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## **Standing Committee on the Status of Women**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, February 26, 2008**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi**

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## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, February 26, 2008

• (0920)

[English]

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

The first order of business is a motion by Ms. Mathysen.

Ms. Mathysen, could you read the motion for the record, please?

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** The motion is as follows:

That the Committee for the Status of Women conduct pre-budget consultations with groups and individuals able to direct the government to ensure that the budget does include gender based budgeting and reflects the needs of women;

And that the Committee for the Status of Women conduct a post budget review with groups and individuals to assess how the budget addresses the needs of women;

And that these consultations be reported to the House of Commons.

I think this would be very helpful in terms of the committee coming to terms with a very complex kind of analysis, and that would help us to do our job in terms of promoting the needs of women through this committee.

Also, in the testimony we heard a week before last, the presenters indicated that there are several levels of gender-based analysis training that's made available. I'd like to suggest that perhaps we could avail ourselves of one of those options so that we were indeed apprised of how a good gender-based analysis proceeds. Then we can evaluate what we hear from civil society and assess the budget as it comes forward.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll have questions and comments.

Ms. Minna goes first, and then Ms. Davidson.

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

I like the motion, but I would suggest two amendments. One is that we do a joint consultation with the finance committee on this and set aside a special time to do it. I was on the finance committee, and sometimes they try to do a... We can do separate...and then we'd report to the House and there would be two separate reports. But it would be even stronger if there was a joint consultation, and then a stronger report that was adopted by both committees, as the finance committee has a fair amount of weight.

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna, where specifically would you like us to put the joint consultations—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** If I could finish, then I'll give you the words. That's one amendment.

The second amendment would be in paragraph two, and this goes back to my recommendation—which was agreed to by this committee, if I recall—that we hire consultants to do work for us. This is an ideal place. The reality is, women's groups out there, while they have some expertise, are losing money and they do not have the time. And it's not fair to expect them to have to do a thorough analysis of a budget, because it is complicated and it is a lot of work.

I also think it has more weight if the consultant is here to advise, as Budlender does for her country, on whether or not the government has met its targets or how it has done that budget or not. So I would change that to say that the consultant to the committee would in fact do that post-review on the budget.

**The Chair:** Could you give the wording so that we can have Ms. Mathysen...?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I would say “That the Committee on the Status of Women, jointly with the Standing Committee on Finance, will do pre-budget consultations specifically with groups and individuals able to direct the government....” The rest of it is okay.

And then the second one would be, “That the Committee on the Status of Women conduct a post-budget review with the support of consultants....”

• (0925)

**The Chair:** To contract out to experts? Okay?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes, to contract experts who would advise the committee. I think that would strengthen this piece considerably.

**The Chair:** Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC):** Before I make a comment, if I can just clarify, the second paragraph then reads that the committee “conduct a post budget review with the support of contracted experts”.

**The Chair:** Experts, yes.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Okay.

Am I discussing the amendment or am I discussing the motion?

**The Chair:** You are discussing the motion, because we have not come back to Ms. Mathysen yet.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Okay. I definitely had some difficulties with the first paragraph. I really don't think it is this committee's role to conduct pre-budget consultations, so I did have some big concerns about that. I know the proposed amendment has changed that somewhat, but I really feel it is up to the finance committee to do those pre-budget consultations. I think they should be done, but it's the finance committee's role.

I really didn't have a whole lot of problem with the second paragraph. If it is done as in the proposed amendment, with consultation with experts, I think that's what this has been all about for us, trying to determine how it can be evaluated. So I don't have a problem with that. The experts may be our analysts who are providing expertise. We haven't got that far yet.

I think leaving it as "experts" leaves that discussion open. We are going to determine that before we're done, I'm quite sure.

**The Chair:** Just to bring it back to people's attention, when we do any contracting of experts we should say "under the supervision of the Library of Parliament", so that there is a control mechanism in place and the liaison committee would have no problems if we did certain things. So we need to be cognizant of that.

Ms. Mathyssen, concerning the proposed amendment, is this a friendly amendment? Are you in agreement?

**Mrs. Irene Mathyssen:** Yes, I think that does indeed strengthen the initial motion, and I do welcome it.

**The Chair:** Okay. Both amendments as suggested by Ms. Minna?

**Mrs. Irene Mathyssen:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Okay. Is there any other discussion?

Somebody now has to read the proposed amendment so that we know what we are voting on.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Bélisle):** It reads:

That the Committee for the Status of Women, jointly with the Standing Committee on Finance, conduct pre-budget consultations with groups and individuals able to direct the government to ensure that the budget does include gender-based budgeting and reflects the needs of women;

And that the Committee for the Status of Women conduct a post budget review with the support of experts under the supervision of the Library of Parliament to assess how the budget addresses the needs of women;

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Sorry, "contracted experts"; otherwise why would they be under the supervision...? It just says "experts"; we're contracting out.

**The Chair:** Yes, that's exactly what she—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** But the word "contracted" wasn't there.

**The Chair:** Did you say "contracted"?

**The Clerk:** No, I didn't.

**The Chair:** Sorry, I'm reading my notes here. It should read "contracted experts".

**The Clerk:** Madame Deschamps has an issue.

**The Chair:** Madame Deschamps.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Just to be certain that I understood correctly, the motion reads as follows: "That the Standing Committee on the Status of Women jointly with

the Standing Committee on Finance conduct pre-budget consultations [...]

**The Chair:** That's right.

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** I have a question about this. What if the Standing Committee on Finance refuses to work with us?

[English]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** In that case, I think we would just go and do it ourselves. But I don't think they would refuse. I don't see why they would.

**The Chair:** So you're saying, in regard to the last sentence, if the finance committee does not agree, then what?

● (0930)

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Precisely.

[English]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay. I suppose that at that point the standing committee could take it unto its own and do its own thing, but that's duplicating things.

I don't see why the finance committee would say no. I've worked with them before, and they do understand that they have to get a thorough consultation. I suppose this committee could always go to the Board of Internal Economy and ask to be heard.

I don't think they would say no. I'm doing it because, having been there, I think they generally want to make sure they've covered....

I don't see how they could have any credibility refusing another standing committee to look at an aspect of their budget and have any credibility when they report, especially if we've put in another report saying they have not done their job.

**The Chair:** However, you have a very valid question, Madame Deschamps, because it is in the mandate of the Standing Committee on Finance to do pre-budget consultations. It is not in our mandate to do pre-budget consultations. All we are asking for is cooperation, because we are looking at one aspect of the budget that, really, is gender focused. If Finance tells us they are doing gender-based budgeting or gender-based analysis, then we want to give them that eye or viewpoint.

Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Conducting pre-budget consultations would be a problem, as I see it, given that the budget is scheduled to be tabled this afternoon. I may be wrong, but I think it's a little late for pre-budget consultations.

[English]

**The Chair:** It's for the future, because we are working towards—

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Perhaps in the future, but conducting pre-budget consultations for today's budget, well it's...

**A voice:** There will be other budgets in the future.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I realize that.

[English]

**The Chair:** We are putting this in place for future generations as well, so that if we're not around, we can at least have cooperation. If we are very serious about gender budgeting and about what we are doing here at the moment, we might as well pass a motion that says we can work in cooperation, because you can't do it now—it would be putting the cart before the horse.

**The Clerk:** It's good for this Parliament, this session.

**The Chair:** Exactly, yes.

Yes, Madam Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I will just make one further comment.

I just feel it's the role of the finance committee to do this, and I'm not sure what benefit there would be for us to sit through these.

I think our role is in the second statement, that we conduct the post-budget review and make sure it's done. That's what we are extremely interested in, to see that it does happen. The finance committee already does this, and I think we'd be duplicating their role otherwise. I think our role is in the second paragraph, that with the support of these contracted experts we make sure it has been done.

I think it is a strong statement, and I think if this passes it will happen, because the finance committee will know that we're going to be doing the post-budget review.

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I understand what Madam Davidson is saying, because of course I've sat on the committee for a number of years and I know that's not in our mandate and all of that. But sometimes it's a matter of a penny of prevention, if you like, or forethought—and foresight goes a long way, rather than having to react to something that could have been or might have been.

So I don't think it hurts to send a message. At minimum, this motion would send a message to the Standing Committee on Finance that they ought to be aggressively looking at this issue, which they have not been doing to date. At best, they would welcome and agree to cooperate and work with us on a number of meetings, and it wouldn't have to be the whole of their hearings, but some of them.

I don't think this is a negative thing, but it is actually a helpful and supportive thing. Of course, they also know that we will be doing the post-budget review, so I think all of it helps. I don't have a problem with it. I don't think it steps on anybody's toes. It's simply saying that we would like to have some work done pre-budget, because otherwise, after the fact, it is a little too late. You can complain, but, you know....

● (0935)

**The Chair:** I think there are two things that we are discussing here: one is proactive participation and the second is reactive participation. The proactive participation is not that we're claiming to be consultants on the budget. Instead, what we want is a coordinated effort. At the moment, everything operates in silos. So if we have a coordinated effort between Finance and, say, the Status of Women, those pre-budget consultations are not our mandate. If we could appeal to them and say, listen, if we could sit and look at this, at least

it will help your budget processing, instead of your coming before us and our always asking you and reacting to this and that.

I think that's the essence of what we were trying to do, or what Ms. Mathysen was trying to project. It's proactive participation. Then, when they have done it, we will have a better feel for it. And if we have made a mistake, then we can blame ourselves. But I think this opens up a participative process.

Are you comfortable with that?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** No, I still think it's something the finance committee has been doing. They are legislated to do that, or that's their role, and I think it is duplication. Our role is the second paragraph.

**The Chair:** Do they consult different groups of women?

Yes, Ms. Mathysen.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

We heard from a number of groups who came to our committee and provided some very good and practical ideas that will benefit women. While I understand that the finance committee may hear some of this, or listen to some of this, it is not always reflected in the budget. This is a mechanism to create greater awareness that we're watching and that we are absolutely serious about taking that step to make sure women's voices are heard and that the budget serves not just some of the population but all of the population. Having that mechanism to review is, as was indicated, both proactive and reactive. Once the budget is in place, it's too late. I want these voices to be part and parcel of the budgeting process, and I'm not convinced they always are.

**The Chair:** I'm just going to throw out something here and see how the committee feels.

If we bring a list of all the women's groups that Finance has consulted—we can't do it today, we'll have to do it on Thursday—would that help us understand what Finance has been doing, and would that...?

Go ahead, Ms. Minna.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** With respect, Madam Chair, I'm sorry, but during the last budget consultations, for instance, I received a call from two organizations that are very strong women's organizations. They had not been given time at the table at that point. I asked to lobby the finance committee to see if they would be able to get in, because they had chosen a certain number and then closed the doors.

I don't really want to put this off, because it is far too important. We don't know where we're going tomorrow after the budget today. We have no idea. I really would like to leave behind some marker for the next committee that comes in. I don't think asking the Standing Committee on Finance to work with us on some pre-budget consultation process is revolutionary. I would really like to leave it—

**The Chair:** We'll go to Ms. Davidson.

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** I just want to make one final comment.

I understand where the members across are coming from in the statement they're making. But is it our intent to abide by the finance committee's regulations on pre-budget consultation, or are we going to set up our own? I know that some groups, whether women's groups or other groups, didn't meet deadlines to submit for the pre-budget consultations. So is it our intent to alter those types of things or to abide by the rules that the finance committee has in place for all pre-budget consultations?

• (0940)

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathysen.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Chair, it is important to open the door. I too received calls from various women's groups that had been shut out of the process. This is far too important a process to be denying access to anyone who is legitimately speaking on behalf of needs within our society.

It's always been a mystery, this budgetary process, and it doesn't need to be. It should never be. So I say that if we can open some doors—

**The Chair:** Sorry, Ms. Minna, could you wait?

Ms. Mathysen, could you finish, please?

Go ahead.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** For the vast number of Canadians, this is a great mystery. Once a year, they see the product of these consultations they're not plugged into. If we can open that door, I think it behooves us to do that.

**The Chair:** On opening the door, the question that Ms. Davidson is asking is whether there are rules and procedures that govern how consultation takes place. So we're going to manage within that consultation process, right?

**An hon. member:** Of course.

**The Chair:** Okay. We'll have Madame Lavallée.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Carole Lavallée (Saint-Bruno—Saint-Hubert, , BQ):** Madam Chair, this motion appears to strike a very balanced approach. On the one hand, it calls for consultations with women's groups, for being more receptive to requests for consultations with women's groups and for conducting joint consultations with the finance committee. On the other hand, it calls for a special effort to be made to consult with women's groups. In that respect, it would ensure that the finance committee, the committee most involved in pre-budget consultations, is made aware of the concerns of the status of women committee.

As I see it, this is an extremely important and relevant component. It seems that the committee itself will be examining the budget that is scheduled to be tabled today. I would imagine that it will conduct the same review when the next budget is due. It will then be able to compare this year with next year, after pre-budget consultations have been conducted with women's groups interested in the funding allocated to Status of Women Canada.

To my way of thinking, this is a perfectly balanced, sensible approach. We could add other components, but I think the motion is fine.

Since our guests have arrived, without wanting to disrupt the order of business, I think we should take a vote, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Merci.

I will call the question. Does anybody want us to read the amended motion? Good.

(Motion as amended agreed to)

**The Chair:** The committee cannot be suspended.

Members, we will go until 10:45. Then I have some committee business we need to discuss. It is our work plan and what is in the future.

The documents you have received are about 180 pages, I am told, and we've given out some relevant documents pertaining to gender budgeting. If you could look over the documents you've submitted and their relevance to our study, it would help us.

Madame Dwyer-Renaud, please go ahead.

• (0945)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud (Director, Gender-Based Analysis and Accountability Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** Good day.

Unfortunately, I do not have the list of the committee's questions. Therefore, I will try to recall them from memory. The committee had asked us for the definition of GBA used by Status of Women Canada and across all federal government departments. We were also asked to provide a copy of the Treasury Board's guide to gender-based analyses.

Could you hold up a copy for members, Mrs. Boucher?

We also sent you some documents. I believe this is the material here.

**A voice:** We did not receive them.

**Ms. Dwyer-Renaud:** They give an overview...

[*English*]

**The Chair:** May I just stop you here? Madame Dwyer-Renaud, we just copied a few pages from that document you sent, the Treasury Board submission—pages 13 to 20.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** That's right. I believe section 9.3...

[*English*]

**The Chair:** *Oui*.

It's just so that if somebody asks you a question, you'll know where we are.

The next one you've given is—

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** This is coming. This is to answer the question about the gap analysis. How do departments proceed? What's available in departments? It also has an overview of provinces and territories. It's dated 2005.

You also received a document that is from the UN. Madam Davidson has a copy to show you that. It's a very interesting document. I encourage you to look at it when you have a moment, because it actually gives a good review of what's going on in the UN and the member states in terms of gender mainstreaming and capacity building, but it is linked. They focused it on gender-responsive budgets. That document is being discussed at this moment in New York, so it's very *au courant* in terms of what's going on.

You asked for a list of departmental contacts. That's being forwarded to you as well.

There was also something sent to you on the gender equality indicator projects, to give you a little bit of a sense of what that project is about.

The international is basically the UN.

A grid has also been sent to you. I believe Clare has that grid, which shows an overview of what's going on internationally in different countries in terms of gender mainstreaming.

**The Chair:** You guys don't have it because it was brought to our clerk at 9:30, so you will get the package.

[Translation]

Do you have it?

[English]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I'm not there. No, we are okay.

**The Chair:** Sorry. Go ahead, Madam Dwyer-Renaud.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I think that was the material sent to you in response to the questions from last week.

**The Chair:** Okay. With that, I'd like to start off with a round of questions.

Madam Minna, go ahead, please, for seven minutes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Thank you very much, and thank you for coming back. It's good to have both of you back.

I have a few things going back to the last meeting. On February 14, when you were here with us, you mentioned that there were 15 people at Status of Women Canada who were responsible for providing support to the federal government on the GBA initiative. You also mentioned several areas of the GBA-related work, including a comparative GBA research project that was going on. I just wondered if these 15 full-time employees are assigned primarily to support the departments and agencies in implementing GBA specifically. Can you explain to us in greater detail the specific roles and responsibilities of these 15 individuals?

I have just four things around this particular group. Can you tell us how many dollars are allocated to the GBA support activity specifically as well, to see the strength of it? What other resources does Status of Women Canada need in order to fulfill all of its GBA functions, responsibilities, and research?

In other words, I'm just trying to get a handle on the people, the money, the responsibilities, and those things.

● (0950)

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I think I'm going to answer parts of that—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'd ask you to answer them one at a time and send it to—

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I will answer part of that question. In terms of resources, I would recommend that you ask our coordinator, Clare Beckton, when you have the next chance to meet her.

I certainly can talk to you about the roles and responsibilities. It's not 15 people. The whole directorate is 15 people. That includes support staff. We are looking at 10 analysts as the core group of people who are working.

Really, the roles and responsibilities are now being defined for that directorate. It's a new directorate. As you know, it combined three former directorates from Status of Women Canada. We are endeavouring to do exactly what your question is going towards. It is to give the kind of support to the departments so that each analyst can be sort of like a chaperone or someone to help out the capacity level of different departments. There are about two or three departments, depending on the size of departments. When you're chaperoning HRSDC, it's a little bit bigger than chaperoning a smaller one such as DFAIT, as an example, in terms of size. Their role and responsibility is support. It's support in terms of capacity building. It's providing gender analysis on the different initiatives the departments choose to work on from a gender-based analysis perspective.

Some are already doing a lot of capacity building—not only the analysts but the departments—and don't need as much hand holding as other departments do.

As I mentioned last time, the Treasury Board submission requirement is creating, if you like, a demand for the services of Status of Women Canada.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So the whole group is 15 and you're going to 10. Are 10 analysts enough to chaperone all of the different departments? When you said, in terms of the resources we need to ask the coordinator...when I asked you how many dollars are allocated and whether they support activities, do you know that? Do you know how many dollars are allocated specifically?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Those resource questions—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Again, they have to go.... Okay, so I'll go back to my question. On the 10 analysts, given the size of our government, do you think that is sufficient to really give the kind of push and clout that your group would need in all of the different departments? It's a fairly broad government.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Again, there's a need to clearly understand the role. The role is one of support on capacity-building in the departments. I'll have to say that I'll give you feedback in a year, because we're just starting that right now.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So are the people now on staff?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** We're still staffing.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay. That was an important part.

Do I have any time left?

**The Chair:** Yes, you do. You have four minutes. You're doing very well.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** It's not usually my case. Usually I'm cut off very quickly.

I'm just trying to pick up on some of the things we discussed at the last meeting.

Also, in your presentation on February 14, you mentioned that the Status of Women Canada assists central agencies and departments with applying a gender perspective to policy and program development in general.

Where does the financing of the GBA training and implementation come from for this particular role?

• (0955)

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** The department itself.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So they have to have a separate budget that deals specifically with this kind of thing? Well, that's good.

In your comparative research project, will you also be including funding and resource commitments to GBA as part of your examination of the European approach to GBA? You're doing a comparative project, right?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Right. We are.

The question is not asked directly because the comparative analysis is basically going across the board in all the different departments to find out what they have in terms of resources and structure. The question is not necessarily directly asked, but it will come out, no doubt, in terms of some of the reaction. We're asking people basically about the kinds of challenges they're facing in integrating GBA inside a department. I haven't seen many of the answers yet. I can only assume that some of the departments... especially because they are interviewing where there are gender equality focal points. Perhaps the focal points will raise that as an issue in terms of resources.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll have the next round.

*Madame Deschamps, sept minutes, s'il vous plaît.*

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Good day, ladies.

I'm not sure if the week off is to blame for my muddled brain, but I find that we have a considerable amount of material to pour over this morning.

Could you talk a little about this document? Is this something new? Did Status of Women Canada take the initiative of developing these indicators? How will these indicators be measured? I see that there is a working group on indicators and that you are part of this process. Will Status of Women Canada ensure that these indicators are adopted by the different departments? For now, this is a project, but I would imagine that one day, this will become a concrete initiative. How will accountability be assured? This project has been in the discussion stage for some time now. I believe the Government of Canada committed in 1995 to conducting a comparative gender-based analysis.

Basically, my question is as follows: Will you continue to play the lead role on this issue? You spoke about training. Are you also counting on that aspect?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** No. However, on the question of leadership, the answer is yes. Status of Women Canada is the lead on this project. This past week, I read an article on developing indicators which was written in 2006. At present, very few governments use a set of indicators of this nature. Everyone has been working on comparative gender-based analyses projects since the eighties and nineties. Canada is truly the leader in this area, at least right now. Developing indicators doesn't happen overnight. It is a long, drawn-out process.

As far as this project is concerned, you will have noted that we are taking on a leadership role and that an interdepartmental committee has been struck. The government has a considerable amount of data. The most thankless job that remains to be done is compiling all of this data and ensuring that no duplication occurs. We need to find out how departments use these databases. Then, we need to develop a set of indicators, which will help us set priorities. We will not be using this for accountability purposes. Perhaps that will be the case later.

There is a very strategic aspect to these indicators. The difficult thing is that even if a department undertakes a specific initiative, it may not necessarily have an impact on the indicator in that area, whether economic or social. This is truly an approach that must be learned. We are on track with this project that was launched a year ago. It is an exciting initiative, one that has captured the attention of departments. They are very open to the idea of working with us. In any event, I really cannot tell you any more than what you can read in the presentation.

• (1000)

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** What prompted you to develop this project?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Interestingly, there is a worldwide trend emerging. We're seeing it right now at the United Nations. Commonwealth nations are getting together to develop a set of indicators that all Commonwealth member governments can use and adopt. Globally, there seems to be an awareness of this phenomenon which again is tied to the notion of accountability.

The question is whether all of this training and these initiatives really bring about change. In the absence of data, indicators and information based on real numbers, it is really impossible to say if the lives of women have improved around the world. This approach is truly innovative and it is getting a lot of attention. People tend to embrace this concept more readily than if they were motivated by a sense of social injustice or something else. They want to be able to observe how women's lives will change over time.

**The Chair:** Ms. Deschamps.

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** You mentioned the Commonwealth and the UN. Therefore, this is a global vision. In terms of changing the lives of women, which factors will be most important? Financial, economic or social factors? Women in North America have different problems, whether in terms of level of poverty, or economic, financial or social concerns. How can we make these indicators universal?



**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I think that is the question on everyone's lips right now. The challenge is global in scale. I was reading a report on gender mainstreaming and world poverty. The report, which was written in English, notes the following:

[English]

“While a number of studies suggest that there is indeed a relationship between gender equality and economic growth”—

[Translation]

and that is our objective

[English]

—“there are conflicting findings as to whether the relationship is a synergy (greater equality translates into greater growth)—you would think that—“or trade-off (greater inequality fuels higher levels of growth).”

[Translation]

Currently, all world governments are having this debate. This impacts gender mainstreaming, as well as the development of indicators. We see how this affects fundamental considerations. We wonder how this matter can truly be resolved on firm ground.

[English]

**The Chair:** Merci.

We now go to Madam Grewal.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

During your last visit you referred briefly to the work Status of Women Canada is doing with Indian and Northern Affairs and Citizenship and Immigration. Could you please elaborate further on how these departments are doing things differently from each other?

• (1005)

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie (Senior Policy and Program Analyst, Status of Women Canada):** You want to know how they each do their work differently?

This is something we do with departments when we work with them on GBA. It's very much based on the organizational culture of the department. Some departments won't move on anything unless they have a guideline or a memo from DMs. Other departments are much more flexible, and different directorates can go and do their own thing, if you will. Other departments are quite stringent in the sense that they're regulatory: they have either legislation or they have regulations they're mandated to enact on behalf of the people of Canada. Depending on what that department's specific culture is, the GBA work that's done has to fit into that culture; otherwise they're going against the current of the department.

In that context, INAC, for example, has a network. They're called GEARS, and they're representatives from each branch of INAC. They meet regularly and bring the GBA knowledge to their directorate, whichever directorate it might be. INAC also has a central core that is the gender focal unit, which are actual FTEs allocated to the specific pursuit of GBA.

The gender focal unit holds a double role. It has a challenge function vis-à-vis the rest of the directorates. It is also supposed to be

looking at memoranda to cabinet originating from within INAC, not from other departments. It also has a capacity-building role.

Right now they're straddling both capacity building and transactional, so they tend to work on the different files based on which directorate the issue falls under, if you will. For example, right now we're working with them on their constructions of the program activity architecture. We were speaking last time about the whole reporting and accountability of Treasury Board.

Some departments are at the stage of writing their new PAAs, program activity architecture. What we're doing with something like INAC is actually working with it on articulating that PAA so that anything gender-related comes across in a very cogent and concrete way in all of the activities they're creating. That assists in being able to pick up the data we need for accountability, in terms of Treasury Board using its mechanisms and in terms of Status of Women using our role to help see how the process is working.

CIC is different as well. Right now CIC has a dedicated resource person, but it has integrated the responsibility of GBA into its five-year business plan whereby, again, each directorate or branch within CIC has to have GBA inserted into its business lines and work plans. Some of the directorates have tiny little intra working groups, which are just analysts from different files within that branch. So that's how they're working.

I think the other one was Health Canada. It has a similar system. It has a gender focal unit, which is the women's health bureau and gender-based analysis directorate. It's an oddball because it has the physicality of women in the health field, but it also has the GBA, how the differentials of the health sector impact women and men. Its little central focal unit has that dual world and it also has a bit of a network.

Some departments are really finding the network system works quite well and other departments are still sort of exploring what will work. I always bring it back to this question: what is the organizational culture and what is the approach more apt to be well accepted and cohesive within that department?

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Madam Chair, do I have some time?

**The Chair:** You have about two minutes.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** You have also mentioned that Status of Women Canada assists central agencies and departments with applying a gender perspective to policy and program drafting. Where does the financing of GBA training and implementation come from? Is there financing available to departments for GBA training and implementation, or does this funding come from the departments' existing operating budgets? Please, could you tell me about that?

•(1010)

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** Departments themselves pay. What Status of Women Canada provides free of charge is our support and all of the training materials: the participant manuals, case study development, what we call the shower sheets, which are highlight questions, a little checklist guide that can help departments. Departments pay for the trainer—they select one of our trainers—and they get all the materials from us for free. So that's basically the extent of the expense, and departments absorb it.

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Good day, ladies. You talked about the mindset of departments. However, I was wondering if it was possible to set a basic guideline, so that gender-specific budgeting becomes automatic for the country's decision-makers. Judging from your take on the situation, I get the impression that that would be complicated. Each department approaches the subject its own way.

How can we develop a universal, standard approach for everyone?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** My answer to you would be to put that question to the finance department.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I understand. The basic guideline should come from the Department of Finance. That is what you're saying.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** It should come from the department. The finance department is largely responsible for all of the budgets drawn up, notably the one that will be unveiled to Canadians today. In 2005, the department claimed to be ready to conduct comparative gender-based analyses. We are training people to ascertain whether departments have in fact implemented the comparative gender-based analysis approach. We are seeing that this hasn't happened. This is an area of shared responsibility and departments are expected to take on this responsibility.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathysen, for seven minutes.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I wanted to come back to Madame Dwyer-Renaud for clarification. You talked about a report and you quoted from the report, and I wanted to make sure I heard you right. The debate was whether greater equality stimulated or hampered economic growth. Is that correct?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** That's correct. These are not government departments, these are governments who are struggling, which creates acute challenges for all practitioners of gender-based analysis and gender mainstreaming in the world.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** I understand that, but it seems rather odd. In this committee we heard from expert witnesses talking about the economic security of women. When things are in place, when government puts things in place, like an affordable housing program and child care and employment insurance that facilitates training, or even addresses violence against women, this has a profound and positive impact on the situation with women who are on maternity leave. And we know whenever women are helped in developing countries, their children are helped, the community is helped, and there is an exponential positive from that. So I was quite confused by

that dichotomy and that quotation. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense in terms of my understanding of what benefits community.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I agree with you, and if you like, I could send—it's not a report, it's a compendium of articles, and it is exactly on this kind of questioning in terms of microeconomic policy and the whole issue of gender mainstreaming.

There's a lot of questioning, which is good. It's a good sign that people are questioning rather than ignoring the whole notion of integrating gender into these kinds of policies and these frameworks. I can certainly forward that; it's a fascinating read.

•(1015)

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you. I would appreciate that.

With regard to the federal plan for gender equality, is this plan still being used and implemented? I believe it's 1995.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** There have been a series of trends. The one I remember is 1995 to 2000. Then there was another one from 2000 to 2005. There have not been succinct plans since 2005, because most countries now are realizing that what we really need is not to get another plan but to arrive at concrete results, so we know what the areas are. The practice of gender mainstreaming is still very new in most countries, including ours, and it still takes time for us to see results. We need to go to an evaluation of the practices and an evaluation of where the practice has made a difference in terms of results and changing the reality of women's lives. That has not been done yet in most countries.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** So we still need an analysis of that evaluation. Is there any plan afoot? Obviously there's a recognition that the analysis needs to be done. Is there anything proposed?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** The indicators project is one part of that, and the comparative analysis is the other part. Once we bring that kind of information within our processes, we will then determine.... We'll look at some options in terms of the next steps in refinement of the practice of GBA.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** We just passed a motion in this committee in regard to being proactive in terms of budget-making, to look at the pre-budget process in regard to whether GBA is being considered, and then to analyze it in the post-budget period. Is it possible for the committee to have GBA training? I know there are several levels. It would seem to me that I would feel far more comfortable if I had a sense of what this amorphous thing is—something more concrete.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** We can definitely organize that. Michèle is our top dog on that. Especially when we go into training, we do make sure we are responding to your needs; it's not something we take off the shelf and give to you. If you are looking at the budget, for example, we can work with you to make sure you can work through a budgetary item to see how this works on a GBA. We can definitely do it, any time.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** That would be wonderful.

Do I still have some time?

**The Chair:** You have one minute.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** You kindly provided the Treasury Board's new guidelines for submissions. Are you aware of any submissions being rejected because they didn't include adequate gender-based analysis?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** That's a question you'll have to ask Treasury Board.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Oh, okay.

**The Chair:** You still have time.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Okay.

In the 1995 plan for gender equality, the federal government was committed to identifying research gaps and anticipating the emerging issues as they may affect gender equality as a basis for development of legislation and policy options. Is the government still committed to this, and how is it demonstrating this commitment, if it is indeed committed to that process?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I can't speak for the government. I can only say that we have a wealth of information that we have had over the years. We also are endeavouring, because it is another piece of the mainstreaming puzzle, to make sure the research institutes and research entities inside and outside government are also integrating GBA. That's probably the bigger challenge, and that is an area we are trying to work with. If you're looking at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, for example, or the NSERC, these are entities that do research, and the challenge is to make sure that when they undertake their research they are doing it from a gender-based analysis perspective. That's really where we have been working for a couple years now.

• (1020)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

There were two questions asked, one from Madame Deschamps and one from Ms. Mathysen. Does Status of Women Canada have a manual for training on gender-based analysis? What do you give the department? If we have an idea of what you give the department, perhaps the questions we are asking may be more focused.

I think Madame Deschamps asked the question on the indicator project. Is this a consolidation of indicators that you have seen from the UN, or where did you pick up those indicators? I don't think we got a concrete answer as to where these indicators are coming from. What dollars are allocated to doing that research? You do need to do research to ensure that you've got the right mix of indicators. At the moment, do you know what dollars are allocated to those indicators?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** In terms of the indicators, what I'd like to suggest is that you actually have a succinct briefing on that project by the researcher.

**The Chair:** Who's the researcher?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** The researcher is a member of Status of Women Canada. She has the lead. She leads the interdepartmental committee. I would like to have her give you a sense of what you're looking for, because it's a very technical area.

You will have to ask our coordinator the resource question.

As for the manual, we have a suite of tools we use when we work with the departments to give them training. Indeed, we have a manual now. I might have to break my rule here. The manual is only

given at the training and once people are trained. We do not provide the manual before, because people will then say they've been trained. We need to have them in a classroom context to really see them understand what we are conveying in terms of notions of gender-based analysis.

We do not do checklists. There are governments and even provinces that feel that if they're given checklists, everything's done. That was not the approach we took. We took the approach that we are empowering and aiding analysts to do a better job at what they do. The training is for basically adapting the entire process of policy development and program delivery and program development.

It is modular in the sense that it is in the area the client wants. For example, you would be a client. What area does the client want? I think Michèle mentioned last time that if you're dealing with communications people, they're not really interested in knowing the research side of things. We can appeal to those needs. So we have that.

We have little CDs that are self-tutorials. We have a performance measurement template so that people understand how to evaluate things at the end. So there's a whole suite of tools we use with the departments that we could use with the parliamentary committee.

**The Chair:** Okay. So you would be able to take us through the process if we asked you to come back. Thank you.

We now go to Mr. Pearson for five minutes.

**Mr. Glen Pearson (London North Centre, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thanks for coming in.

This is in relation to Ms. Mathysen's comment that she was surprised to learn that maybe some of the things from other countries have shown that productivity could be hurt by some of these things. Some of us work a fair bit in Africa and also in Latin America. And it's true that there have been mixed results from all of that. We've been monitoring it for the last five years. Part of it has been because of a basic prejudice against women being involved in things like micro-enterprises and other things, and people will not buy their products. I think it's something that might lead to those kinds of indications. But they're not necessarily truly economic; they're based on culture. I think that's important to remember.

The Department of Finance has many different areas that are all independent of one another. There are things like tax policy, interprovincial transfers, and so on and so forth. Why was it that the basis of tax policy was chosen as the thing that would have a GBA done? Why was it not the others as well?

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** There are a variety of ways of working with the departments. One of the golden rules we've learned over time is to take the department where it's at. If the department says this is the area we're going to focus on, then that's the area we focus on with them. That's part of the support role. We don't dictate. We work with them where they're starting. Then you work your way through, sometimes past that point and sometimes not.

•(1025)

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** That sort of answers my second question. Who makes that decision? It's not you; it's the department.

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** It's the department, yes. Finance could explain to you why they chose to start with the tax policy side.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Is that study on tax policy done? Is the GBA completed?

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** They're not doing a study per se. They're applying GBA to the tax policies where they're able to. They're not any different from other departments that are constrained by the availability or lack of data. Often, no matter which department you talk to, at a certain point you're going to hit the data issue—the big D.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Because of that complexity, is it your view, then, that a GBA could eventually be done for all the different branches of the Department of Finance?

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** The Department of Finance already made that decision, because they opened up training to the entire department as of January. So it's already being rolled out to other areas of Finance.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** You were very good at answering my next question. I was going to ask which areas of activity were trained, but you're saying that it's all areas of Finance Canada. Is that correct?

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** Yes. They opened it up to everybody. They can talk to you about this, but in their view that constitutes the beginning of a mainstreaming process, in the sense that they are going to make their various branches responsible for the implementation of GBA within that branch mandate.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Thank you. I'm done, Madam Chair.

I want to thank you for the stuff from the UN, and the Commonwealth as well. That's what I had asked for, and I appreciate you sending that along.

**The Chair:** Ms. Minna, for one a half minutes or two minutes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay. I'll try to be very quick.

I have two questions, and maybe the first one is not fair. I wonder what you think of the idea of having a commissioner—call it something else—who would report to Parliament about once a year on how we're doing with GBA in this country. I think that would be an interesting report to see. That would keep all of us on our toes. I want your reaction to that.

On the other, I've just flipped through “The Gender Equality Indicator Project” here, and I wonder if you could tell the committee whether there are dedicated resources for this project, specifically dollars for full-time employees and the intended outcome of the project. Is there a specific outcome? It doesn't indicate here what it is. It's generic. How will these indicators be used and by whom? It's good, but it gives the framework; it doesn't give much else.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** With respect to “commissioner”, I think in some of the international materials we sent you there's a review of the different infrastructures around the world. Some have commissioners, some do not. It's a worthwhile suggestion to study and look into. It seems to work in some areas and not in others. I'm

not an expert on that; I couldn't tell you, but I think it does exist in some countries.

On the indicators project, again it would be good for you to have this more in-depth briefing. Right now our concern is having a set of indicators to help us determine progress in terms of Status of Women and priority setting in the future. Whether it will do anything else in the future has yet to be discussed. We're taking it one step at a time. We're also looking at other countries. As I said, there's a major project at the Commonwealth. We seem to be having good discussions around the table with departments. You can imagine that with the Commonwealth doing it across countries.... They are huge projects to undertake. They take time to discuss and to make sure that we're picking the right indicators. You want an instrument that is sound, that can give you evidence-based policy information, and not an instrument that is simply to give good or bad news. There's a lot of discussion of those kinds of elements, which we're just starting to do right now.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

To follow up on what Ms. Minna asked, who is the lead at Status of Women Canada on this gender equality indicator project, so the clerk can contact them to come before the committee?

•(1030)

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** It's a staff member of the directorate of policy. We'll provide the name to the clerk.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Mr. Stanton, for five minutes.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton (Simcoe North, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for joining us again on this discussion in regard to gender equality as it relates to budget.

First of all, how long have you been with Status of Women Canada? We may have been provided with this earlier, but how long have you been involved with this organization?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** That's an interesting question. This is my third time at Status of Women Canada. I've been in the public service for 27 years, and I've basically always worked in women's issues. Throughout my ins and outs, I think I've been at Status of Women Canada for about 15 or 20 years, something like that.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** And you have had experience in other departments as well?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Yes.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** What are some of those other departments?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I have worked with HRSDC. I've done some work with royal commissions. I've worked with a past royal commission on new reproductive technologies. It wasn't a royal commission; it was a panel on violence against women. I've also been with the Public Service Commission.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** In your opinion, as you've watched the evolution of how the gender-based issues analysis or lens has been applied in terms of decisions to improve and roll out tax measures or program measures, how would you say the government and the departments are responding now, compared with, say, three or four years ago?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I think we had that discussion the last time we were here. There has been great progress, when you think of it in terms of the whole notion of GBA being accepted across the board. I think that is no longer a discussion. I think the GBA policy is raised and understood by most public servants who deal in policy—I mean, we don't deal with 265,000 people.

The capacity building is picking up. There, we still have some work to do. But we have some key departments. You're looking at departments like Health Canada, HRSDC, CIC, and the central agencies. The momentum of capacity building is building.

The future for GBA practice is at three levels. One is the accountability. It has started, but it has to be built. It has to answer questions such as, if there are guidelines, if the finance department feels that departments need to do X, Y, and Z, are departments doing X, Y, and Z? So there's that kind of monitoring of the practice that needs to happen.

To do that, we have to do an evaluation of the situation, which is what we are starting to do with our comparative analysis, but that's a situation that all governments are facing right now.

There was a thrust over the 1980s and 1990s for lots of training and capacity building. That was the case for Status of Women Canada. Between 2000 and 2005, we put a lot of our energy and effort into capacity building and creating our tools. Now we have to put the theory into practice. The past was almost, in one sense, capacity building for everyone. Now we have to move into sustainable practice, accountability, and evaluation.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Would it be fair to say that the notion of gender consideration in terms of the decision-making process at the departments is ingrained and now a part of the culture of this decision-making?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I don't think it's there yet. The practice is there. Senior management knows that there is a practice going on, but does it make it through to the decision-making process? That's uneven, depending on the support that's being given to the departments.

•(1035)

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Good. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Does anybody want to take one more minute?

Ms. Davidson, would you like to ask a question?

**Mrs. Patricia Davidson:** Sure.

I understand that it's an evolving process, and it sounds as though you're saying it is moving along and it's getting to where it hopefully needs to be.

The one question I have is that we refer to this federal plan for gender equality from 1995. There were some previous questions

asked about it, and I think you had indicated that it wasn't necessarily followed, because there was a new plan, a five-year plan, put in place in 2000. Did it differ very much from the 1995 plan?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Just to give you some context, these plans also come through in terms of the commitments of governments under the Beijing platform for action. Basically, there were commitments made internationally, and then domestically the plans were put together.

Definitely the first plan, the 1995 plan, was huge in its breadth. I seem to remember 265 recommendations. But the surviving piece of it was the GBA policy.

The next round, the next plan, was very much more targeted, and ironically, all the governments that moved through the different years realized that you needed to have the GBA policy. That practice was endorsed in the second plan pretty much everywhere in the world, with the idea that it had to be on targeted initiatives, that to spread yourself too thinly didn't give you the kinds of results you needed.

What actually was missing on the second one was what we are now doing government-wide. It's the whole notion of results-based management. It's looking at how we can collect data and see the results, and see how the results are moving through the system. That was not part of the thinking in many of those years. That wasn't necessarily where any of the governments were, but with the whole notion of accountability now, it would be the piece that we would want to see happening and it's the piece that we're pursuing now.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to Madame Deschamps *pour cinq minutes*.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** In the Gender Equality Indicator Project that was submitted to the committee, you have defined an indicator framework with the help of an interdepartmental committee. Did you take into consideration outside groups, such as research groups, in setting priorities for this plan? Have groups already done some research that impacts the project's objectives or content?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Research groups have certainly influenced project priorities and will continue to do so. In 2005, we initiated a fairly broad consultative process. We consulted with women's groups across Canada. Information on this subject is available on our website. One of the recommendations made by women's groups called for the development of indicators. These groups trusted Status of Women Canada to undertake this project. And that is what we are doing.

There is nothing mystical about these indicators. They were not conjured up out of thin air. They are truly a reflection of a world-wide trend. Commonwealth nation indicators are similar to ours. They embrace the same themes, domains and issues.

I believe the next step in the indicator project will be to ask civil society for its opinion on the aims and choice of indicators. Here again, this is a question for Ms. Beckton, not for the researcher.

•(1040)

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** As I see it, it is extremely important to be able to base ourselves on studies that reflect fairly accurately the economic and social reality of women today. It is unfortunate that these studies are not funded to the same extent as they once were.

In a similar vein, I imagine that it is rather difficult for you to carry out a project of this nature at a time when you are being pressured by task forces working under the aegis of the UN and contending with the will of governments in office. Surely you must be facing some pressure from the government which has its own priorities. We talked about culture, but efforts can be hampered by ideology as well.

The next step is for you to submit your project to the interdepartmental committee no later than the start of the summer. An election is always a possibility when a minority government is in office. Could that have an adverse effect on your efforts or could the prospect of an election stop your project from going forward?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Not to my knowledge. We are talking here about a methodology, a precise instrument for assessing the validity of policies when they are formulated.

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** You've worked with a group and you plan to submit this project to the interdepartmental committee. What we have here is very much a summary. Is it possible that the government might ask you to go back and do your homework because it disagrees with certain things or because the project is not in line with its current priorities? Or do you wield enough influence to say that this is the definitive gender-based analysis?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** This committee is composed of senior officials working in the research field. The feedback that they will provide is not what you think. They will focus in particular on the technical aspects of the indicators and on supporting statistical information. It is a technical committee.

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** It is not a political committee.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** No.

[English]

**The Chair:** Merci.

Ms. Mathysen is next for five minutes.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to go back to the plan for gender equality. It also cited that the federal government is committed to supporting work undertaken by women's organizations to address the root causes of violence and develop strategies that result in long-term systemic change.

We know that half of Canadian women will experience violence, whether it's in the home, the workplace, the broader community, or at school. Is there a continued commitment to address the root causes of violence? How is the women's program at SWC helping to address those root causes?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Those are questions I recommend you ask my coordinator, Clare Beckton.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** How important is the voluntary sector in improving the status of women in Canada? What role does that sector play in the progress toward women's equality?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Again, that is a question you could ask our coordinator.

I'll just open a parenthesis, because my expertise is in gender-based analysis.

It's interesting to see the interest of the NGOs in gender-based analysis. I believe we mentioned the last time we were here that some of the NGOs are looking for training. While we thought they would have created their own training for different purposes, they are very much interested in receiving the training Status of Women Canada has developed to assist them in interacting with government officials. I think that's an interesting aspect from a GBA perspective. But I would ask that you forward the other questions to Madame Beckton.

•(1045)

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Are you able to provide that training to the NGOs as part of your mandate? Okay. That's very interesting.

You said that in January—and I assume that's January 2008—the Department of Finance opened up the GBA; it was more broadly undertaken. Is there a sense that we will see some concrete results from that? Is there hope that we will see them in this budget?

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** I think for them the expectation is that because they're learning how to apply GBA, they will continue to apply it to the elements of the budget as they develop it. But it's best that you talk to them directly about anything further than that. There are many different areas they can go into, and they need to make choices as they go through the budget process themselves. So see what they tell you.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** We have a long way to go, don't we? It has really just begun. If it started to be more broad in January 2008, we have miles to go before we sleep.

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** I think the sense for them was to first get it embedded solidly in one area and then start expanding it out. I'd be hesitant to use terms like "there's a long way to go or there isn't", because it's quite relative.

As far as what other countries are doing, you'd have to see how they compare with different approaches. I think the message might have been clearly delivered the last time you heard from experts on gender budgets that there is no magic bullet and no one approach works well for everybody. Even some countries that were doing it in the early 1980s stopped and are now picking up different approaches again.

Not to belabour the point, but it really would be good for Finance to talk to you at that level.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** We've been at this a very long time. It feels like a very slow process. Thank you.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** You have two minutes, Mrs. Boucher.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** When we first started to look at gender-based budgeting, we discovered that some countries had opted for this approach, only to discard it later. Why was that? How can we, as government decision-makers, put an end to these questions and ensure that gender-based budgeting at all levels becomes automatic? Is there anything you would recommend?

[English]

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** There's that magic bullet again.

[Translation]

Seriously though, we could send you a document listing those countries that adopted gender-based budgeting and then discarded this approach and explaining what led to that decision. Again, different countries opt for different approaches. For example, Australia ended its experiment with gender-based budgeting for political reasons. South Africa made some changes because it had changed its definition of a budget respectful of the principles of equality.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from this document is that the situation is really not conclusive.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Some countries adopted this approach, while others chose to let it go. As decision-makers, what kind of parameters can we set? Can we have gender-based budgeting without having to go the fiscal route?

• (1050)

**Mrs. Michèle Bougie:** This ties in with a suggestion we made in our presentation last December about the theoretical contextualization of budgets. We had suggested that all departments incorporate gender-based analysis into their activities. Ultimately, this approach would have an impact on the budget.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you. Your question is very valid. We had asked for legislation in 2006. If there were legislation, nobody would—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** In fact, we were about to introduce legislation in the fall.

**The Chair:** I have a couple of things that I was given to ask. Will Status of Women Canada be analyzing the current budget, when it comes, under a gender lens, and did you do an analysis of the previous one? We just need to know what we are dealing with. How do we intelligently address this issue? You have manuals, you have tools, and you have various things, so you start off with a base of trained people. You start off with the premise that they have implemented certain things, and then we come to do the checks and balances and ask if they have done it. If we could have that type of analysis, it would be a discussion rather than blaming anybody. It's a discussion as to how to move forward, because nobody seems to have an answer for it.

After March 13—hopefully we'll still be around—if we could ask you to come back and train us on your manual, then we could have a better understanding and we wouldn't be talking out of both sides of our mouth. We would have some focus. I think it will be important. So we'd love to have you back, and perhaps you could bring the person who was doing the indicators as well, and perhaps we could combine that, but we'll see what the logistics are.

Thank you very much for being here, and you're more than welcome to come back. Thanks.

We will suspend for one minute.

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

**The Chair:** I think we have about nine minutes, and I'd like to go through the work plan that's in your binder.

Before I go over the work plan, I'd like to make an announcement that the Parliamentary Centre has invited, in celebration of International Women's Day, a delegation of seven women from Afghanistan to take part in a discourse on Tuesday, March 4, 2008—an interesting date—after QP, question period. The meeting room is not confirmed, so as soon as the meeting room is confirmed we will let you know. If you're interested, please advise the clerk.

**The Chair:** The second thing I'd like to do is this. If we look at the work plan, I'll come to the Status of Women Canada as well. If we go to the work plan...today is February 26.

Does everybody now have a work plan in front of them?

**Some hon. members:** Yes.

**The Chair:** How did you miss it, Mr. Stanton?

• (1055)

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I have no idea, Madam Chair. I was late coming in.

**The Chair:** You were probably sleeping.

On today's meeting, because it was revised as of February 13, we claimed it was cancelled, but we did what we did, and I think it was important that we did it. I think what we need from Status of Women Canada is their analysis, because we need to know about the tools they are using. Because they are the ones who are the lead on gender analysis or gender budgeting, we need to work with them, we need to understand the tools they are using and the gaps that are taking place.

We also need to get the Library of Parliament to help us understand, because that has been a resource assigned to us, to analyze Budget 2008, to see how they perceive the budget from a gender lens. For that I'd like to get the committee's okay to say let's get the Library of Parliament to do that for us as well.

Is the committee in agreement with that?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Good. I see no objection.

The contract person will come.

Ms. Minna, I know we need the contract person, but the liaison committee will ask me, "Have you done A, B, C, D, E? How much money is that person going to charge?" We will get the contract person as soon as we understand...

I still don't think all of us have grappled with the complete picture of what's going on here. Do we all understand the tools that are being used in government? No. Do we understand what we want to give the consultant? No. If we can get the Library of Parliament and the Status of Women...then we can say "that's interesting". Then we can do some logical analysis of what we need to go forward with.

I think the majority of committee members are not yet there. You may be the only one there, but I think the majority of us are not there. I think this was a suggested, logical move. Once we get it there, then we can contract out if we know what we're doing. We don't even know what those indicators are, so we need to understand a few things. We have to put all our ducks in a row before we go forward.

If we're in agreement, then I'll ask the clerk to ask the Library of Parliament to have the economists do the gender analysis of the budget.

On Thursday, February 28, if you go to your work plan, instead of Dr. Luc Juillet, we have Claire Young, from the University of British Columbia. Then from the central agencies, we have PCO coming on March 4 and March 6, and we also have Treasury Board. Interestingly enough, Jeanne Flemming was promoted so she's no longer with Treasury Board as of Friday, so we're getting a replacement. Whoever the replacement is is going to be good enough to know what you're talking about. Instead of Daniel Ricard, we're getting Mr. Joe Wilde.

Those are the only changes I would like to let the committee know about.

Other than that, on March 13, if we're here, the experts from different universities will be doing an analysis of the budget as well, so we have three different documents to look at and we can logically connect the dots ourselves.

Is it agreeable? Are there any questions?

Yes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Have both Professor Lahey and Armine Yalnizyan been confirmed for that date?

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Perfect. That will be great. Thank you.

Anne Phillips?

**A voice:** She's in Australia.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** She's not coming. Okay. I just wondered.

**The Chair:** We have Nancy Peckford.

**The Clerk:** Nancy Peckford is to be confirmed. She's out of town, but somebody from her organization is supposed to get back to me.

**The Chair:** If you have any other suggestions for witnesses to do gender-based....

Yes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** A question of clarification, Madam Chair. The Library of Parliament is going to give us a thing on the budget. I know they need time, so when would that be?

**The Chair:** March 13?

• (1100)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Same time as—

**The Chair:** Can we get back to you?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Sure. I just wondered. No problem.

**The Chair:** Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.









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