



House of Commons  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

---

FAAE • NUMBER 021 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

---

EVIDENCE

**Thursday, April 3, 2008**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson**

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:

**<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Thursday, April 3, 2008

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good afternoon, colleagues. Welcome. This is meeting 21 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, April 3, 2008.

Today we will have a special briefing to update the committee on the situation in Haiti. Our committee, as you know, tabled a report in the House of Commons in December 2006 entitled “Canada’s International Policy Put to the Test in Haiti”, following many meetings that we held on our study of Canada’s attempts to make a difference in Haiti. We have a number of witnesses here today to update us.

In our first hour we will hear from Rights and Democracy. We have Monsieur Jean-Paul Hubert, the interim president; Danièle Magloire, the coordinator of the Haiti office; and Nicholas Galletti, Americas regional officer. Also appearing, from the Parliamentary Centre, Mr. John Wood, the program manager of Haiti; and hopefully, from the Canadian Foundation for the Americas, Carlo Dade, the executive director.

We welcome you here today and we look forward to your comments. As you know, each person making a presentation may speak for approximately ten minutes and then we’ll go into the first round of questioning. I’ll also say that at the next hour we will have a second group of witnesses, but we will be leaving fifteen minutes at the end of the final hour for committee business.

Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Sorry to interrupt the flow, Mr. Chairman, but I would hope, if we can, to reserve thirty minutes if possible for committee business, because I know there has been a lot of committee business we’ve been trying to get to. If possible, I would appreciate that.

**The Chair:** Thank you. As you know, in the agenda we have allotted fifteen minutes, but we’ll see when it comes.

Monsieur Hubert, would you like to begin? Again, welcome. Good to have you with us today.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Paul Hubert (Interim President, Rights and Democracy):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and honourable members of the committee.

[English]

Are we all right?

**The Chair:** Yes, we’re just welcoming our new guest. He has arrived, so you go ahead, sir.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Paul Hubert:** I would like to start by thanking you for giving me another opportunity to speak to you briefly about the activities of Rights and Democracy, this time as regards Haiti. We must thank all of you for the committee’s commitment to promoting democracy. It is no accident that it was in Canada that the heads of state of the Americas decided in 2001—at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, to be specific—to establish a democratic charter for the hemisphere: the Inter-American Democratic Charter.

Article 1 of this Charter, which, by chance, was adopted on September 11, 2001, reads as follows:

The peoples of the Americas have a right to democracy and their governments have an obligation to promote and defend it. Democracy is essential for the social, political, and economic development of the peoples of the Americas.

Rights and democracy are at the heart of the matter when it comes to Haiti. Rest assured that we follow your proceedings and that they are a great inspiration to us. I am delighted to have with me Ms. Danièle Magloire, who coordinates the activities of Rights and Democracy in Port-au-Prince. So you will have an opportunity to hear from her and to ask her questions.

In preparing for my appearance before you today, I of course consulted your report of December 2006, to which you referred, Mr. Chairman. I would like to quote three brief passages from it.

The first is a quotation from Peter MacKay, who was the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time. This is what he said:

The government intends to remain in Haiti for as long as necessary in order to complete the reinforcement of international efforts undertaken with other partners. Our work is not done. Canada will therefore be there for an indefinite period of time.

The second quotation is taken from recommendation 7 in your report. It concludes as follows:

Canada should also work with and lend support to civil society organizations. A long-term aid strategy for Haiti must include both government and civil society.

The last quotation from the report is once again from Mr. MacKay. It reads as follows:

Perhaps the most important lesson drawn from past efforts [by donors] is the need for Haitians themselves to assume the leadership and responsibility for the implementation of their development agenda. The involvement of all sectors of Haitian society is key to putting all Haitians in charge of their future.

I do not intend to read every word of our presentation, which you have received. Rather, I would like to speak more generally about our activities in Haiti and explain why we have adopted the approach we are using there. The title of our presentation, "A Citizen-Centered Rights Approach to Democratic Development in Haiti" was chosen quite deliberately.

As we know, democracy was restored to Haiti in 2006. This was a long, difficult and courageous process. The task of the current government in Port-au-Prince remains—and Haitians are the first to say so—an enormous one. In order for this effort to be sustained, it must produce the results the people expect. This new democracy must produce some concrete results. In order for that to happen, we feel this democracy must be supported and sustained. That is what we are trying to do, but it is particularly important that it be supported within the country.

● (1535)

I think Ms. Magloire could confirm that, left to its own devices, the government will not be able to do everything that is required in order for the country to overcome its difficulties. If it is left alone, it will not succeed. This government needs the engagement of civil society, that is to say all the relevant resources that can be found and identified in Haiti. Everyone is going to have to put their shoulder to the wheel.

I should point out that the government itself wants the support and assistance of civil society. And that is exactly what we have opted to do. We have chosen to work with civil society which, I repeat, is working in partnership with the government. Civil society often represents the best-skilled in the country. Because of the dictatorships of the past, many people have fled the country, and at the moment, many competent engineers, lawyers and other professionals are not to be found in either government or Parliament. Today, they are still part of civil society. That is why it is so important to work with them.

A program we established in Port-au-Prince about two years ago is designed to give civil society the tools it needs to dialogue with the government, to develop action strategies with it and to develop concrete government policy proposals. So we are working to make civil society in Haiti a constructive player. I am not talking about developing tough guys or protesters, but rather about developing civil society, which, in a constructive way in keeping with the government's wishes, will work with the government.

That is the main focus of our activities. The report contains a fairly specific description of all the areas in which we have started working. We can talk about women's rights or the establishment of a civil state. I know that one of the committee members is interested in this right to identity. You have no idea how many people in Haiti have no identity. As far as vital statistics go, they are dead, they do not exist. How can they exercise their rights and become part of society if they do not exist? This is something we have looked at.

Let us talk about the involvement of young people. We have brought some young Haitians to Canada to see how young Canadians participate in democracy here through their involvement in political parties, but also at the municipal and regional levels.

I will stop my description of the program here, because you will find full details about this in the report.

Have we been effective? You have spent considerable time on this—it was the starting point for your study two years ago. Are we effective? We have been there for so many years, and the problem still exists. Have we been effective? By chance, at this very moment the programs introduced by Rights and Democracy are being audited. The legislation that created our organization provides that programs must be reviewed every five years by an independent agency to determine whether or not they are effective.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has given this job to a private firm. A few days ago, we received its findings about our work in Haiti. I'd like to quickly read some of the findings made by this auditing firm that went to Haiti to look into our programs there. It states:

Rights and Democracy's programming manages to integrate human rights and democratic development in a convincing fashion;

The focus of R&D's programs lie at the very heart of Haiti's national concerns;

Some of the results of R&D's activities are already being felt among the target groups;

R&D's activities help build an interface among the representatives of civil society [...]

In the opinion of these outside auditors, apparently the program meets its objectives and works as a link between the government and Haitian civil society. This is a crucial time for us because we are coming to the end of our budget, and the financial year has just begun.

● (1540)

I must tell all committee members that we are rather concerned, because the program we submitted to the Canadian International Development Agency has still not been approved. Will the little office we established be able to survive? We do not know yet. There is some urgency to the situation. In any case, the auditors said that the greatest risk facing the program would be that the office not survive. That would be a risk to the project, to Rights and Democracy and to the Government of Canada.

I would like to thank you for your patience. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would suggest that Ms. Magloire be given the floor briefly. Thank you very much.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madam, how long would your presentation be?

[Translation]

**Ms. Danièle Magloire (Coordinator, Haiti Office, Rights and Democracy):** It will take less than five minutes, because I know how limited your time is.

[English]

**The Chair:** Yes, that would be good.

[Translation]

**Ms. Danièle Magloire:** I'd like to thank the committee for its welcome today. I would like to describe the situation and say how important it is to strengthen civil society in a country like Haiti, where so much blood has been shed.

Everyone, including the international community, and particularly the United States and Canada, agrees that Haiti can be described as a fragile or frail state. This is not just an adjective. Once it has been categorized as such, we have to understand what that means. It simply means that this state is unable to carry out its duties and responsibilities. Even though we know this is a frail state facing many difficulties, there are people living in this country. And the people are its main assets. The people of Haiti have already demonstrated their desire to be involved.

I would just point out quickly that the principle of participation is enshrined in the Constitution of Haiti. Whenever there are upheavals in Haiti, they are mainly of a political nature. Despite the fact that this is a very poor country, there are no hunger riots there. Every time the people have mobilized, it was to demand a right or to speak out against the violation of a right. Hence the importance and necessity of elections. It is clear, however, that democracy is not established solely by means of formalities, procedures. A number of practices must be introduced so that they can be given a firm foundation. The way to do this is to get the commitment of the people of this country to this process.

Even before Rights and Democracy established its small office in Haiti in 2006, Haitian society had set the tone through a number of commitments. I want to make particular reference to the women's groups—le Mouvement des femmes haïtiennes pour l'éducation et le développement. I would mention in passing that today, April 3, is the anniversary of the social women's movement in Haiti. This movement took the initiative to try to develop other approaches. It is all very well to make demands, but that does not go far enough. We will have to be able to set forth proposals that are not magical or spectacular, but that actually take into account the country's capacity and resources.

Things are going badly in Haiti. We and our partners have our responsibilities, but it is clear that the main responsibility lies with the people of Haiti. In light of that, organizations have developed ways of working with the state. Things are going badly, but it is our state nonetheless. It is ours, and no one else's. Therefore, it is up to us to build it.

Once again, words are not enough. We have to develop work methods. When Rights and Democracy wanted to set up an office in Haiti, it was my honour to be contacted as someone who works for human rights. That is the approach I put forward, and it was accepted. We are not talking about establishing a new little NGO or new organizations, but rather to work with the existing ones in order to strengthen them and give them the tools they need to build democracy, which is so fundamental. Of course, there are some results, but what is even more important is the process itself. As some philosophers say, democracy is first and foremost a way of travelling. One either travels alone, or with the people, so that when the support disappears, the people can carry on themselves. There is no doubt that some mistakes have been made, but we are sure we are moving in the right direction.

I would like to speak generally about what we are trying to do. I will just refer to two major areas of activity. The issue of justice, beyond any questions of procedure, involves solving human rights problems about which human rights advocacy groups and civil society groups are aware. We must ensure that the electoral process

and justice procedures respect human rights, so that the state can establish the rule of law democratically. It seems superfluous to say this in Canada, but a state must be genuinely democratic.

I am here today to ask you to continue supporting this type of approach because it works. It may be a small project, but as we say in Haiti, "little by little". But let us take the time to build and to do things that will last.

Thank you.

● (1545)

[*English*]

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

We'll move to Mr. Wood, from the Parliamentary Centre.

**Mr. John Wood (Program Manager, Haiti, Parliamentary Centre):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I should like to say at the outset that the Parliamentary Centre welcomes the commitment and attention of this committee to the challenges facing Haiti and pledges its support to the work it is undertaking to ensure Canadian policy and programs effectively address these challenges.

The president and CEO of the centre, Robert Miller, came before you as you were developing your report cited by the president, "Canada's International Policy Put to the Test in Haiti", which was tabled at the end of 2006. At that time, a few months after what were undoubtedly historically significant and successful presidential, legislative, and local elections in the country, the committee acknowledged that these elections were only the beginning, though a vital step, in building sustainable democratic institutions and good governance in Haiti, where such institutions have always suffered from the neglect, public alienation, dysfunction, and organizational weakness that characterize fragile states.

● (1550)

[*Translation*]

In light of this, we informed the committee at the time that the parliamentary secretary would launch a significant support program for the Haitian Parliament with \$5 million over four years, between 2007 and 2010. This program is currently up and running and I would like to discuss it with you briefly today.

This initiative is part of the theme of governance and strengthening of the state, one of the three aspects of Canadian cooperation in Haiti, and seeks to contribute to reinforcing political governance and the national dialogue through the creation of strengthened and permanent capacity of the legislative power. It includes four program components: development of the capacities of parliamentarians, namely deputies and senators and parliamentary staff; the improvement of relations between the executive and the legislative branches through the promotion of dialogue between these two arms of the state; the opening of Parliament to citizens; and more effective management and operations of the two houses of Parliament.

As you know, the history of Haiti has not been favourable to the parliamentary instrument created at independence, over 200 years ago, as the army of the will of the people. And yet, the current Constitution of 1987, drafted at the end of the long authoritarian Duvalier regime, set in place strong a legislative power. The long-term result being sought by the current project is to ensure that the legislative function becomes a credible, reliable, effective, visible and present element in the national political space, on a permanent basis.

At the end of the project, our success can be judged by the extent to which the current Parliament will have managed to transfer the reigns of power to its successor in a positive political climate that respects the Constitution, something which has never happened in modern-day Haiti.

The project provides for points of entry related to the normative functions of any Parliament to legislate in an orderly fashion, to control government action and to represent the will and interests of the public.

With a few rare exceptions, all the parliamentarians elected in 2006 are neophytes in public administration and the positions to which they were elected. Through the speakers of the two parliamentary chambers, that is the Chamber of deputies and the Senate, we're reinforcing the ability of these respective commissions to assume their mandate. We put at their disposal spaces for them to hold their meetings in a structured environment which, unfortunately, does not exist at the permanent site of Parliament. We provided support and training sessions to explain in-depth how the work of the commission should operate. This training also applies to the methods and work tools during the plenary sessions of the Senate and the Chamber of deputies.

It's important to point out that these activities bring together elected officials and parliamentary staff to discuss the duties they share. Creating a positive and effective joint working environment is an important objective of the project, because that relationship has been traditionally characterized by contempt, mistrust and tension between two parties.

Right now, we are supporting the special commission that was formed to review and approve a new elections bill aimed at the next elections to renew one-third of the Senate and the creation of local and departmental assemblies. This is an important initiative insofar as it will ensure the positive continuity of the process of restoring democratic institutions which was begun in 2006.

[English]

The project also seeks to strengthen the effective functioning of Parliament at the level of political representation within these bodies. As you know, Haiti does not have what we would recognize as a stable political party system. Still, it is necessary for political groups to be able to come together efficiently within the parliamentary setting to debate and form their positions.

As a first step towards this objective, the project has decided to provide physical spaces for party caucuses to be able to meet together for this purpose. I might mention that this action to directly support the political groups within Parliament, which was not foreseen in the original scope of the project, is in line with the

recommendations that this very committee made last year in its report, "Advancing Canada's Role In International Support For Democratic Development". This is an area to which the Parliamentary Centre is giving increased attention in its programming.

With respect to the very important representative function of Parliament, and specifically parliamentarians, I would like to mention several activities the project has been engaged in. With the assistance of Radio Nationale D'Haiti, and in partnership with the Canadian NGO Réseau Liberté incorporée, a portion of the daily sessions of the Chambre des députés has been broadcast live to the population since the end of January. This objective is to inform the public of the parliamentary agenda and the manner in which Parliament works, and so hopefully improve its image as an important institution working in their interests.

This is the first time such a continuing activity has been undertaken in the country, because traditionally, only the appearance of the head of a state or prime minister before the joint session of the National Assembly has been broadcast.

In addition, the project is working alongside other donor agencies in planning for the holding of parliamentary committee hearings in local communities at the level of *départements*. Devising the proper methodology and organization of such public consultation is a complex and sensitive process, particularly as Haiti has almost no experience and tradition in this area as far as Parliament is concerned.

One of the areas being considered currently is that of education, given the government's intention to reform the current education system's legal basis, which will eventually have to be approved by Parliament. More generally, there is a need to insert Parliament into the process for implementation of Haiti's recently approved national poverty reduction and growth strategy. This strategy essentially constitutes the country's new national development plan, replacing the previous interim cooperation strategy. This strategy will be discussed at an international donors' pledging meeting this April 25.

It has to be noted that up to the present, in the drafting and public consultation that preceded adoption of this strategy, Parliament as an institution, and its members as representatives of local populations and groups, was not involved by government. With the beginning of process for implementation of the strategy, including its integration into the national budget, whose approval is one of the important functions of Parliament, our project intends to seek ways for formal and continuing evolution of the relevant parliamentary commissions in this area with respect to the local communities. This topic is one in which the Parliamentary Centre has substantive experience already in other parts of the world.

Finally, an area of work for bringing Parliament closer to citizens involves the manner in which Parliament organizes itself to deal with gender issues, and in a complementary fashion, to support women's voices in parliamentary affairs. The project has indicated its commitment to the support of the creation of a women's parliamentary caucus on a more formal basis than what currently exists, and to work with such a group on an agenda for promoting gender equality themes in the legislative and other processes, including extending this work into a broader gender network involving outside organizations alongside parliamentarians.

• (1555)

[Translation]

I wish to thank the committee for having given us the opportunity to explain some of the details of the project for supporting the Haitian Parliament that we, at the parliamentary centre, have the privilege of managing. I will do my utmost to respond to the questions of members of the committee to the best of my ability.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wood.

Finally, I welcome Mr. Dade, from the Canadian Foundation for the Americas.

[Translation]

**Mr. Carlo Dade (Executive Director, Canadian Foundation for the Americas (FOCAL)):** Good afternoon, everyone. At the outset, I'd like to beg your indulgence. I arrived last night from Madrid where I gave a talk involving Spain and Canada and dealing with cooperation with Latin America. I'm suffering a bit from jet lag. One interesting point for this committee, there were a number of discussions on the role of Spain in Haiti. Spain expressed its will to deploy more efforts in this regard.

• (1600)

[English]

I can return to that in the question and answer period, as I just returned. It's not in my prepared remarks, which will be distributed.

I would like to start off by again thanking the committee for their interest and their invitation to appear, but I would also like to start by drawing attention to something we mentioned the last time I came before the committee two years ago, something that was lost in the plethora of issues that were on the table at the time.

FOCAL, as well as other institutions and analysts involved in Haiti, was concerned with a multitude of issues at the time, and some of the most salient and pressing ones I think were lost a couple of years ago. In order for that not to happen again, I would like to start out by stressing something, which I will return to at the end, and that's the fundamental importance of significant work on the economic growth and job creation front. This is something that really has gotten lost. We've spent a lot of time working on the very important issues of governance, democracy, and promoting elections. I do not want to take away from the work that we have done here, especially that Canada has done in this area. It is critically important. However, we cannot forget the economic growth and the job creation side.

I don't know if anyone saw *The New York Times* Sunday edition two Sundays ago. There was an article about the impact of the commodity boom and the resulting macro-shocks that have hit small island states especially hard. We've seen food riots throughout the developing world, but in the Caribbean the effects of the commodity boom and the resulting macro-shocks have really been quite severe. They've hit Haiti too. Interestingly, though, in the article that focused on Haiti, they talked about the rehabilitation of the Duvalier legacy in Haiti. There was a certain nostalgia in looking to the past. Given the lack of economic progress, the lack of real improvements in the everyday conditions of people's lives, we're seeing a questioning of the gains that have been made.

I'd also like to point out that on the political side, while we have seen impressive gains with governance and with democracy, still a lot needs to be done. We've recently witnessed the vice-president of the Senate of Haiti being forced to leave the country under somewhat difficult circumstances. This is an issue that, again, warrants our attention, but I will return to economic growth and job creation at the end.

I would like to meet the mandate of the committee meeting by talking about the present situation in Haiti. My colleagues have done an excellent job reviewing the governance issues and the human rights issues, so I'd like to explore some of the other areas that are critical and that will be increasingly critical for Canada. The first of these is a reflection on MINUSTAH, and the role of MINUSTAH and what's been accomplished. This is the United Nations peacekeeping force in Haiti.

I was just in New York, at the UN, at a meeting organized by a Spanish think tank for an analysis of how well MINUSTAH's done and where it's going in the future. Two interesting points emerged for our consideration here. One is to think about what has actually occurred with MINUSTAH and what this means for the future of the hemisphere and future peacekeeping operations in the hemisphere.

We've had a mission in Haiti for over four years, with thousands of troops on the ground, essentially for one purpose, and that is to chase down a few gangs with guns. The major part of what we would think of as a traditional peacekeeping operation—going after insurgents and separating armed parties with political agendas—was accomplished very quickly in Haiti. The first mission, Operation Secure Tomorrow, or, as we called it in Canada, Operation Halo, by the United States, Canada, Chile, and France, actually pretty much succeeded in disarming the insurgents who came across the border. What's remained in the ensuing years has been a domestic police operation.

If you think about this, the amount of money, the number of troops, and the amount of time going into Haiti to conduct what is essentially an operation against criminal gangs that, in comparison with other criminal gangs in the Caribbean, are not very strong, not very professional, and not very well armed, should give us real pause about the future of the hemisphere and our engagements and what we'll be looking at in the future should we face another situation with a weak—failing, failed, fragile, whatever term one wishes to use—state.

The situation of security in the hemisphere is changing drastically. Gone are the days of guerrilla insurgencies. Even the FARC in Colombia has transitioned into what has been called a terrorist organization or a narco organization. It is less a political movement and less a political ideology.

• (1605)

As we face this sort of situation more and more in the hemisphere and become engaged in future peacekeeping operations, we should not think that they will be what we traditionally think of—separating armed groups, removing guerillas, or separating armed combatants. They will be more domestic police-keeping operations. We need to keep that in mind as we look ahead.

Another issue with MINUSTAH is the role of Latin America. This is of profound significance. We faced the situation, when the United States, Canada, Chile, and France first went in, of neither the United States nor Canada being able to commit the number of troops needed, for as long as needed, in Haiti. We are extremely fortunate in this regard. We make a point at FOCAL of expressing this sort of gratitude and thanks every chance we get. We are extremely fortunate that the Brazilians, the Chileans, the Argentines, the Uruguayans, the Peruvians, and others were able to step up when we, the United States, and others could not. We're indeed fortunate that they were able to take on an unprecedented role for them, not simply participating in the UN peacekeeping operation but putting enough troops in to take leadership. This has had a profound impact on the region.

When Brazil first went in and led the mission going in, there was much apprehension in Brazil and in the southern cone, and some derision elsewhere in Latin America. No one thought the Brazilians were going to succeed. Everyone thought they were going to fail. It's turned out to be just the opposite. They've succeeded where others have failed. This success has emboldened them and Latin American countries to consider taking on more responsibility in Haiti. We need to be really aware of this, to encourage and thank the Brazilians, and to encourage the continued role they're playing in Haiti.

It's also important to consider that this probably spells the end of northern hegemony in terms of UN peacekeeping operations. The Brazilians and their allies have been successful once. There's a feeling that should the situation arise again and the conditions are right, they could probably play this sort of role again.

This presents for us an interesting opportunity, and one that I'm very glad the government has seen, I think, and CIDA especially has seized upon, in reaching out to the Brazilians, the Chileans, and the Mexicans, who, even though they cannot participate in peacekeeping operations, are interested in joining their Latin American colleagues in taking on more of a developmental role in Haiti.

As I'm sure CIDA will talk about when they come up, we're looking to have a visit of Latin American development officials in Ottawa next week, and to work with them in explaining how we do development in Canada and looking to reinforce what they're trying to do in Haiti.

Another issue we need to think about—moving from Latin America to focus on Canada—is the public commitment to our engagement in Haiti by the Canadian public. This is something we're extremely worried about, at FOCAL and elsewhere. It seems hard to imagine, but in some ways it seems we've done a worse job communicating on Haiti than we have on Afghanistan.

I travel quite a bit in Canada and talk to communities, NGOs, business leaders, and local government officials about Haiti. It's a sideline of mine, not an official poll. I'm just really curious about the perceptions on Haiti. This has come out of the work we've done, conferences we've had, and conversations with other think tanks.

There are essentially four questions I generally ask. I'll go through them very quickly.

First, what do you think is the current situation in Haiti? The answer I get to that uniformly is, "Oh, Haiti? It's a basket case. Nothing's going right. It's the most dangerous country in the hemisphere. People are being shot every day. Nothing positive is happening."

Next, are you aware that security has improved, that there is a functioning government, that the homicide rate in Haiti is lower than next door in the Dominican Republic? The response I get to this is, *Vous blaguez. C'est impossible*. "You're joking. You've got to be kidding. This can't be true."

Next, do you think Canada should be involved in Haiti? The answer I most often get is, "Well...I guess so."

Finally, why do you think Canada should be involved in Haiti? The answer I most often get is, "I don't know. Because we've always been there? Because it's the poorest country in the hemisphere?"

These responses—"I don't know", "I guess so", and "Because"—are something you'd expect from your teenage son or daughter over dinner. They're not what you'd expect when asking the country about our second-largest aid commitment in the hemisphere.

• (1610)

So in the longer term, it may not be just the fragility of the state in Haiti that's worrying, but also the fragility of our commitment in this country. We really need to see Haiti become more than an all-Canadian government strategy or approach. It really has to become an all-of-Canada approach. That will mean an effective and persistent communication and outreach strategy on Haiti.



Finally, there are two other issues. You'll hear a lot about issues of disbursements, especially from the Haitian side. We've done extensive research and talked to folks at the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. Our indication is that the disbursement issue is really not a major problem. The Inter-American Development Bank has bent over backwards, and then some, to move disbursements. They've applied resources, both financial and human, to make sure that disbursements in Haiti move faster than they do anywhere else in the hemisphere. There's really not much more they can do at their end. The problem and the holdup is at the Haitian end.

On the economic growth and job creation front there are two ideas. On the things we can do, a lot of this will be more of a symbolic nature. Our trade with Haiti is not very significant compared to that of the United States or the Dominican Republic. We would rank fifth or sixth in foreign trade. But there are things we can do that send very important signals, especially to the partners. Even though we have a very open trade regime for Haiti and we have granted exceptions and allowed Haitian goods to come in, we can do more.

We're suggesting a unilateral trade agreement with Haiti, with a complete opening on the Canadian side to all Haitian goods and imports—obviously the sanitary and other requirements would be left. On the Haitian side, the International Monetary Fund already ranks Haiti as the most open economy in the hemisphere, so there's not much more we could demand from them on their side. But we could take the lead by opening up completely. This would send an important signal to the United States, which is looking at the HOPE and HERO legislation—special trade exemptions for Haitian goods. The United States exemptions are very limited. I think 3.5% of Haitian exports would be subject to special tariffs.

From our end we can do more. Haiti is also the only country in the western hemisphere that has special WTO exemption for these types of agreements, as one of the poorest countries in the world. So we wouldn't have to worry about other Latin American countries piling in asking for the same thing. This is something that would apply only to Haiti.

Finally, on trade and aid, we've put a lot of emphasis on trade agreements promoting growth, economic development, and equality in the region, but we seem to have forgotten about Haiti. So this would address that issue.

On the Dominican Republic, we should look at our negotiations and discussions with them and ask if they can do more vis-à-vis Haiti. The United States did that with the Jordan free trade agreement; we could do something similar with the Dominican Republic. Would the Dominicans like it? They might not, but then the Peruvians probably weren't thrilled about the CSR agreement we put in on that agreement, and the Colombians probably aren't thrilled about the side agreements we're putting in on human rights, environment, and labour with that agreement. But we have a history of doing this. We can do this with the Dominican Republic agreement. This is something we should consider.

Finally, in two weeks, on the 16th and 17th, we have a delegation from the Haitian private sector coming to visit Ottawa. This is something that has never really happened before. Leaders of the

progressive private sector visit Washington, D.C., every year on fact-finding missions to meet congressmen, senators, and U.S. government officials. This is the first time they're coming to Ottawa. Many of you have been contacted about that, and we hope to see you in two weeks.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're going to very quickly move into the only round we'll have of five minutes each for question and answers.

Mr. Patry.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First of all, I'd like to ask our guests to respond to us in writing. The five minutes allocated for questions and answers will not allow us to obtain all the answers we would like. And yet we would like to obtain them.

My question is for Rights and Democracy and for FOCAL. First I'd like to congratulate Mr. Hubert, even though he occupies an acting position, and wish him every success. I'm also very pleased to note the presence of Ms. Magloire and the fact that for the past two years, Rights and Democracy has had an office in Port-au-Prince.

Mr. Hubert, Rights and Democracy also supports the Groupe d'Appui aux Rapatriés et Réfugiés with a view to "achieving the right to identity through universal registration of civil status and national identification".

Last month in Washington, you presented the results of your research in the framework of a partnership with the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Centre for Human Rights. Could you provide us with a few details on this research as well as the recommendations?

• (1615)

[*English*]

I'm also going to ask Mr. Dade a question.

I read with great interest your special report last November by a joint delegation to Haiti by FOCAL to Inter-American Dialogue, *Haiti: Real Progress, Real Fragility*.

As we're all aware, Canada is very involved in Haiti's elections. In your report you said:

Haiti's political stability is threatened by the possibility of elections that are subject to indefinite postponement.

We know there were five elections in the past 18 months in Haiti, at a cost of \$15 million U.S. each, meaning \$150 million, and the sixth one, last December, was postponed and resulted in the death of another senator. That means we're left with 19 senators out of 30, and there's no possibility of any amendment to the constitution.

My question is about this senatorial election. Could this bring instability to Haiti again? And do you think any work is being done right now by the Haitian government to amend their archaic constitution? Because if you want to amend their constitution, the amendments need to be adopted by two-thirds of both houses, then ratified by the following Parliament, and then they come into effect following the third Parliament. That means nothing is going to be done.

They need to change this constitution. Do you know if they have done any work on this issue?

Merci.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Hubert, of Rights and Democracy, on the first question.  
[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Paul Hubert:** Mr. Patry has invited us to send a written response, and that will be done. The right to identity is currently the subject of many discussions. Since I wear another hat, that of a member of the Inter-American Judicial Committee, I will also include documents that might interest you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you for that.

Mr. Dade, on the question of the elections.

**Mr. Carlo Dade:** I'll send something in writing.

[Translation]

However, with regard to instability, it depends on the situation.

[English]

If the reworking of the constitution also includes a change to allow a second consecutive presidential term, which some fear, then, yes, we will have major problems. If it's limited to changes in the electoral regime, there will be complaints, there will be outcry, but it will not lead to instability. So the issue is whether or not this is used as an excuse to change the constitution to allow two consecutive terms.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You have another minute, Mr. Patry. Were there any other comments, or should we just move to who is next?

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** You can move to the next person.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot (Papineau, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Magloire, gentlemen, thank you for being here today. As you know, I'm the only parliamentarian of Haitian origin to have sat in the Parliament of Canada. As such, I'm particularly proud to be here. Of course I would have liked to feel the same pride by being a parliamentarian in Haiti, but things being what they are, I try to make a bit of a contribution to the best of my ability.

Ms. Magloire, we know that despite all the deficiencies in Haiti, if it managed to survive up until now, it's in large part thanks to the work of women and women's groups. I would therefore like to know

how Canadian aid specifically targets the women's movement and women's groups in order to achieve better development in Haiti.

Mr. Wood, with regard to the question of identity, I know that an enormous amount of work has been done regarding the preparation and holding of the elections. However, work was to be done in the meantime to continue to identify the population outside of election periods. For the next elections, you will undoubtedly start establishing the identity card again, among other things, but I'd like to know what was done in the meantime and how Canada intends to take charge of that work as it had promised to do.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Magloire first and then Mr. Wood.

[Translation]

**Ms. Danièle Magloire:** I would like to give an example to answer Ms. Barbot's question. Haiti has had a Parliament for a very long time. And yet, there had never been any women members. Thanks to the work of women's organizations, eight women became parliamentarians at the last election, four in each of the chambers. That work was made possible in part thanks to Canadian aid, through CIDA's Kore Fam Fund, in Port-au-Prince, the goal of which is to support women. In particular, the fund supports one of the organizations dedicated to the participation of women in political life.

Last year on April 3, those women parliamentarians commemorated National Haitian Women's Movement Day. They pointed out that for the first time, women parliamentarians had been elected to the Haitian Parliament, that they had inherited its traditions and were attempting, as one of the witnesses indicated earlier, to overcome the difficulties of life in Parliament, including the need to obtain guidance and training. Rights and Democracy also tries to provide them with such support. Our latest intervention was on an analysis—and I can't help smiling—of the draft text of the future electoral law, which includes provisions on the rights of women but also on human rights in general.

• (1620)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Wood.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Wood:** With regard to identification cards, or their regularization beyond what was done in preparation for the election, our project does not specifically deal with electoral instruments. I will, however, ask for information from my colleagues at Elections Canada who are interested in that issue.

Nevertheless, inasmuch as the bill can provide a legal framework for that issue, we would be in favour of an approval process within Parliament.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wood.

Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot:** Ms. Magloire wanted to add something.

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, go ahead.

[Translation]

**Ms. Danièle Magloire:** I simply wanted to clarify something. Rights and Democracy is working on the issue of national identification with its partners from an organization called Droits humains, which was instrumental in creating the national identification framework. The government first reacted by creating an elector's card. As you know, such a card costs money and can only be used once. Thanks to the submissions of the organizations that were supported by that Canadian institution, not only was the card adopted, but legislation was passed establishing the national identification office. It now happens that that office is in need of human and financial resources.

The last thing that was accomplished, with the assistance of Rights and Democracy, was the national study on registration and identification. From birth and through the various stages of civilian life, discrepancies were noted in peoples' status, especially regarding women, and these had consequences on the establishment of genealogical relations and identification.

Some progress was made thanks to concerted efforts. On International Women's Day, Parliament agreed to pass a bill recognizing various types of spousal relationships in Haiti, given that married couples form a minority. Only 12% of Haitians are married, the vast majority live in consensual relationships.

We can provide you a copy of this document if you so wish. Work on identification is in progress. It has been the focus of a meeting with the OAS, which is partnering with Rights and Democracy on this issue. The process needs to be restarted by providing state institutions with the necessary resources.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame.

We'll move to the government side. Mr. Goldring, please, for five minutes.

**Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, madam and gentlemen, for being here today.

Certainly I think everybody would agree that the priority and focus of the Government of Canada today, and the international community, gives longer-term confidence and encouragement for the resources being used in the area. Of course there are many needs throughout the area, but I believe the security of the country and lessening of the security difficulties there is at the heart of it.

One of the other things I saw when I was there was the political aspect of it. Being there for the election of the Parliament, I certainly would like to hear more from Mr. Wood on that aspect. It certainly was very evident to me that there was a disconnect from the communities that elected somebody to the central government and much more work being done with 45 or 50 political parties on the

scene. I would like you to make a few comments on the progress being made in that area, and maybe you could submit something in writing to us so we can better understand.

The second question would be to Mr. Dade. As I said, the security aspect is very important, even to the encouraging of families sustaining jobs and work. Also, we visited the Gildan manufacturing concerns. I was quite impressed with their facility. Those were double minimum wage jobs, and there were thousands of them. If one Canadian business can do that in an area, then certainly there could be encouragement for others. With all due respect, I think these things have to follow in stages of security, good governance, and a climate that would encourage this type of development.

Mr. Wood, maybe you could touch on some of the advances you've done, and then, Mr. Dade, perhaps you could comment. Maybe the climate is better for this type of realization.

• (1625)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Wood.

**Mr. John Wood:** Mr. Goldring just put his finger on a rather important issue, in our view, and this is an important part of the project. I can't come to you today and say that we've come up with the magic solution. A lot of our attention in deploying resources is going to be placed on this very thing, because the heart of the success of the project is democratic practices—in fact the accountability, if you will, of Parliament to the citizens. It's not sufficient to remain only working in the area of institutional reform.

The examples I gave were what I might call initial steps in that process, attempting to explain to Parliament in a virtual way, if I can put it that way, what Parliament actually does, because there's not only a major alienation but a major ignorance in Haiti of what parliaments are supposed to be doing.

In our view, what has to be done is prepare the parliamentarians not just to engage themselves with the citizens at the time of elections, but to create their local bases. As you know, even though they're elected on a constituency-type basis in Haiti, they do not have a presence in the constituency in a permanent manner. The budget of the state does not provide sufficient resources for them to engage the population, and unfortunately the work of Parliament retains them in Port au Prince for too much of the time.

In the project's view, what we're going to have to be doing is putting forward some resources as incentive resources for parliamentarians to engage with the population. From looking at other experiences that have been attempted, it seems that rather than simply sending parliamentarians into the *départements* to listen to the population and ask what they want, the population is more likely to be perceptive and participatory if this is done around particular issues. I cited the example of education as one area, and many more could be used on that process.

That generally is the strategy that we feel is most likely to pay off: that we use the parliamentary institutions—commissions, if you will—and engage them in a direct relationship with the community.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Wood.

If you want to supplement any of your answers, Mr. Dade, do so very quickly. We are confined by the clock here.

**Mr. Carlo Dade:** Sure.

In terms of economic growth and investment, there has been quite a bit of success in Haiti. He mentioned the Gildan plant; we also have the free trade zone operating—Ouanaminthe, in the north, along the Dominican border—and cell phone companies: we have four companies in Haiti, whereas I think six years ago we had none. So there are opportunities. The private sector is coming in.

Part of the problem is perception. There are wide swaths of Haiti where there are no murders. Most of the homicides are confined to small areas of Port au Prince. David Beer can give you greater details on this. The danger posed by the homicide rate in Haiti is less than it is next door in the Dominican Republic, much less than it is in Jamaica, much, much less than in Central America and Colombia, yet we see significant foreign investment.

The Latin Americans are very good on this. They think the two islands have to be sequenced together; you can't do one without the other. And they've been proven somewhat right. I would argue that their success so far would lead us to give more heed to what they're saying.

Finally, there's a story people tell about California; the Haitians tell this all the time. If somebody gets shot in Los Angeles, you don't not invest in Silicon Valley.

It's simply lack of communication about Haiti. We're not getting enough information about the actual situation now. And there are tons of offers and tenders that the IDB and others have for jobs, which they can't get met simply because of poor communication and bad public perception.

•(1630)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Dade.

We want everyone to have an opportunity for a question.

Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I just have one quick question, to do with the idea of peace-building. Perhaps Mr. Dade, or maybe someone else, might want to answer this question.

It's on the role of training of police and whether anyone can give me statistics on how many women have been trained in the area of police services. I think we can all acknowledge that there is a profound, disproportionate result from violence against women, gender violence. I want to know where we are on that: how many women have been trained in the police forces, and how many will be trained in the short and medium term.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Dade.

**Mr. Carlo Dade:** I don't have exact numbers, but we did talk about this extensively with Mario Andresol, who's the police chief. He mentioned that they're making special efforts to recruit women. They had problems in the past recruiting. They've changed recruitment tactics, and he said they've had some success.

The domestic violence issue, he said, is more problematic. They haven't had as much success. He brought these issues up. I don't

think I brought up the domestic violence issue; I think he brought it up, so it's something he's thinking about.

On the recruitment side, they're making progress.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Madame Magloire.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Danièle Magloire:** Regarding Haiti's national police force, the current operational staff has a maximum of between 700 and 800 women, including administrative staff.

Civil society, human rights and women's organizations are working to increase the effective participation of women. This was recognized by the executive branch, through the work done with the Department of Justice. Moreover, we are now training a cohort that is to include about 300 women.

[*English*]

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

We want to thank each one of you for being here today. We apologize for the rush. These one-hour meetings are far too short. The input has been very well accepted today. Again, we remind you to submit any further answers you may have. We look forward to getting them.

You did bring up one question, Monsieur Hubert, with regard to the CIDA funding that hopefully could help keep that office open in Haiti. CIDA will be next here, and maybe that question will come forward in the next hour.

We will suspend momentarily to allow you to make a very quick exit from your chairs, if you wouldn't mind. Our other guests, if they could, can quickly take their seats.

•

\_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•

•(1635)

**The Chair:** Order.

In our second hour we're continuing our special briefing to update this committee on the situation in Haiti. From the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade we have Robert Derouin, the director general, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force Secretariat, or START. We also have Ginette Martin, the acting director general of the Latin America and Caribbean Bureau. From the Canadian International Development Agency we have Luc Fréchette, director general, and also Louis Verret, director, both of the Haiti and Dominican Republic Americas Branch.

Also, we want to hear again from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and David Beer, director general of international policing, who is here with us again. Welcome back.

Welcome to all of you.

These meetings have been cut short. We've already had a request to take out the last half hour for committee business, but I'm not sure we can do that. I'm not certain how many presentations we have here. It's three? Is it three from the department, plus the RCMP? It is three altogether. All right. So if we could keep these to nine minutes, we could still do a first round of questioning. If you want to cut your presentations a little short, that gives us more time for questions. You may have heard in the previous hour that there were a couple of questions for CIDA specifically.

Welcome. Madame Martin will start.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Ginette Martin (Acting Director General, Latin America and Caribbean Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for the invitation to address this committee and speak to the progress made in Haiti since the government's response was tabled in February 2007. I will provide a brief overview of the current situation and highlight some of the positive trends we are seeing, as well as some of the key themes of our engagement in Haiti going forward.

It has been a full year since the government responded to your committee's report, and we have had the opportunity to witness some concrete advances in the situation facing that country. Canada is playing an important role in sustaining these improvements through our commitment, our ongoing support for and policy dialogue with the Haitian authorities, and our continued leadership role in mobilizing the international community to stay the course.

However, stability across all sectors remains fragile. We must constantly remind ourselves of the need to anticipate progress on an incremental scale in Haiti, and of the need for continued vigilance and flexibility in our approach. Three broad themes inform Canada's commitment to Haiti: democratic governance, security and prosperity.

We are fortunate that the current Haitian government enjoys legitimacy as a result of a credible electoral process. Since his election in 2006, President René Préal has been able to build on his resounding victory with an emphasis on political inclusiveness and an obvious desire to tackle the country's numerous social and economic problems. The result is a political stability (however fragile) unknown in Haiti since 2000. Préal's own reputation, as an honest broker and untainted by corruption, has helped enormously. There is palpable will to bring about positive change.

The most dramatic and visible improvements in Haiti are in the security situation. For the first time in years, government control over marginalized areas in urban centres has been re-established, notably in Cité Soleil and Martissant, once lawless zones under gang control. Progress has been so significant that Prime Minister Harper was able to visit Cité Soleil during his July visit to Haiti, the first such visit by any foreign leader.

This is thanks to strong leadership on the part of President Préal, and the essential contribution of MINUSTAH. These achievements continue to be built on through efforts by Canada and others to strengthen Haiti's capacity to take on security challenges. My colleagues, both from the RCMP and from the department, will discuss this in greater detail. Further, our lessons learned in Haiti,

including past withdrawal of UN troops before the job was consolidated and completed, argue for continued Canadian support for a long term MINUSTAH presence, and a mandate that equips the mission to respond adequately to the needs on the ground. From that perspective, we were particularly pleased with the October renewal of the mandate for 12 months, with a renewed focus on border management.

● (1640)

[*English*]

The good-news story in Haiti continues with the significant macro-economic advances that were initiated in 2004. Inflation has been brought under control in the 8% to 10% range, although, of course, as Carlo Dade mentioned earlier, the situation with the world food prices is bringing a new challenge to Haiti. The exchange rate is stable and foreign reserves have doubled. In 2007, for the third consecutive year, the Haitian economy enjoyed a positive growth rate of 3.2%.

However, these positive developments, combined with improved prospects for private investment and massive international investment in infrastructure, have as yet failed to bear fruit in terms of new jobs and improved living conditions for the Haitian population. The challenge facing the Government of Haiti is to ensure visible peace dividends to the local population, a challenge to which Canada remains firmly committed as a means of ensuring sustainable and positive return on our investment there.

We have seen that Canada's presence in Haiti resonates with our partners in the hemisphere and it is an important element of the government's re-engagement in the Americas. Our commitment to the Haitian government and the Haitian people is an opportunity to demonstrate all that Canada has to offer to the hemisphere, to fragile states, to stabilization, to reconstruction and long-term development. Haiti is also a challenge to Canada's ability to deliver on our promises, to bring focus and real leadership to bear in all these areas.

Inherent in this is the risk to our credibility in all these areas if we do not leverage the resources necessary to ensure the success of our current engagement and that of our partners in Haiti. As Prime Minister Harper remarked during his visit to Haiti:

...the security of our entire region will be enhanced by greater stability in Haiti, and a stronger Haitian economy will serve our goal of expanded trade and improved employment opportunities for people throughout the Americas.

The past 12 months have firmly established Canada's leadership role in Haiti. We have the trust of the Haitian government and the respect of the international community. A series of high-level, high-profile visits to Haiti started with the Prime Minister in July 2007, and they have included the ministers for foreign affairs, CIDA, and public safety, all departments engaged in this whole-of-government effort, and further reinforcing our leadership.

During his visit Prime Minister Harper announced an increase of the Government of Canada's contribution towards the reconstruction of Haiti, for a total of \$555 million, from 2006 to 2011. This commitment is only surpassed by Canada's aid commitment to Afghanistan.

The whole-of-government character of the Canadian effort was further reinforced very recently with the launch of the bilateral Canada-Haiti expanded consultations. These took place last week, when an 18-strong delegation, including representatives from five government departments and three agencies, as well as the Government of Quebec, travelled to Haiti for high-level dialogue and an exchange of views with the Haitian authorities on the priorities moving forward.

Established donors like the U.S. and the EU appreciate the contribution we are making in stabilizing one of the world's most fragile states, as well as the experience we bring to an effort that seeks to distinguish itself from past failed attempts there. Unique to our current engagement is the fact that for the first time Latin American troops comprise a majority of the UN force in Haiti, a point that Carlo Dade also underlined. These same countries are now initiating development activities in Haiti, again something that our CIDA colleagues can address and which was also mentioned by Carlo. Emerging donors in our own hemisphere, such as Brazil, Chile, and Mexico, are increasingly looking to us as a partner and a guide for their involvement in Haiti.

Our common-cause commitment to Haiti can therefore be in turn leveraged to further reinforce bilateral objectives with those countries. Thus Canada's engagement in Haiti is having a real impact in the country but also more broadly in the region.

• (1645)

Through our commitment to a sustained, long-term engagement and leadership in Haiti, Canada is shown to be a driver and active partner in the promotion of prosperity, security, and democratic governance in the hemisphere. These are themes that we intend to carry forward as we continue to bring focus to bear in our commitment to making a real difference in Haiti.

[Translation]

Thank you once again for this opportunity to discuss our current engagement in Haiti. My colleague, Robert Derouin, from DFAIT's Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force, will be able to answer specific questions you may have regarding Global Peace and Security Fund disbursements in Haiti, particularly in light of recent initiatives announced by Minister Bernier during his visit in February. I am also joined by colleagues from CIDA, who will elaborate on our development programming, within the context of Haiti's National Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Our RCMP colleagues will then speak to Canada's deployments to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti, and Canada's contribution to police reform.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madame Martin.

Monsieur Fréchette, welcome.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Fréchette (Director General, Haiti and Dominican Republic, Americas Branch, Canadian International Development Agency):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will be very brief. Further to the intervention by my colleague from Foreign Affairs, I would add that the current situation offers an occasion—"window of opportunity"—that the government and the donor community plan to use to good advantage.

Haiti is a fragile state where the sustainability of activities continues to be a challenge, but where progress has been made. The current relative stability gives us the opportunity to envision longer-term results. Despite this fragility, our joint action has enabled us to achieve results.

For example, we supported the holding of elections in 2006 and 2007; we distributed three million voter ID cards, which were mentioned earlier; we have provided hot meals for school children; we have increased the quality of education; we have conducted awareness campaigns against HIV/AIDS and drug abuse; and we have strengthened the credit union network in Haiti.

We are at the final stage of preparing a report on our results for the period of the Interim Cooperation Framework, which ended in fall 2007. We plan to post this report on our webpage in the near future. We are all satisfied with, and encouraged by, the Government of Haiti's tabling of its national Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the GPRSP. This document will become the necessary means through which the international community must better coordinate its activities to support Haiti's priorities from now until 2011.

As for the Canadian International Development Agency, and in accordance with the principles of the Paris Declaration, we plan to align our future programming with the priorities contained in Haiti's GPRSP, based on its three main pillars: growth vectors, human development and democratic governance. This approach will also allow us to consolidate our achievements. Our current programming supports such areas as central government institutions, the justice system, Parliament, health, education and road infrastructure and is well aligned with Haiti's priorities.

I would like to thank the committee again for this opportunity to discuss our efforts in Haiti. I am here with the Director of Programming, Louis Verret. We are available to answer your questions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Monsieur Fréchette.

Mr. Beer.

**Chief Superintendent David Beer (Director General, International Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In the interests of brevity and because I've distributed a text of my presentation, I'll cut directly to the chase. If we could accept the fact that the security situation in Haiti has indeed improved, I'll jump over a number of paragraphs and go right to giving you a brief resumé of our current commitment to Haiti.

Currently, sir, we have 76 serving police officers of a commitment of 100 on the ground in Haiti. In addition to that number are 19 contracted agents with policing experience who also assist on the ground in the development of the Haitian National Police. Having recently secured important commitments from policing partners around the country, in particular among our policing partners in Quebec, we anticipate the Canadian policing contribution to the MINUSTAH will be elevated again to the authorized strength of 100 serving police officers during the summer of 2008.

For the information of the committee members, the serving police officers include 21 members of the RCMP, 23 members of the Sûreté du Québec, 24 of the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal, two Ontario Provincial Police officers, two Service de sécurité publique de Saguenay officers, one from the Durham Regional Police Service, one from the Service de police de Saint-Jérôme, and one from the Service de la sécurité publique de la Ville de Rivière-du-Loup. Seven of those members are women police officers, which I think gives a good accounting of our police services within Canada, indeed. It is perhaps to a lesser degree, but certainly seven women police officers represent almost 10% of those numbers.

Also, Mr. Chair, I think the committee might be interested to know that although our numbers are down to a certain degree in the total number of almost 1,900 serving police officers, in the mission Canada continues to have very key roles. Indeed, Canada holds the position of deputy commissioner of operations, senior mentor and advisor, and senior mentoring unit for the police for the city of Port-au-Prince. We are in charge of the *Bureau de la lutte contre le trafic des stupéfiants*, the counter-narcotics unit. We're also in charge of the anti-kidnapping unit. We also contribute to border management, the academy, and *la formation de la police nationale*. Also, we're involved in a financial integrity and assets management project within the Haitian National Police. Finally, Mr. Chair, the vetting and registration of the HNP is also a responsibility of a Canadian police officer. Indeed, the vetting program continues to be an important program for MINUSTAH.

I think I could leave it at that and leave the remainder of the time to questions, Mr. Chair.

•(1650)

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Beer.

We'll proceed into the first round.

Madame Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.):** Merci. Thank you very much.

It's a real pleasure for me to be discussing this today, because I was Minister for International Cooperation when I visited Haiti. I'm glad to hear, Madame Martin, that it's time for the UN to finish the job. At the time I remember part of my job was to do an assessment. In fact, my report back was to say that we could not leave, that the UN needed to stay longer, but unfortunately that advice wasn't listened to, and we know what the outcome of that was.

I want to get back to a couple of questions. One of the earlier presenters said that Parliament and civil society had not been involved in the development of the PRSP. Is that true? If so, what's the buy-in now? I find it strange if that would be the case.

Maybe, Mr. Fréchette, you could answer that for me.

**Mr. Luc Fréchette:** Thank you for the question. I could not tell you how, but I know for a fact that there has been consultation with regard to the PRSP in Haiti. We could perhaps provide you with additional information with regard to how extensive those consultations are.

We had a Canada-Haiti consultation last week. I was in Haiti. I also met after Christmas with President Préval. I had several occasions to discuss this document, this poverty reduction strategy, with Haitian authorities and also with other donors. I think the government of Haiti is extremely committed to this. There will be an international donor conference at the end of April that will specifically have to address this poverty reduction strategy. The focus they would like to have is the implementation of it.

From our perspective, this is a very good document. The government of Haiti is committed to it.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I don't question the commitment. I just wondered, because my understanding and my recollection of all of this area was that the consultation to develop a PRSP of civil society was important. In this case, the gentleman earlier said that neither the Parliament nor civil society were involved in its development. I found that strange. So I'm asking you to tell me whether—

•(1655)

**Mr. Luc Fréchette:** The information we have is, yes, there has been consultation with civil society. What I can do is verify that information and send that answer in writing to the committee.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I would appreciate that, because it's important.

From my trip, which was in 2001—a long time ago—one of the things I noticed at that time was that there was very little or no cooperation among the donors or participants, the players.

I'll ask you a couple of questions, and then you can answer them at once.

Could you give me a bit of an update as to what's happening there now and who's taking the lead in what area, and to what extent are women in Haiti participating in the rebuilding of Haiti? I don't just mean in terms of their being educated, but actually being part of the development of the constitution, of the electoral laws, of the structures of governance, so that they're part of that. We've seen this in other countries that have started from scratch, such as Rwanda and South Africa, where they build in women's rights. Women were part of it from the ground up, and they tend to have actually more women parliamentarians as a result and much more buy-in. So I'm wondering how that's playing out in Haiti.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Fréchette, again.

**Mr. Luc Fréchette:** With regard to donor coordination, I think you're touching on a very important issue. Donor coordination is absolutely essential if we want to improve aid effectiveness and make an impact.

In terms of the coordination in Haiti, we currently have several projects and initiatives that we are co-funding with other organizations. That does facilitate aid coordination extensively. There is a group in Haiti called the G-9, now the G-10, which is all the main *bailleurs*, who are meeting regularly to discuss what the future initiatives will be.

I think one key element that will happen over the course of the conference in April is that the Haitian government has made it clear that it would like to have a dialogue with each of the international community donors and look at the funding of the poverty reduction strategy by sector and the extent to which sectors are funded or underfunded, and ask donors directly, to be able to close the gap.

Having this document would become one of the key tools by which I think the donor coordination that we have right now in Haiti could be tightened and much improved.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

As to women's involvement in the constitution, I know we have already heard about the numbers of women in the Parliament, undoubtedly in committees and working in Parliament, but specifically I think her question was on the building of the constitution.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It was on their involvement in rebuilding.

**The Chair:** Right.

[Translation]

**Mr. Louis Verret (Director, Haiti and Dominican Republic, Americas Branch, Canadian International Development Agency):** Thank you for that question. I'm going to answer in French.

First, I must say that CIDA considers the issue of equality between men and women to be very important. Your question is broader than the involvement of the agency in promoting equal opportunity. Our programs in Haiti are all reviewed transversally with regard to equality between men and women. We also have a fund called the Kore Fanm Fund. CIDA is one of the major funding agencies as concerns promoting equality between men and women.

I cannot respond to your specific question, that is what is being done for the promotion of women and how this activity is managed. I imagine that you will receive a more specific answer.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You can always submit more of those, if you wouldn't mind.

Madame Barbot.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here today.

The role of the Haitian diaspora has not yet been addressed. The previous government had made a genuine attempt to involve the diaspora in the development program, but I don't know what the result was. However, this topic was outlined very clearly in our report. As we know, the diaspora provides approximately 35% of the

gross domestic product. Therefore, it is a major contributor of funds. I would like to know what is being done in this respect.

The previous witnesses talked to us about funding. Rights and Democracy is present in Haiti and is having trouble getting its funding renewed. However, I imagine that this is a common problem affecting the programs that you lead in conjunction with NGOs.

What steps are you taking to ensure that the projects are not temporarily suspended due to a lack of funding? Are you making a special effort to ensure that there are not service gaps between the end of a program and its renewal?

• (1700)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Martin.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Ginette Martin:** My colleague from CIDA will provide a partial response to your question concerning the diaspora.

As you know, a consultation process was launched concerning the involvement of the Haitian diaspora in Canada. It was extended to the Americas and elsewhere, beginning with the conference that was held in 2004. Since that time, we have maintained a regular dialogue with the Haitian diaspora to ensure that it is aware of the efforts made by the Canadian government.

In addition, we worked with the Inter-American Development Bank, through the Department of Finance of Canada and CIDA, to determine how we could facilitate the transfer of funds to Haiti and their use in reconstruction efforts. We are awaiting the analysis report published further to these consultations, which are continuing with the financial institutions that participate in royalty-related transactions.

I will turn the floor over to my colleague, who will speak about cooperation efforts with representatives of the Haitian diaspora.

**Mr. Luc Fréchette:** As you mentioned, the Haitian diaspora sends some \$1.6 billion to Haiti, which accounts for more than all of the international aid received by this country. CIDA believes that the role of the diaspora in Canada is essential to development efforts in Haiti.

In February, Minister Oda met with the diaspora in Montreal. There will certainly be other meetings, especially as part of the poverty reduction strategy in Haiti. We will have to meet with our partners and hold consultations. We have support funds for the diaspora and three main initiatives. We have a funding program intended for diaspora organizations of some \$2.5 million, which is scheduled to end in 2009.

As these funds run out, we will evaluate the outcomes of this program, and then determine whether to pursue a similar initiative based on lessons learned.

In 2007-2008, we provided institutional support to the Regroupement canado-haïtien pour le développement (ROCAHD). We also have a cooperation program as part of which over 110 volunteers were sent to Haiti in 2005-2006. Some of these volunteers included members of the diaspora.



We have an initiative that provides institutional or technical support to Haiti's core institutions, which allows us to use the services of consultants and specialists to assist the Haitian government. Members of the diaspora also participate in this project.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Fréchette.

We'll go to the government quickly. Mr. Goldring, quickly, and then Mr. Lebel.

Both pose your questions and then we'll get the answers.

• (1705)

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Thank you, the department and gentlemen, for appearing here today.

I'm encouraged that the prioritizing and the focus of the Canadian government seems to have some improvement. One of the comments that was made earlier, I believe, by you, Ms. Martin, was that the Prime Minister actually visited Cité Soleil, whereas a year and a half ago, when I was there, they wouldn't allow me there in an armoured vehicle. That is a considerable improvement, even though I'm decidedly more expendable than the Prime Minister. It is a decided improvement in what has been happening. Along with this security there was also a comment on cross-border travel of criminals or criminal elements and gangs.

I understand Minister Bernier was visiting with Haitian officials. The question is this. What efforts have been made or are being made to improve relationships with Haiti and the Dominican Republic vis-à-vis the cross-border labour issues, employment issues, and other things? Maybe we could have some commentary on whether there has been some improvement on that element.

I'll let Monsieur Lebel ask his question too, and then we'll hear your answers.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lebel.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Lebel (Roberval—Lac-Saint-Jean, CPC):** I care deeply about public safety. Since I can only ask one question, I would like to have more information on the impact of our actions. I know that Minister Oda and Minister Bernier travelled there recently and made important announcements.

Do these announcements have a veritable impact on the lives of Haitians? How can we contribute to the well-being of these people by making tangible gestures like the announcements that were made recently?

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Lebel.

Mr. Beer, would you like to answer that last question first?

**C/Supt David Beer:** Yes, I could.

With our internal, whole-of-government partners, we're exploring bilateral opportunities that may support our multilateral contribution to the United Nations, including the following: working more in the area of counter-narcotics and border integrity, the cross-border

movement of goods and services and people; collaborating with our border services colleagues; and indeed profiting from positive relationships we have as a police organization—and as Canadian police organizations—in the Caribbean and in particular with the Dominican Republic.

So we feel that we do have more to contribute, and we will be exploring that with our whole-of-government partners.

**The Chair:** Just quickly, before you come back to Mr. Goldring's questions, we lost one officer—I think a retired officer at the time—earlier. Has there been any other violence against any of our police in the training or as they're—

**C/Supt David Beer:** No. My last appearance before the committee was shortly after the death of former RCMP member Mark Bourque. I'm pleased to say that since that time, though we have been exposed to considerable violence for a period of time, there have been no further casualties.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Madame Martin, could you reply to Mr. Goldring's question?

**Mrs. Ginette Martin:** Yes, I wanted to complement what Mr. Beer was saying. Sorry, it's not a comment on the borders. I will let Mr. Derouin speak to the borders.

In terms of tangible results in announcements that are being made, one thing I think Minister Oda announced in early February was a \$75 million construction project to build a road between two urban centres in an area of Haiti that has really seen very little development.

I had the pleasure of accompanying Minister Bernier when he was in that particular region and seeing an event with the population and how enthusiastic they were to see that. I think that is related to an earlier experience I had. I was impressed, when I was speaking to some of the local population, with how the one thing they pointed to in terms of tangible results was the fact that they no longer had to drive eight hours across a very bumpy road, which usually meant the buses broke down and the vehicles broke down, in order to get to a market. That road is not the one we're building, but that is just an example of what is being asked of donors like Canada.

The fact that a road had been improved meant that instead of maybe eight hours to reach their destination, they were travelling two hours to reach their destination. So there have been very concrete results in that respect.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Go ahead very quickly, Mr. Derouin.

**Mr. Robert Derouin (Director General, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force (START) Secretariat, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** Thanks for this opportunity. It's my birthday today, so this is a wonderful present to be here.

**The Chair:** Well, happy birthday. We'll give you an extra ten seconds.

**Mr. Robert Derouin:** There is a lack of adequate infrastructure and state presence along that border, not only in terms of illicit trafficking of goods and people but also an irritant with the Dominican Republic.

We have committed through the START program in the Global Peace and Security Fund \$12.2 million for infrastructure development and equipment for Haiti's land and maritime borders, including improving the Haitian maritime service coast guard type of service, training immigration officials, and training law enforcement officials to deal with the human trafficking.

There's also the importance of cooperation between Haiti and countries in the region on border security. There was, when Minister Bernier was in Haiti, a trilateral poll of Hispaniola, an event with the participation of Dominican and Haitian government officials, to inaugurate an effort for land border collaboration.

Also, through START, we have been working to support dialogue and collaboration among the government of Haiti, MINUSTAH, the Dominican Republic, and other countries in the Americas on issues pertaining to border management and regional security.

There's one last bit. We've been working with the IOM, International Organization for Migration, on trying to champion some legislation through the Haitian Parliament on the trafficking of people. That might come through over the next while.

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

We'll move to Mr. Dewar, please.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I actually will just make one comment. Well, no, I'll make two comments.

I have an observation for our friends from the RCMP. If there's a way to have more women involved, I think most of us would like to see that. It's great to see that there's 10%, but I think most would hope we could see that complement grow.

I'd just say to CIDA that we heard from Rights and Democracy. I know a question was put forward to you by someone else, but it's just to encourage you to support the work they're doing.

My only concern when I go through the Haiti file is that we talk about prisons, judges, and security, and these things are all very important, but I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done with civil society in supporting and building that. So I'd like to underline that, and thank all of our guests for being here today, especially our friend who has his birthday today.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Dewar.

You actually asked the question I was going to ask, and that I think was more directed to CIDA. I think it's funding from them.

Also, I just want to let you know that there is a review that Rights and Democracy is going through, and the Haiti portion has been completed. If there was a concern about waiting for some review on the Haiti thing before that money was allocated, if indeed that is the wish, that thing is available.

Mr. Patry said he had a ten-second comment.

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Not a comment, a question for Monsieur Beer.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Beer, you told us that there had been a very significant decline in the number of murders and kidnappings in Haiti, especially in Port-au-Prince.

A few years ago, Haiti was a hub for drug trafficking, most commonly originating from Colombia. What is the situation now? Is there less trafficking of drugs originating in Colombia in Haiti, or is the situation about the same?

[*English*]

**C/Supt David Beer:** Haiti's position is a location or central point for trans-shipment of cocaine from

[*Translation*]

South America. Drugs are still smuggled to Miami, Boston, New York and Montreal. Drug trafficking still exists.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Is it much as before, or is it improving?

[*Translation*]

**C/Supt David Beer:** I have to say that the situation is probably about the same as before. There is still much work to be done in the fight against narcotics.

[*English*]

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

I want to thank our guests for coming again and for updating us. As you know, with the report that we concluded last year, we do like these occasional updates, so thank you for being here today.

We're going to suspend and come back to committee business.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_
- 
- (1715)

**The Chair:** We will call this meeting back to order.

We want to move right into our committee business. As you recall, at the last meeting we were dealing with Madame Barbot's motion in regard to Omar Khadr. I think at that point, if my memory serves me correctly, Mr. Obhrai had the floor.

Mr. Obhrai, you were speaking to the motion, and we were debating the motion. We have moved the motion to the front of the committee's order paper, and we are now debating this motion.

Mr. Obhrai.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair, for debating this motion.

First of all, I would like to welcome Mr. Mark Eyking and the others out here. It's good to have them here.

Mr. Chair, I was just wondering—and it's up to Madame Barbot—in light of the fact that the NDP motion by Mr. Dewar is very important, time-sensitive, I was wondering if he could have that motion moved first and talk to that, and have this motion moved down to the subcommittee, and then we can discuss that, considering the fact that it has a time element to it, and this motion does not have any time element to it. If I were to propose that we move that ahead of this for—

**The Chair:** Well, Mr. Obhrai, what you stated was that we not move it in front of this, that we take this motion to subcommittee, which we've already really debated.

There are two options. Perhaps you can convince Madame Barbot of that—I would rather doubt it. The other option would be that with unanimous consent, because we've already moved this one ahead, we move Mr. Dewar's motion ahead of this one that we're in the middle of debate on.

We could adjourn debate on Madame Barbot's motion and go to Mr. Dewar's motion and come back to Madame Barbot's motion, but I think we've already really debated the subcommittee.... I don't know.

Have you spoken to any of them in regard to Madame Barbot? Are you doing that now?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** No, I haven't spoken to Madame Barbot. I'm doing it right now.

**The Chair:** Have you spoken to Mr. Dewar about this? Is he able to speak to this today?

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Well, I was hoping to get to it today. That's why at the beginning of the committee I asked if we could extend our time for committee business, hoping that we'd be able to deal with Madame Barbot's proposal and get to the one on the MDA, because it is time-sensitive.

**The Chair:** Again, we're in the committee's hands here. We either continue debate right now on the motion that we have—and my intentions are at 5:30 to conclude it—or we need unanimous consent in order to go to Mr. Dewar's motion and then to come back to Madame Barbot's motion.

I haven't heard any type of a motion.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** I suppose Madame Barbot has to agree to this.

• (1720)

**The Chair:** Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot:** Mr. Deepak Obhrai has asked me to suspend dealing with the motion and to study the one tabled by Mr. Dewar. I would like him to tell me why. We have been working on this motion for several weeks and as far as I know, Mr. Obhrai has made no effort to help us do constructive work in this regard. So I don't understand why he is the one asking me to come to this kind of agreement today.

[*English*]

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Chair, the accusation of my not making this committee work is absolutely ridiculous.

Nevertheless, the point is that—as we discussed this matter down in the steering committee—the subcommittee on human rights is the appropriate place for this to be in. So the work is not being stopped; the work is getting done. There is not a question about this.

The issue on Radarsat was that it was a time-sensitive issue. Mr. Dewar wants something practical. Obviously it's an NDP motion. So as far as I am concerned, it doesn't really matter to us whether they come along or not, but it's up to them. Anyway, if the opposition is not willing to do that—

**The Chair:** Pardon me, Mr. Obhrai, but in all fairness here, we need some type of a motion. You've asked for consent, but are you asking to suspend debate on this?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** I am seeking to know the views here before I put the motion. There is no point in putting a motion and letting my debate go, if, the way I see it, heads are just twisting and saying no, which is the usual thing. Whenever I speak the opposition will always say no. So they have to—

**The Chair:** Madame Barbot.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Vivian Barbot:** I really don't understand how the parliamentary secretary, who is always telling us that he represents the government, can come here this afternoon and, without even discussing it with the person making the motion, ask us to substitute Mr. Dewar's motion for mine, whereas we have been working on it for several weeks.

I would like to hear his explanation. Why this change? What is his aim? Is he going to guarantee to us that in the next five minutes he will be adopting Mr. Dewar's motion? That would be a fine proposal on his part.

[*English*]

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Yes, that's very good. I still have 195 countries to speak about.

Okay, I am saying this. The Dewar motion is time-sensitive, this one is not, and we had agreed that this could very easily go down to the subcommittee, which had agreed to do that.

**The Chair:** Mr. Obhrai, why is Mr. Dewar's motion time-sensitive? Is that the date in April it has extended to, and it's specific to that date in April?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Yes, that's right. That's why I'm saying....

In the meantime, I'm also saying that this one, where Madame Barbot says she has worked so much, is not off the table. It goes back to the subcommittee on human rights, which has agreed to listen to that.

I'm just putting this as a suggestion.

**The Chair:** It's a suggestion. All right.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Yes, this is the suggestion I'm putting forward. If it is agreeable, then we will move this there and we will go back to Mr. Dewar's motion and move forward to getting other business done.

There are a lot of motions over here that need to be looked after and done. So I am suggesting, if Madame Barbot accepts that this motion moves to the subcommittee on human rights, that's fine with us. Then we will move it with Mr. Dewar's motion.

**The Chair:** Is it fine with you, if you were to move Mr. Dewar's motion ahead of Madame Barbot's, if she is not willing to have it go to subcommittee, because we've already spoken about that, to then come back to this motion?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** No. We would like to have this motion go to the subcommittee first.

**The Chair:** That would be your preference.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** It would give us the opportunity to move forward.

**The Chair:** You're saying there's only one option here, and that's to leapfrog Mr. Dewar's ahead and send hers to the subcommittee, but you would not look at doing Mr. Dewar's first and then coming back to this one.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** If, for example, to Madame Barbot also, the subcommittee on human rights for some reason comes along and says that they have difficulty doing this, she can always bring back this motion again. As you know, the opposition will have to work this out anyway.

**The Chair:** We do have a problem, Mr. Obhrai, because we've already debated sending it to the subcommittee.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** It doesn't matter, I'm putting the suggestion again. I know you've debated it. I'm putting it again. We debated something else in the steering committee as well, but that didn't happen, so the opposition.... I'm just putting this motion forward so we can get Mr. Dewar's—

• (1725)

**The Chair:** So it is a motion.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Well, no, I'm asking for an opinion here. Is she agreeable that we put a motion?

**The Chair:** We would need a consensus, and I don't sense right now that we have that consensus, so we'll continue debate on Madame Barbot's motion.

She says no.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** She's saying no, so we are not accepting a time-sensitive motion from the NDP. Is that what...? At this committee, I want it very clear, so the Liberals who are sitting out there can understand what is happening here. We have a time-sensitive motion that's sitting out there and we don't want to debate it, but we want to debate a motion here brought by Madame Barbot, which is not time-sensitive, right, and then we say this committee is not working. Am I getting it clear?

**The Chair:** I don't want to take up all the debate on the motions, but what I'm saying is if your motion would have been to go to Mr. Dewar's motion and then come back to Madame Barbot's, that might have been acceptable, but we've already debated the fact of which committee would do it. That may be an option to her. That may not be.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** That's what I'm asking, if this is an option to vote and I can put this forward and if she agrees in the spirit of cooperation, move forward.

**The Chair:** But she has said no to sending it to the subcommittee.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** I didn't hear.... I'm talking now—now, now.

**The Chair:** She just said it—no. So would you still be open to both bringing Mr. Dewar's motion forward, and then coming back to this one?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** I don't see what the level of this thing is. There are other motions that are important here. Let's put the Liberals in the hot seat.

**The Chair:** We'll continue debate.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Khan would like to speak.

**The Chair:** Mr. Khan.

**Mr. Wajid Khan (Mississauga—Streetsville, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's quite surprising that we have a subcommittee, which can address this, and I don't want to go there after the fact, but I'll give a few comments.

Everybody in this room is concerned about human rights. People are all aware of Mr. Khadr's position. Whether Liberal or Conservative governments, our human rights records for Canada have been pretty stellar. Sometimes I'm just wondering, Mr. Chair, with the new realities in the world today, the world has evolved into something very different today. This is a very important issue, and I want to address it. Are we somehow diminishing the national security value of our country? Are we, out of the goodness of our hearts and compassion as Canadians, forgetting some of the realities around the globe?

The issue here is about a child soldier and his age and youth.

**The Chair:** On a point of order, Madam Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'm not quite sure what's happening. I need some guidance from the chair, because I thought we were trying to decide which motion would go, but it seems that Mr. Khan is debating the motion, or having a discussion.

**The Chair:** No, we've already decided that we are not proceeding with Mr. Dewar's motion because we had already dealt with this, and on Madame Barbot's motion, it was passed that we debate it.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** In that case, Mr. Chair, do we intend to go past 5:30?

**The Chair:** No, no.

Mr. Khan.

**Mr. Wajid Khan:** With your permission, Mr. Chair, I would like to speak about an individual, and they're connected because of age. This committee is to understand the age issue of Mr. Khadr.

A gentleman by the name of Mr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, born in Egypt, in a suburb of Cairo, was reportedly a studious youth. His father was a pharmacologist. Mr. Zawahiri was arrested at Anwar Sadat's assassination, and I will tell you how it is connected with Mr. Khadr in a minute. He served time for arms possession. In 1980 Mr. Zawahiri went to Afghanistan to fight the Russians and climbed in bed with Osama bin Laden. Actually, this gentleman is known as Al-Qaeda's number two.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** All right, Mr. Chair, we can call the question.

**The Chair:** Are there any other points of debate on this motion?

I call the question on Madame Barbot's motion, which reads:

Whereas Omar Khadr, a young Canadian, will soon be facing trial by military commission on allegations of war crimes; whereas he is the only foreign national still being held at Guantanamo; and whereas his trial would be the first in which a tribunal would rule on war crimes committed by a child soldier, therefore it is proposed: That the committee invite to appear, as soon as possible, first and foremost, Omar Khadr's lawyers and experts to explain why they are calling for all accusations against Khadr to be dismissed; and Secondly, that the Minister of Foreign Affairs and relevant government representatives be invited to appear before the Committee to report on measures taken with respect to this file.

(Motion agreed to)

I congratulate Madame Barbot. Your debate today really brought tears to our eyes.

**An hon. member:** Unanimously.

• (1730)

**The Chair:** The motion is carried. I think we have a consensus.

We are adjourned.

---





**Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons**

**Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes**

**Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the following address:  
Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à l'adresse suivante :  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

---

**The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.**

**Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.**