking to promote women's equality interests within their unique cultures and communities.

The Métis National Council of Women has frequently been invited by the federal government to speak on behalf of Métis and other aboriginal women in international meetings and organizations. The MNCW has been included in the status of women delegations at the UN and has worked on women's issues within Indian Affairs. We lobbied the European Commission to enter into an international agreement on humane trapping, in which our community is involved. We have also been involved in the implementation on biodiversity, and the indigenous issues in Madrid. MNCW has been involved in a lot of issues in the international area.

The MNCW achieved recognition of non-government status on the international scene. We have general status with ECOSOC at the UN. Again, there are many international areas of involvement.

We are committed to advancing equality and justice for Métis women, and that includes a commitment to safeguard the aboriginal, constitutional, and human rights of Métis women, including those guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

To this end, we were granted leave to intervene in *Lovelace v. Canada*, and have been invited, along with the other two aboriginal organizations, Pauktuutit and NWAC, to speak on behalf of Métis women at conferences held by Justice Canada. We received funding from the Secretary of State, through the court challenges program, to hold a workshop and conference on Métis women's equality rights.

Métis identity is not affirmatively created by federal legislation in the same way as Indian status was created by the Indian Act. Thus the MNCW's education and advocacy on behalf of Métis women has taken place in the form of creating an audible voice for them in predominantly male-run organizations, and in finding ways to bring their unique concerns as Métis women to the attention of Métis communities and organizations, on the one hand, and the federal government on the other.

• (1635)

Continued advocacy for Métis women's employment needs, as well as the process of establishing a political and public voice for Métis women, became much more difficult in 1994 after the Supreme Court issued its final decision on *NWAC v. Canada*. The Métis National Council of Women continued to work with the royal commission, despite these difficulties. We have advocated strongly that the Métis National Council of Women be recognized and included in self-governance arrangements as an independent voice. The depth of the opposition to Métis women's organizational autonomy has made it clear at every step of the way that Métis women have to overcome prejudice, stereotypes, and traditional roles in their dealings with federal government.

The Chair: Please wrap it up.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: Okay.

Based on my involvement with Métis women in Canada, I believe there is considerable confusion and anxiety on the part of Métis women about the lack of uniformity in the application of law to Métis, Inuit, and first nations women. At the same time, the continued prevalence of attitudes of domination and violence against Métis women makes it difficult for Métis women to turn to an organization that itself has been marginalized.

The status and condition of aboriginal people in Canada, and the federal government's decision to support a select few aboriginal organizations in developing capacities for self-government, have placed us at a disadvantage. There is a need for political will to build partnerships in sharing ways to promote participation, accountability, and effectiveness, not to cut funding. If the funding to Status of Women is cut, will there be more cuts in other federal departments?

We believe this will result in uncertain futures for equality-seeking women's groups. Many groups will have to reduce their operations, most of us will simply shut our doors, and the most disadvantaged women will be silenced.

The promise of the future must be tempered with the legacy of the past. In the case of Métis women, the legacy is a long and continued history of exclusion and marginalization. There must be political will from all parties and continued funding to ensure there will be change and freedom for Métis women from social injustice, exclusion, gender inequality, and racism.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: I hope you all read my whole text when you get it. Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Landolt is next for five minutes.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: REAL Women of Canada has been around since 1983, when we were federally incorporated. We represent a vast cross-section of Canadian women— Métis women, immigrant women—many, many women across Canada. One thing we've found is that the most discriminatory agency against us has been the Status of Women, because the Status of Women only represents, not women in general, but those having an ideology, that of radical feminism.

You gave out \$1.5 million between 1992 and 2002 to the organization CRLAW to research for feminist objectives, and they are not a reflection of what Canadian women want and need.

Canadian women have other agendas than the Status of Women, and we are very offended that this agency has existed since 1973, never ever reflecting the needs of Canadian women. For example, I'll give you the most pertinent example today. Canadian women are in all the major professions. We have equal opportunity, but one of our major problems today is how to balance our work life with our home life and commitments. The Status of Women has not the slightest bit of interest in what women think in these areas. Women need to be treated equally, and there has never been equality with the Status of Women. It has been a blemish on the face of Canada.

In fact, we're looking through some of the previous speakers.... It's the end of democracy. Women are not being funded. REAL Women has never received money. We're obviously an advocacy group and we've managed to survive very well because we have grassroots support. We reflect what women in Canada want. They pay money, and they're not wealthy. Some are on pensions, some are single mothers, but they support us simply because they care about what we reflect.

REAL Women is an NGO with consultative status with the United Nations. As such, we've attended over 34 United Nations meetings. We have been working internationally, promoting women and the

care of women. We have equality, which is in our objectives of incorporation, yet we have been able to do all this work simply because women care for what we're doing. We're not fronts; we're not phoney, putting up artificial creations by the government, which is supposed to represent women but doesn't.

For example, a very important point is this. One of the previous speakers suggested that Canada won't have equality until all the CEDAW committee accepts us and says we're equal. Perhaps they're not aware of the fact that the committee monitoring CEDAW is under severe surveillance because it's coming up with theories and positions that are not in the CEDAW agreement. For example, we have them promoting the word "abortion" 37 times, yet it's not in the CEDAW at all.

As for pay equity, how many people here know that when Canada actually ratified the CEDAW document, it put a reservation against pay equity, simply because the provinces would not go along and were not interested in this equal pay for equal value? In fact, I hear again and again that there's no pay equity, yet the International Labour Organization convention has never implemented it because there's no international agreement on that.

The point is that times have changed. We have to move into the 21st century. We have to deal with what women want. We have to listen to women—I've heard that again and again—but women are not all feminists. A few are, and they're perfectly entitled to be, but the vast majority of women do not accept those bylines and guidelines out of the Status of Women. The changes that are taking place are long overdue.

You've had the Status of Women operating for 34 years, and yet you still say women are discriminated against, that we're victims. What victims? Some women are victims—they may be Métis women, they may be immigrant women—but women as a whole are not discriminated against. We're perfectly capable, competent women, able to make decisions with our life, and it's deeply troubling that the government is putting out \$11 million each year to a variety of feminists—not women's groups, feminist groups—to promote an agenda that is not a reflection of what Canadian women want or need.

•(1645)

Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Graydon, you have five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Shari Graydon (President, Women's Future Fund): Thank you very much for your invitation.

[*English*]

My name is Shari Graydon, and my role as president of the Women's Future Fund is unpaid. I tell you this so you can appreciate that my goal is to make the organization obsolete, because once it's no longer necessary, I will have a lot more time to stick to my knitting.

The Women's Future Fund is a coalition of national organizations working to further women's equality. Our member groups include a number of those you've already heard from, such as CRIAW, LEAF, and others. The mandate of the coalition is to develop an alternative source of financial support to make women's organizations less dependent on government. Understanding that this wouldn't happen overnight, Status of Women Canada assisted in the development of the Women's Future Fund as a means of accessing workplace giving programs, much as the United Way does. Because such success takes years to build, the agency had pledged to support the coalition through its start-up phase. But the new guidelines have rendered us as well as many of our member organizations ineligible for funds, thus cutting us off at the knees just when we were starting to build and realize significant returns on the investment.

Last year we doubled our revenues and donors. This year we were poised to do so again. Our progress has also been hampered by the fact that although Canadians overwhelmingly support the goal of women's equality, they believe that ensuring human rights is the government's job.

Let me put this in context. No one says the Department of Justice should raise its own revenues. Everybody recognizes that simply making murder illegal doesn't stop the violence. As long as injustice exists, we still need a Department of Justice. As long as inequality exists, we still need a department like the Status of Women. Asking the groups that do the work funded by Status of Women to raise their own money makes about as much sense as asking the Department of Justice to set up its own bingo hall. Yet that's essentially what the Women's Future Fund is trying to do.

My unpaid work with the Women's Future Fund is made possible by the fact that I earn enough money as an author and speaker to be able to volunteer and pay taxes. As do all Canadians, I want to know that my tax dollars are being spent responsibly. I have enormous confidence that the moneys awarded to the Women's Future Fund members deliver an exceptional return. We leverage enormous in-kind support in volunteer labour, and our work is relevant not just to women's lives but to Canada's economic prosperity. UN research from around the world makes it clear that social equality translates into economic prosperity. When women are educated, given genuine choice about child rearing and employment, treated with respect, and paid fairly, the entire society benefits. All taxpayers suffer from the

barriers and biases that continue to keep many women from fully contributing their skills and knowledge to our economy. We should all be outraged that instead of spending millions of dollars annually to prevent violence against women, we are spending billions annually on the aftermath of it.

John F. Kennedy once noted that things do not happen; they are made to happen. The equality gains that we've achieved in the last century—and there have been many—exemplify this. Governments didn't simply decide to grant women the vote, or declare us persons. Women's advocacy made that happen. Over the past 30 years, the member groups of the Women's Future Fund have also made divorce and sexual assault laws fairer, improved the matrimonial rights of aboriginal women, secured maternity benefits and fair pay. We lament that the current government doesn't wish to continue funding this work, which benefits millions of Canadians. If the goal is to make us obsolete, at least part of the solution is to ensure that women have parity in the House of Commons, where the decisions affecting us are being made. If our voices, experiences, and realities were integral to the identification of priorities, the formulation of policy, and the allocation of funds, then our groups would become much less relevant.

I thought I had ten minutes; that is what the correspondence I got said. So I will skip and hope to have the opportunity to come back to some of what I would have said.

•(1650)

In conclusion, because progress doesn't come from deleting the word "equality", I ask you all to imagine that, in declaring that equality has been achieved, Minister Oda had somehow tripped an invisible balancing wire and men were suddenly faced with the same odds that currently confront women, and my nephews and your sons were now forced to anticipate their new equality in the form of a 30% reduction in expected wages, two more hours per day of housework—unpaid—a 25% risk of sexual assault during their lifetimes, and a 50% chance of living in poverty if they were to become single parents. Those are the realities facing our daughters. They deserve the same realities as our sons.

The member groups of the Women's Future Fund are currently among the resources that government has at its disposal to effect that equality. We are recognized and emulated around the world. We're among the most cost-effective non-profit organizations you can find. And we're working to improve the lives of women and to become less dependent on government funding.

Thank you.

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

We stopped at Ms. Stronach last round, so we will start off, for seven minutes, with Mr. Stanton.

I'm sorry, but that's what we agreed to do.

Hon. Maria Minna: When?

The Chair: That's why Mr. Stanton had been cut off.

Hon. Maria Minna: We shouldn't do that again, actually.

The Chair: Mr. Stanton has seven minutes.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you to our panellists, both from this panel and the previous one. Your reports and insights today have been invaluable to this study on Status of Women and the change in the terms and conditions that have been undertaken.

I'd like to start, just to preface my comments, from the position that what we're seeing here, in fact—and I heard this through the course of the testimony this afternoon—is the realization that there exists an acceptance that while the public sector has invested heavily in advancing funding for equality-seeking groups and so on over the last 20 or more years, even by the admission of the various groups that have provided testimony to this committee in the last month or so, tremendous need still exists. And predominantly, and even backed up here today, these needs in fact exist in the community and at the community level. We heard examples of that this afternoon.

To Ms. Graydon's point that this goes beyond just treating the effects of the issues around inequality, it in fact speaks directly to the kinds of injustices that are occurring at the community level.

When I look at the new terms and conditions for Status of Women—and I'll preface my question this way—what we see, and I'm speaking now of the women's program, is that the program's key objective is to achieve the full participation of women in economic, social, and cultural life in Canada. And as its key priorities—but not just these three—the focus of these programs would be towards aboriginal women, immigrant women and visible minority women, and senior women. As I said, these are the priorities of the women's program. That's not to say that only these categories of needs would be addressed.

I'll start, perhaps with Ms. Genaille. Could you tell me, from the standpoint of your organization, how that new objective of the women's program would fit with the needs you have in your community?

• (1655)

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: Taking away the words “equality” and “advocacy” is... We haven't reached equality, and I don't see it within my lifetime or even in my children's lifetime.

The aboriginal population in this country is at or below the poverty line. I don't have to tell you that. You've seen the number of communities that would rival third world populations. And for Métis women, if you check with Statistics Canada, you will see that we are the most impoverished in this country. So when you start cutting funding on the grounds that we're an advocacy group or that we're seeking equality, it's not there.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I'm sorry, I don't mean to interrupt. Have you applied under the women's program?

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: We have applied. We have done some work on violence against women. The incidence of violence in our community is very high. We have in the past, but this year we haven't applied. The funding in the past was limited. With the number of women in this country looking for dollars to address their issues, the funding is very small, so when you cut it even further and put in more stringent criteria, we won't have the same opportunity.

Yes, to answer your question, we've had money in the past. It was about three or four years ago.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: You haven't applied under the new terms and conditions.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: We haven't, not under the new ones, no.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I just want to correct a point. In fact, there has been no reduction in the women's program funding. It's still \$10.8 million and will continue to be. That's in addition to the \$1 million available for the Sisters in Spirit program.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: The Sisters in Spirit program is for Indian women. We're Métis women.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I understand that.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: Also, just as an aside, I live in Alberta, even though the national organization has the office here. In Edmonton, the Status of Women had a person on two or three or four hours a week, and they didn't even have an office. They were sharing with someone else. It was hard at that time to get the programs off the ground. And to shut the door fully is just...

The levels of bureaucracy, I don't have to tell you, and the steps you have to go through.... Making it smaller is just going to make it harder for groups.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you.

Ms. Landolt, along the same lines, I have the same question. In light of your remarks and your testimony here this afternoon, how would you say the new terms and conditions for the women's program at Status of Women Canada square with the needs? You've made some obvious concerns known about the previous terms and conditions. How do the new ones square, from your point of view?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: I think they're much more inclusive. They're not as discriminatory, because they're going to be open to anyone, which is a novelty for this particular department or agency.

The second thing is that I'm always puzzled by the fact that we're talking about transportation for women, or this or that. Those are matters of provincial jurisdiction. Why on earth is the federal Status of Women supposed to be responsible for matters that are provincial? Now, I can see, which was said previously, that it might be a good idea for the federal Status of Women to push the provinces, but you have different agencies in the provinces performing those very jobs. So why do we have a federal Status of Women doing a duplicate job? That always puzzles me.

What I do see in the changes is the advantage that it will be open to all women who have a concern. The second thing we appreciate very much about these changes and the guidelines is that finally it will be used for results. In other words, we find again and again that the money—\$11 million—going out every year, a lot of it, is to promote an ideology and to service centres of propaganda, as it were. But they're not helping women directly, many of them. Now, some might, but we find that they're not dealing with women. New guidelines will demand that there be accountability and results. Believe me, that's a great novelty for this particular agency.

• (1700)

The Chair: Thank you.

We'll now go to Ms. Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I am really in quite of state of shock after what I have just heard. I will try to get a grip.

First of all, I would like to welcome the people who agreed to appear before us today, as well as those who preceded them.

I am a bit surprised. This is the third meeting during which we have heard various women's groups and associations explain how they will be affected by the cutbacks that the government is preparing to make at Status of Women Canada.

I am particularly concerned by your testimony, Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt, because I feel that it runs counter to the overall concerns we heard from women regarding the status of women in general in 2007. In fact, very few have told us that even in light of the figures we have —

Women on average earn 71% of what men earn, to this day. We were told that women hold 21% of the seats in the House of Commons, which is a reality for all political bodies in our society. We were also told that three quarters of the women in Canadian prisons are victims of abuse or sexual assault. I am very worried

when I hear figures like that and when I hear testimony such as that of the organization you represent, Ms. Landolt.

Could you tell me how many members there are in your group?

[*English*]

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: We have a minimum of 55,000 across Canada of all backgrounds, all differences. I'm a lawyer. We have a commercial pilot. We have many homemakers. We have many immigrant women who do flock to our organization, not feminist ones. You mentioned, and I've heard a couple of times today, that only 21% of the members of the House of Commons are women. I'd like to comment on that, and my comment is that women are not stupid. We vote for individuals because of their platform, for their values. We do not vote because a person is a woman—never. And if the woman has a platform, if she has values that the people want, they vote her in. And why should we vote for a woman because she's female? That's absurd. There's nowhere that I or women of my values would ever vote for a woman simply because she's a woman. We're far too intelligent for that.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: Excuse me, but that was not at all what I was referring to—

[*English*]

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Pardon? I can't hear.

The Chair: She's allowed to interrupt you. She does not feel you're answering her question, so she has her minutes that she has to look after.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: That wasn't the point of my comment. What I am wondering about is that to this day, in 2007, only 20% of the positions in our political institutions are occupied by women. I never said they were stupid. As a matter of fact, with an equal platform—

• (1705)

[*English*]

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: That's one conclusion one gets from the statement....

I must say I'm having difficulty getting the translation. It's not coming through.

The Chair: Just one second.

Madame Deschamps, repeat your question, please.

[Translation]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: I'm starting to realize that your philosophy is very close to that of the Conservatives which is to say that to you, in our day—and we've heard this before—women are all equal, all competent, all determined, and now they are able to flourish.

I don't think the fact that organizations defend the rights of women necessarily makes them a feminist movement.

Ms. Landolt, in a press release dated September 26, 2006, you rejoiced in the fact that the government was slashing the budget of Status of Women Canada, because that department does not express your view but the feminist point of view. You also said that this was a good step toward completely eliminating the program, which is what you want.

Even if we agree that, before the arrival of the Conservatives, Status of Women Canada was a hotbed of feminism, can you explain how completely altering the nature of the program and shutting up these women is a good thing?

[English]

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Let me give you an example. When REAL Women began, we applied many times for funding. We never got a response. They wouldn't even send us application forms. Under the Access to Information Act, we found material showing they were deliberately ostracizing us. We knew that, and one day we decided to prove it. So we phoned and said we were representing a whole new group of women called the national association of lesbian mothers. Within two weeks we got a response, and the application forms, with a little handwritten note saying, welcome to the Status of Women.

That was the proof we were waiting for. We have it. We still have that documentation. We have presented this to prior committees. If you doubt me for a minute, we have the documentation to back up what I'm saying. It has been a discriminatory organization.

We represent grassroots women. We are an advocacy group. We have no charitable number. We are able to exist because grassroots women, ordinary women who are not wealthy, have been able to say they are willing to support us. We have a lot of volunteer help. We are a prime example of how, when you have the support of grassroots people, women can exist and be an advocacy group without government funding. We reflect that. If we can do it, why cannot all these other groups?

Why can't LEAF or CRIAW support themselves if they have the support of women? They obviously don't. They don't have the support, because they can't even get their own funding. You gave \$1.5 million to the research group CRIAW, and LEAF has had \$1.5 million, from 1992 to 2002.

What have they done? Look at their court cases. They represent feminist ideology. We go to court; REAL Women has intervened in court many, many times, but we've paid for it ourselves. We pay for all our visits to the United Nations. We pay for it ourselves. It can be done, because we have support of Canadian women behind us.

The Chair: Madame Deschamps, you have one and a half minutes. *Vous-avez une minute—*

[Translation]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: Thank you. I think that the testimony we heard from other groups who defend and represent the interests of women was also grassroots testimony. In some cases, when you talk about the grassroots, these are poor women, women who are socially and economically underprivileged. I don't think that these women, who in my opinion are also part of the grassroots, are in a position to afford an organization that is self-financing. So these women go to organizations to have some representation, to have a voice.

I am from a rural region, as was the group that we just heard. Without the help of these organizations, which in my opinion do not conduct feminist or discriminatory research, it will be impossible to put forward measures to counter the tragic situations often experienced by these women, for example poverty. When a region is in economic upheaval, who's the first person who will directly be impacted by that situation? Most of the time, it's a woman. Most of the time, it's a woman who is head of a single-parent family.

• (1710)

[English]

The Chair: Madame Deschamps, I'm sorry, the time is up.

Ms. Landolt, you may keep that question in mind to address when you do your closing remarks. I have to go to the next round.

Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I do hope to have a chance to question all three of these witnesses, but I would like to start with Ms. Landolt.

I'm a little confused. You said that you had never received any funding from Status of Women Canada.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Very minor funding.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Oh. That's different from none.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: It was \$6,000, as opposed to millions and millions that were received by other women's groups. Our funding has been cut off entirely, from 1996, and only under enormous—

The Chair: Order.

Ms. Mathysen is asking a question, so wait for her, please.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Actually, it indicates here that you received \$6,000 twice. I wonder, now that the funding mandate has changed, will you be applying for funding as you have in the past?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: If we have a project that will help women, that will be accountable, and that will show results, we will apply. But we're not going to apply just to have ongoing core funding, because that's a waste of taxpayers' money. We certainly will apply, but we have managed to survive and do all our projects all on our own up to this time. We've been 23 years funding our own material, and all we've ever had was a paltry \$6,000 for a few years, and that was cut off entirely in 1996. We have never even been invited to the Status of Women meetings. Why?

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you. And thank you for correcting the record.

I wonder, do you think that equal pay for work of equal value is a laudable goal?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: No, it's a feminist concept. We do not agree with that. We think that wages should be determined by merit, by experience, and by the training. We do not think that equal value.... How do you equate a parking attendant's job with a secretary's? It's not possible, it's subjective. That is the very reason Canada had to put a reservation on equal pay in the CEDAW document. That's why the International Labour Organization can't, because it's subjective and it's not something that's acceptable. We fought against that from the very beginning, saying it's a feminist concept that is not practical. Wages should be paid on a person's ability, skill, and training, but certainly not because they're equated to somebody else in some other area entirely.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: You talked about professionals in Canada, women having reached professional status. Were you aware that even in female-dominated professions in Canada, women still make less on average than their male counterparts?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Yes. And do you know why that is? Because women work differently from men. We have a different work schedule. For example, you'll find that 59% of the medical graduates in fact in 2005 were female. And what do they take? They go into family medicine. They don't go into high-paying orthopedic surgery. Women in law, they're leaving because they have family commitments. For example, 57% of the law graduates are now women, 59% of medical graduates are women, but the vast majority of women are still going into the other fields of teaching, service industry, and nursing because it suits them because of family commitments. That's what women prefer. Most of the part-time workers are women, because it's what they want. And because women have a different work schedule, more women drop out—

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Most women drop out of their professions, and it's because we don't work in the same way as men do—

• (1715)

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I'm sorry, Ms. Landolt, I was a professional teacher, and I can assure that I worked far harder than most.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: I'm sure you do. But many women leave because they have family commitments. They don't work—

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I have another question. You made reference to all these phoney fronts that you were unhappy with. Who are they? In your presentation you talked about phoney fronts.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Yes. We have looked around, and we've discovered that many of these so-called organizations are a handful of women. For example, the National Association of Women and the Law received \$290,000 up to September 2007, and they are a handful of women lawyers. Who do they reflect? They go to court, they reflect only their ideology. But they don't have grassroots support.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Okay. Thank you.

I have another question for Ms. Graydon. You talked about the Women's Future Fund. Could you explain how that works?

Ms. Shari Graydon: Yes. Thank you very much.

The Women's Future Fund, as I mentioned, is a coalition of, at the moment, nine national women's organizations. We are constantly receiving applications for other under-resourced women's organizations. Our membership is made up of board members from other organizations. What we do, basically, is seek to access workplace giving programs like the United Way does. But United Way funding is not accessible to national women's organizations, so we have a two-step process. We have to get access from employers who invite us in and say, yes, you're welcome to talk to our employees. Then we speak to the employees; we talk about the work of our member groups, and employees get to decide whether or not to donate to our member groups through payroll deduction.

What we're finding is that when we have the opportunity to speak to people about the work that NAWL, LEAF, Media Watch, ACTEW, and other organizations do, people are happy to donate to us. The challenge is that it takes a long time. It took a long time for the United Way to build up its momentum, and it's going to take us another five or so years, at least, until we're self-sustaining. But that's our goal. We have been cut, all of our member groups, repeatedly over the last 15 years; we are absolutely attempting to become self-sustaining. The scope and the breadth of the work that our member groups do is simply not something that is easily funded. I know you've heard from some of our member groups; I'm not going to reiterate the great work that NAWL and CRIAW do, but it's not something that \$5 or \$10 membership fees are ever going to cover.

The Chair: You have one minute, Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Ms. Genaille, you bring an important perspective. I wonder if you could tell us why it's important for groups not just to provide concrete services but to lobby as well?

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: I think what Ms. Landolt talked about, not being funded by the Status of Women, is a reality for all women's groups. You may not get it all the time; you may not even hear from them. We've had the same problems over the years with different departments.

But the solution isn't to cut the funding, especially for the most impoverished women. I don't know the organization that Ms. Landolt represents, but certainly Métis women would not subscribe to her thinking. You have to walk a mile in our moccasins for a while and understand that we have to have funding for the impoverished women, whether they're aboriginal women or women of colour. When you talk about women being represented, less than 0.005%... you will not find aboriginal women in executive positions, in top management positions in this country. It's ludicrous for me to sit beside this woman and listen to her rhetoric, because it does not represent women in this country. When you say you have 55,000 members out of 20 million women, that's a little bit much for me to swallow.

• (1720)

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: We represent more women than any other organization.

The Chair: Order. We are here to hear different viewpoints.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: Yes.

The Chair: We have to respect each other. You may have very diverse viewpoints; you may be ideologically totally different from each other. That is why we brought in REAL Women, because we wanted to see another perspective of it. I think it's important that we respect everybody's viewpoints. Yes, you can interject and stop them if they are not answering your questions, but let's respect each other.

Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: I want to start off with Ms. Landolt.

I want comment first, Ms. Landolt, about your disparaging tone when you talked about LEAF as if they are....and your comment about what have they done. You may be aware of the rape shield law. Without their work, that would not have happened for women in this country. You may be aware of the fact that aboriginal women were not being recognized for the Canada Pension Plan at one point, even though they worked on reserves, but they now are able to receive it. You may have heard of the fact that immigrant women were not being given English as a second-language training up until the late 1980s because it was assumed that women were not going to work anyway, so why did they need language training to get settled in this country. It was only going to men. It was only as a result of the charter challenges program, which is another program that's gone... but never mind. Those are just some. I'm not going to go through the whole list of what they have accomplished. I just want to let you know that the advocacy and the work that organization has done for women over the years has been absolutely humongous and very valuable.

I want to ask you something. As I said, the immigrant women at one point, without advocacy and without an actual charter

challenge—which I was involved with at that point, with LEAF—would not have actually received English as a second language. The government would not have conceded this, backed off, and provided it. Since you object to funding for advocacy, and you say in your presentation you do services for immigrant women, how would you be able to assist in that situation? What would you have done?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Well, first of all, a lot of what LEAF has done—for example, the rape shield law—we don't agree with. I'm a lawyer, and I have another reason for that. There are legal things. There has to be equality in the defence, a mechanism, number one. In fact, I actually worked on the actual legislation when that was drafted, along with a group of women lawyers, and I never agreed with that right from the beginning.

Some of the things LEAF has done are all right, but most of it has not been acceptable: abortion on demand, the homosexual things—we don't agree with these. They have not represented and reflected grassroots Canadian women in the majority of their cases. Believe me, I follow every one of their cases, because REAL Women of Canada has opposed them many times in the courts—again, I might say, opposed them with our own money, while they were funded by the court challenges program and the Status of Women. Again, they're a reflection of only a handful of women. They are not a reflection of grassroots Canadian women—

Hon. Maria Minna: You and I can argue all day about whether or not we agree with the rape shield and all of the other things that were accomplished by LEAF, a great deal of it not through the women's program but actually through the court challenges program, and thousands of volunteer hours from the lawyers themselves. But my question to you was what you do for immigrant women who cannot access programs. You say we should not have advocacy.

Providing services and assisting immigrant women with, say, the English program or project isn't enough. Equality is not attained by simply giving a service. You also need to change the system. I'll tell you as an immigrant woman who has banged against the system that there was a time when immigrant women's organizations could not get a penny from government sources to provide services for their groups or organizations.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: First of all, with regard to English language training, everybody knows that immigration is a federal matter, but the education, the welfare, and the training are provincial

Hon. Maria Minna: No, this was a federal program. Ms. Landolt, it was a federal program.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Well, then why are the provinces not doing that? Why should the Status of Women be doing that—

Hon. Maria Minna: You're not listening to me. With respect, I need to interrupt. What I said to you is that what I was working with was a federal program delivered by HRDC Canada. It discriminated against immigrant women very directly, and if it weren't for the advocacy work done by me and other immigrant women's groups with the assistance of LEAF, they would never have changed the policy.

Let me go on to something else, because I don't want to waste time on this one. I just wanted to explain to you that there is a need for this kind of work, and hopefully you might accept that.

I want to ask some questions of Ms. Graydon, if I could. I'm sorry, I may be running out of time, and I need to share with my colleagues.

Ms. Graydon, I wanted to ask you this, and I asked this earlier. The constant discussion is that there haven't been cuts, that there is money there, because it's been redirected. The fact of the matter is, though, that the criteria for advocacy have been changed, that equality-seeking advocacy organizations can no longer get funding. How does that impact on the rights of women you work with, apart from within the specific services? Yes, I can apply to provide ESL or to provide counselling to a woman, but I cannot apply for funding to change that woman's condition or situation.

• (1725)

Ms. Shari Graydon: Really, that is the point I was trying to make when I talked about the history of the advancement. The advancements we have made over the last century have come through advocacy. Women got the vote because of advocacy. So many of the member groups of the Women's Future Fund—like LEAF, like NAWL, like Media Watch—that have advocated for systemic change, for policy and legislative change that would affect all women can't show how this is going to make this woman's life better right this minute, but in fact that advocacy work helps all women and changes all our rights. Without advocacy as part of what Status of Women funds, the kinds of progress that we have made in the last century will not be replicated. The very removal of the word “advocacy” and the word “equality” suggests that there's no understanding of how that change happens. It seems so fundamental that the change happens—

The Chair: You have one and a half minutes.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Madam Chairman, could I respond to that?

The Chair: It's her turn to ask the question, so whether she wants

Hon. Belinda Stronach: I'll just ask Ms. Landolt, very quickly, about REAL Women of Canada. How many of your members are members of Parliament?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: How many of our members are what?

Hon. Belinda Stronach: How many are MPs?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: I don't know. We don't ask that. We don't know.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: I just want to ask you a few quick questions. Are you a member of a political party?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: I am not.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: It claims on your website that many of your members attended the Conservative convention in 2005. Are you a Conservative organization?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: Some of our members did. A lot of our members attended the Liberal Party convention too. We're non-partisan. It's part of our organization. A lot of us were at the Liberal convention. You must have seen them there.

Hon. Belinda Stronach: You talk a lot about measuring results. That's a good thing, to be able to measure results. What measurable results has REAL Women of Canada achieved to advance women's equality? What are examples of that?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: We have a policy in our articles of incorporation—

Hon. Belinda Stronach: What results have you achieved?

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: —and we have always said that women who choose to be at home—we're not saying that everybody should be at home—should be treated with dignity equal to that of women who are in the paid workforce.

We have suggested that the national day care plan is only for a certain group of women. Your Liberal Party plan was not accepted by the public, because we want equality for women, and every woman should be treated equally. That's exactly what we've been working for. We don't care what the profession, but those women at home have been denigrated for their choice for far too long.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'd like to thank the panel for being here. I know the discussion has been a little heated, but that's part of the....

Yes.

Mr. Laurie Hawn (Edmonton Centre, CPC): Madam Chair, I have a quick point of order for clarification for somebody new to the panel.

We've had two hours of testimony from some very knowledgeable people. We've had six questioners from the opposition side and two questioners from the government side. I'm just wondering if that's the normal ratio, just in case I come back.

• (1730)

The Chair: Generally there would be two rounds, and the governing party would get three, but we had no time, and we went for one round only. That's why. Seven minutes were given to each one to be fair. Okay?

Mr. Laurie Hawn: Just for future reference, we can always expect to ask questions. Fine. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you for asking the question.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here. I hope you had a fulfilling experience. We will take your input. What I'd like to do is give you each one minute to wrap up, and I'll be very strict. It will be one minute only.

I will start off with Ms. Graydon.

Ms. Shari Graydon: If women's voices were heard, if government representation in the House of Commons were 50% instead of 21%, and if the most marginalized women's realities were reflected in the policies and priorities of the government, we wouldn't all need to be here at all.

I think that really speaks to why advocacy is necessary and why many organizations, like the ones I represent, are so concerned about the removal of the word "equality", because that suggests that the government is now even more resistant than ever to the kind of work that is necessary to ensure that women do in fact realize substantive equality, not just legal equality on paper.

I also want to say that I regret the amount of attention that has unfortunately been focused in this past hour on one particular group. There has been a lot of misinformation. I would love to have had more opportunity to respond to that.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Landolt.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: I'd like to respond and say that they mentioned that women got the vote through advocacy. Believe me, those women did it all on their own, without the Status of Women funding them. Women have many advantages, simply because as women we are perfectly capable of speaking out. We don't need government funding to pay for everything. It seems to be that they all want to be in the government trough to feed, but they don't want to stand on their own two feet and fight for what they believe in.

What does one mean by the word "equality"? That is the main problem. All of us believe that women should be equal, but there are different approaches to how we would achieve that. What has happened is that Status of Women has only accepted the feminist approach to equality. There are other ideas, other challenges for women, but they are all totally ignored. That's why it's crucial that the guidelines be changed so that all women, with their own ideas of how to change equality, will achieve it, and not just the feminist definition.

I would like to make a comment. On September 21—

The Chair: Your time is up.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: On September 21, MP Mrs. Minna got up in the House of Commons, addressed the government, and said, "On behalf of all the women of Canada, I'd like to ask about the funding." Who gave her the choice to speak for all of us?

The Chair: Order, please.

Ms. Gwendolyn Landolt: She doesn't speak to the grassroots element.

Thank you.

The Chair: Ms. Landolt, I'll finish it off. You went over the time, and you've now quoted Ms. Minna. I'll have to get her to respond to it.

Ms. Minna, I'll give you half a minute, please. Go ahead.

Hon. Maria Minna: I don't have the quote here, but with all due respect, as a member of Parliament, when I stand in the House of Commons to read a question, it's usually a result of having received petitions or what have you from constituents, and I'm speaking on behalf of the women I have spoken with. Yes, of course.

Maybe Ms. Landolt could someday get elected and she could speak on behalf of the women in her riding as well.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Genaille, go ahead.

Mrs. Sheila Genaille: I would like to thank you for inviting me here today.

I think when you're contemplating this issue, you should take away the labels "feminists" and "women". We are not at a place where we should be. If you look at the history of this country, when all your ancestors came here, you called us bloody savages. You called us idiots. Those were labels. We weren't at the same level as all of you. Take away the labels, please.

We're here for women's equality. When the first issue for aboriginal women is everyday survival, they need voices like mine to say don't cut funds, because the projects that we do give them a voice.

With great respect to what you're saying and your particular views, I am a woman. If you want to call me a feminist, that's fine. I've been called worse. I've been called a half-breed. I've been called a slave. I've been called a *maudite* Indian. So take away the labels, and remember there are women in Canada, and the aboriginal women are in poverty. They don't have voices. To cut funding that allows us to find answers to our issues, and to cut funding to people like NAWL and the other organizations that do work that we can use to bring our issues together.... It's very valuable. Please, take a really hard look at it, take away the labels, and keep Status of Women. In fact, funding should be increased and not decreased.

Again, thank you very much.

• (1735)

The Chair: Thank you.

Thank you, once again.

Thank you, committee members.

Yes, Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I don't want to prolong the meeting, but I want to follow up on Mr. Hawn's point.

In the routine motions that we adopted on May 11, 2006, I noticed that when you as the chair made the decision to continue in the same

pattern as we used through the normal second round of questioning, the final speaker should in fact have gone to the Conservative side as opposed to the Liberal side.

The Chair: I agree with you, but I'm going to reply to what you said.

I felt I was being fair to you, and I shouldn't have done that. I should have started with that round.

I had enough complaints that we won't do it again. It's done. We were fair to everyone, and we gave everyone seven minutes. It's done and finished. We can't do anything about it now. I'm not going to cry over spilt milk. It won't happen again.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Nor would I. I was only going to suggest that perhaps for the next meeting you could consider a different approach to make sure we obtain the balance that was achieved and set out in the standard motions that were originally decided.

The Chair: From the next time onwards, we will stick to starting fresh, and we won't be fair.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: *Merci.*

The Chair: Thank you.

This meeting is adjourned.

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