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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Yasmin Ratansi**

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## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, March 4, 2008

• (0900)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Yasmin Ratansi (Don Valley East, Lib.)):** Good morning, everyone.

I would like to welcome Ms. Biguzs and Mr. Wild, from the PCO and Treasury Board respectively. As I mentioned, we are doing a gender budgeting study, our preamble to what would be required. We have heard a lot of witnesses, and we have heard from Status of Women Canada. We would like to see how the pieces of the puzzle fit, so that we are able to move forward in an intelligent and a logical manner.

I understand, Ms. Biguzs, that you have a presentation of ten minutes. I will have to leave the chair at ten o'clock; I have to be in the House. Ms. Davidson will taking over.

With that, Ms. Biguzs....

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs (Assistant Secretary to Cabinet, Operations Secretariat, Privy Council Office):** Thank you.

I'll try to keep my comments brief and turn to my colleague from Treasury Board, Mr. Wild.

My name is Anita Biguzs. I am the assistant secretary to the cabinet for operations in the Privy Council Office. I'm also the acting assistant secretary to the cabinet for social development policy. This latter position includes responsibilities as the champion for gender-based analysis in the Privy Council Office. I have been in the position of acting assistant secretary social development policy for the last two months while this position is being staffed on a permanent basis.

I'm very pleased to be here this morning to help discuss and describe the policy development process and the role of PCO in that process, and in gender-based analysis as part of it. It's very fitting, with International Women's Day this Saturday, that we are discussing this issue.

[Translation]

I think it would be helpful if I first explained the role of the Privy Council Office in the policy development process and then spoke about the role of the gender-based analysis champion.

The primary responsibility of the Privy Council Office is to provide public service support to the Prime Minister and to cabinet. We are responsible for facilitating the smooth and effective operation of the cabinet decision-making process, where policy decisions are taken by the government.

It is important to note that PCO is not responsible for leading the direct development of new policies or programs. This responsibility resides with departments. Rather, PCO helps shape policies by supporting departments in their efforts to act on the government's agenda.

[English]

Our role is to help advance the policy process by providing constructive feedback to departmental proposals and to ensure that the proposals are ready for consideration by cabinet; in other words, that the due diligence has been undertaken so that proposals are practical, responsible, and sustainable. This is accomplished by helping to ensure that there is coherence and clarity in new policy proposals and existing programs and that these are consistent with the government's overall agenda.

Status of Women Canada also plays a very important role in the policy process, and I know you've met with representatives from Status of Women. They are the policy experts in the area of gender-based analysis, and the agency assists departments and central agencies, through training and support, to ensure that a gender-based analysis has been conducted as appropriate.

• (0905)

[Translation]

The Speech from the Throne lays out the government's agenda and key priorities. Responsible ministers are tasked with bringing forward policy proposals to advance the government's priorities as outlined in the Speech from the Throne. Historically, in support of cabinet decision-making, departments are required to prepare a Memorandum to Cabinet.

[English]

The memorandum to cabinet is the basis for cabinet decision-making. There is a template available online at the PCO website for access by departmental analysts and the public. If you haven't seen it, I have a copy here. The template includes a consideration section where the sponsoring department is expected to include an analysis of a full range of perspectives, and that includes gender issues.

The analysis to support a policy initiative should include a range of considerations, including, for example, the problem or issue that needs to be addressed, the rationale for government action, the objectives to be accomplished, whether it has implications for existing programs or policies, and whether there are horizontal interdependencies or ramifications with other issues or programs within the department or other departments. It should identify a range of credible options to provide the government with choices. It should also include an assessment of implications, including issues such as costs, benefits, effectiveness.

In other words, the memorandum to cabinet should demonstrate how a proposal aligns with relevant management, fiscal, and policy agendas and the government's overall direction.

Individual ministers and their departments are responsible for ensuring that various aspects of the proposal are considered and assessed. From a horizontal perspective it is part of PCO's coordination role to make sure interdepartmental consultations are undertaken during the MC process and that the considerations raised by other departments are taken into account by the sponsoring department. At the same time, central agencies—and that includes PCO, Finance, and Treasury Board Secretariat—work together to provide feedback and to challenge proposals against the range of considerations—and that includes gender-based analysis—to ensure that when a proposal comes forward, cabinet is presented with information to help inform decision-making.

So that represents the public service role in cabinet decision-making and how we develop our non-partisan, neutral advice. After this point it is up to cabinet to consider, discuss, and debate proposals and take decisions collectively on how to proceed. It is important to bear in mind that the policy process must be considered in a broad context, and that it must weigh numerous considerations and impacts of competing priorities and pressures.

Turning to look within PCO, based on recommendations made by this standing committee the Privy Council Office has also established the role of gender-based analysis champion attached to the function of assistant secretary of social development policy. The champion's role is to ensure that gender-based analysis is integrated into the policy process and challenge function of PCO. On an ongoing basis the champion works to promote and encourage gender-based analysis training to all PCO officials. To ensure a coordinated horizontal perspective on the issue, PCO is a member of a gender-based analysis interdepartmental committee, which assists in the creation, coordination, facilitation, and support of gender-based analysis activities across federal government departments and agencies.

As part of our commitments we have worked with Status of Women Canada to provide annual training to PCO officers to ensure officers are familiar with gender-based analysis as part of their challenge-function role. This training helps analysts to identify whether gender issues have been taken into consideration in program and policy proposals presented by departments. Formal gender-based training was first piloted at PCO starting in the summer of 2006. The second round of training was provided early in 2007, and following participant evaluations training has now been incorporated into the annual suite of courses available to analysts. We are currently working on rolling out the 2008 training with Status of

Women Canada, and we're trying to reflect the results of evaluations and the comments we received last year.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I think progress has been achieved over the last two years—I think thanks to a lot of the recommendations and work of this committee—to ensure that gender-based analysis has a profile in the Privy Council Office, and to ensure that it is embedded in the training curricula of PCO officers consistent with their role to undertake policy due diligence. Our colleagues in Status of Women have provided their expertise and assistance to us to ensure that training has been provided. The introduction of this training has been an important tool to strengthen the PCO challenge function.

With that I will conclude my comments. I hope I haven't exceeded my time.

I'll turn to my colleague, Joe Wild.

● (0910)

**The Chair:** Thank you, and no, you didn't.

Mr. Wild, for ten minutes.

**Mr. Joe Wild (Executive Director, Strategic Policy, Treasury Board Secretariat):** Good morning.

[*Translation*]

Thank you for the invitation to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women to discuss the progress that Treasury Board Secretariat has made with respect to gender-based analysis (GBA).

I am happy to be here to speak on behalf of the secretariat. Normally, our GBA Champion would be making this presentation, however, Jeanne Flemming has recently been appointed by the Prime Minister to head FINTRAC. I would like to assure you that our secretary, Wayne Wouters, is fully committed to moving forward with our GBA commitments.

[*English*]

This time last year our associate secretary, Linda Lizotte-MacPherson, appeared before this committee and provided an update on the steps the secretariat had taken to meet the commitments we made following the committee's report, "Gender-Based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success". I am very pleased to tell you that since that time, we've continued to make significant progress in entrenching GBA considerations, tools, and practices into our everyday work.

Last year our associate secretary explained the roles of departments and central agencies in applying GBA. I'd like to focus more specifically on the role of the secretariat in the development of programs and policy and in the implementation of gender-based analysis. Afterwards I'll describe what we have accomplished in the last year and where we are hoping to go in the future.

First, departments and agencies are responsible for the development of programs that are compliant with policies, including GBA. Our program analysts have an important challenge function with departments as they assist departments to develop proposals for consideration by Treasury Board ministers. Part of that challenge is to ensure that the department has undertaken GBA in the development of its Treasury Board submission and that the proposal has no unintended gender bias. In the past year, we have continued to foster gender-based analysis, building on our commitments. Those commitments were to train staff in gender-based analysis within the context of our mandate; to screen Treasury Board management policies to ensure there are no unintended gender impacts; to use the management, resources and results structure, or MRRS, to ensure that departments use performance information in the management of their programs, including those with gender-specific objectives; and ensure that the management accountability framework, or MAF, makes reference to assessing analytical capacity and practices in departments.

We are taking steps to embed GBA as a practice throughout the organization. For example, gender-based analysis is included in staff training and undertaken as part of our policy development and oversight roles. Eventually we will be in a position to begin reporting on results and linking program spending to horizontal issues such as gender.

In order to continue moving forward, the secretariat has developed an action plan that outlines how we will ensure that GBA is included in our activities on an ongoing basis. This action plan clarifies the roles of the secretariat's GBA champions, senior managers, and our program and policy analysts in the application of GBA. By doing this the secretariat has taken an important step in bringing GBA into the mainstream of our day-to-day business. Ultimately our goal is to make sure that each program and policy analyst in our organization has GBA "reflexes", so that in interacting with departments and in providing advice and guidance, they consciously integrate GBA considerations into the work we do every day. I think this follows very much along the lines of the testimony that Dr. David Good gave. For us, we're trying to integrate it throughout the organization so that it is part of our day-to-day work.

The TBS approach highlights our work in partnership with Privy Council Office, the Department of Finance, and Status of Women Canada to advance GBA. We look forward to continuing our strong and productive relationship with Status of Women Canada, and continue to rely on them for their valuable advice and expertise as we move forward.

I'll now just go quickly through our progress in meeting our four commitments. With respect to training, since we last appeared before this committee, the secretariat has actually incorporated GBA into our training for program analysts. All new analysts are required to attend what we call the TBS boot camp. Boot camp is basically our orientation program for anybody new coming into the organization; it basically gives them the tools they need to understand how to do their job. It's a comprehensive learning event that includes specific training on GBA. Furthermore, we've provided additional training to clarify and provide further guidance on the application of GBA in the context of Treasury Board submissions. These learning events have been developed in close collaboration with Status of Women

Canada, and they're intended to teach analysts how GBA can be applied to their day-to-day work, in particular in reviewing policies through a GBA lens and being more aware of the supports, resources and tools that can be used to apply GBA to their work. To date over 100 analysts have attended learning sessions, and future training events are already being planned.

Another key step in entrenching GBA was to ensure that it was included in our guide to preparing Treasury Board submissions. The updated guide includes clear reminders to departments and agencies to ensure that their program proposals are GBA compliant and to report their findings in the Treasury Board submissions. Our analysts are then able to apply their training in reviewing submissions, challenging departments and in providing advice to Treasury Board ministers.

With respect to policy renewal, we had committed in 2006 to ensuring that Treasury Board management policies would be free of unintended gender bias, and we're doing this as part of our work in renewing the entirety of the Treasury Board policy suite. The renewal of the policy suite is a joint Treasury Board Secretariat and Canada Public Service Agency initiative to reduce the number of rules, while at the same time strengthening management and enhancing accountability.

One of our commitments was to screen our policies to ensure there are no unintended gender impacts. We have made significant progress in this area and have updated the guidance on developing Treasury Board policy instruments, consistent with the guide for policy-making issued by Status of Women Canada. My directorate is actually responsible for challenging whether or not the policy centres that are responsible for developing policy have actually considered potential gender impacts of both the policy development and implementation stages. Finally, renewed policies are also edited thoroughly to ensure gender-neutral language is used throughout.

● (0915)

With respect to program performance, the management resources and results structure, or MRRS, is a policy that ensures, among other things, that departments and agencies track programs in a structured manner, that departments define expected results for all their programs, that they develop indicators, and that they report on results.

This policy is being implemented in a five-step process. The first step was to take an inventory of the programs of the Government of Canada. We now know there are approximately 3,000 of those. The second step, which we are in the process of completing now, is to develop performance measurement frameworks for each of these programs. Once this is done, then both departments and central agencies will be able to use this performance information to help make better management decisions. The step after we complete getting these frameworks in place is to create a centralized database where this information will be stored. Once that's fully implemented, it will ensure that, across government, resources are clearly aligned with results. It will also ensure that the information is standardized across government, so we can actually properly compare what's going on.

Once the database is complete, we would be able to use that information to help us better understand horizontal initiatives, and one of those uses could be to track government programs that specifically affect target groups, including gender. Because of the time required to collect and input this large quantity of data, developing this kind of functionality is going to take us several years. We certainly remain committed to moving forward with MRRS and to exploiting the vast potential of this tool in assisting us to understand program performance, including in the area of gender impacts.

Our last commitment was to ensure that the management accountability framework, or MAF, makes reference to assessing analytical capacity and practices in departments. The MAF sets out expectations of good public sector management. Since its inception the assessment tool for MAF has become increasingly sophisticated, and it continues to evolve. Departments and agencies use their MAF assessments to pinpoint areas of management that need to be addressed.

One of the areas that is assessed under MAF is the quality of analysis in Treasury Board submissions, which includes the appropriate use of GBA. As I mentioned before, GBA is one of the policy lenses departments are to consider in their Treasury Board submissions, and by doing so, the secretariat is sending a clear signal that we expect Treasury Board submissions to include good-quality, adequate, and sound analysis of gender-based impacts of their proposed programs. MAF assessments for this particular year are not yet completed, but once they are the onus will once again be on departments to address any performance shortcomings.

So in terms of moving forward, certainly we're continuing our efforts to ensure that GBA is part of our business processes. We will continue to train our Treasury Board Secretariat analysts and we will improve that training based on their feedback. We will also continue to communicate the importance of GBA with departments in the development of Treasury Board submissions. And finally, through MRRS and MAF, we are contributing to departmental awareness of the importance in considering and addressing gender in decision-making. It's certainly an ongoing effort. We know that promoting culture change requires attention and effort, and through our own action plan, MAF assessments, feedback from Status of Women Canada, and comments from this committee, we're going to continue our efforts toward integrating GBA in our ongoing activities.

[*Translation*]

Madam Chair, this concludes my remarks. I would be pleased to answer questions committee members may have.

[*English*]

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

We now start with the first round of questions.

Ms. Minna, for seven minutes.

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

Thank you to both of our witnesses for coming.

I have a fairly good understanding of how the process works, because of my having been in cabinet before. I also know where the

power resides in terms of monitoring the spending, which is Treasury Board, of course. But before that, the Department of Finance has a tremendous amount of power in terms of what goes in the budget, together obviously with the Minister of Finance. The Department of Finance also over time, I've noticed, has tended to mentor people from the finance department who then have gone and worked in other departments.

So I have a question. Does the Department of Finance have individuals in the different departments—because I know you have all kinds of people who have worked in finance before—who, because of their understanding of the Department of Finance and so on, have been actually mandated to do a proper, segregated analysis on programs before they even start going to the cabinet process?

● (0920)

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Were you asking about whether the Department of Finance has individuals?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Yes.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** I think you have an official appearing from the Department of Finance next week. I think you'd be best placed to actually ask the Department of Finance, in terms of—

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Do we not have the finance department today?

**The Chair:** No. This is TBS and PCO.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** I apologize. That's right.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** But certainly, if I can comment in terms of the Privy Council, in the nature of PCO being a central agency, you do have people coming from the finance department, or going to other departments from PCO, or coming from line departments to PCO. In terms of the skill sets and the competencies we look for in PCO, it does include an ability to look at analysis. Many of our PCO officers, in fact, come from special accelerated economist trainee programs, have graduated from those programs, so they would also have some background in doing analysis.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay. I have a question, then, actually to Treasury Board.

When the budget is done, there are implementation bills that go through to implement budget processes. Let's say, with the last budget, which dealt with pension splitting, the implementation of some things would have to come through Privy Council. Does Privy Council now already do an actual analysis before the program becomes alive or viable, as to its impact on the gender-based agenda? As programs come forward for spending and as you monitor that spending, that's Treasury Board's role. Do you now do an analysis as to what the gender impact will be of that budget item that is now being applied as a spending item?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** When the department brings forward its Treasury Board submission to implement and basically to get its allotment in order to spend against its appropriation in a particular area, once you're actually at that implementation phase and they come forward with a Treasury Board submission, they are required within that submission to have provided or have performed a gender-based analysis. Our analysts then look at whether or not, in fact, a gender-based analysis has been performed by the department. It is the department's responsibility to do that, and then we assess whether or not it has been done, and we assess whether or not it has been done in an adequate fashion.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So which items of the budget, then—the previous budget, not even the current one—have received a gender-based analysis before applying them, and what were those results? And if they found the results to be impacting unintended consequences, what was done about it?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I don't have specifics on specific items that have come through. What I can say again is that any item out of the last budget that has come forward with a Treasury Board submission would have had a gender-based analysis performed upon it as part of the submission process, and the Treasury Board analysts would have examined whether or not that analysis was adequate. I'm not aware of any particular incident where, if there was any issue with the adequacy of the analysis, that wasn't ultimately addressed before it went on to the ministers.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Would we be able to get that information? What I'm trying to get at is that I would like to see it in action, actually functioning. I understand the process that you've just described, and we've heard it before, but I would like to see some examples of how it has actually happened in some instances and what were the consequences or not of the specific item.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Part of the difficulty of dealing with specific items is that they're all wrapped up in the Treasury Board submission process, which are cabinet confidences, and that puts me in a bit of an awkward position.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** But we can get the analysis, can we not?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Again, we'd have to go through and pull all of those submissions to determine them and see what we could pull out. We could certainly undertake to look at doing that. I'm just not in a position to be able to speak to a specific item that would have gone through Treasury Board.

We deal with approximately 850 submissions a year. So trying to identify whether there's some specific submission that you're actually interested in would be of help, rather than trying to figure out which of these 850 are actually—

• (0925)

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay, the pension splitting is a specific item. Was that looked at? What was the analysis done on that before it was actually implemented?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I'm not aware that there would have been necessarily a Treasury Board submission for pension splitting, given that it's part of a legislation scheme. That's probably a more appropriate question to put to the Department of Finance, since they were responsible for that particular project and they would be in a better position to answer as to what analysis would have been done

on it. I'm not aware whether or not pension splitting actually would have even come into Treasury Board at a certain point.

Again, it only comes to Treasury Board if the department is actually having to access funding to do something. It doesn't come to —

**Hon. Maria Minna:** So test measures do not necessarily come to Treasury Board.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Generally, no, they don't.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** That's interesting, because that means a whole pile of stuff just isn't going to be looked at, except that we need to deal with finance when it gets there.

Am I over my time? My time's over.

**The Chair:** Yes.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Chair:** For the benefit of this committee, could you have a flow chart that shows where your responsibility begins and ends? Because we're looking at submissions here, and they are all words. We're looking for something concrete. I think concrete is important for us.

Mr. Wild—I'm taking this privilege, because I'll be leaving the chair soon—you were talking about cultural change requiring effort and continuity. I understand that Ms. Flemming was the person who was an expert on gender-based analysis, but she has left. So do you have another champion who understands this?

You can answer later. You don't have to answer now, but just keep it in your mind. I would expect Ms. Davidson to follow up with you if you don't answer the question. Ms. Davidson is taking the chair afterwards.

Thank you.

We now go to Madame Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps (Laurentides—Labelle, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair, and welcome to both of you.

All of this is rather vague for me. It's not easy to understand the process and how gender-based analysis is applied. We have heard from many witnesses from various departments, public servants and experts who were not directly involved in the decision-making process of the government. That's why I find it difficult to get my head around it.

I would like to understand the role played by the champion. Who designates the champion? Is such a champion found in all departments? Does he or she play a specific role? Who appoints this person?

[*English*]

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I can speak to the practice of the Treasury Board Secretariat.

[*Translation*]

At Treasury Board, the secretary appoints the champion. I don't know if all departments have a champion.

[English]

Madam Chair, Jeanne Flemming was our champion. She literally started a new job yesterday, so the secretariat is in the process of examining who will be best positioned to play the role.

**The Chair:** Continue, Mr. Wild.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Jeanne Flemming was our champion. She just started a new job on Monday, and the secretariat is in the process of examining where that role should be situated next. It will simply take a little bit of time to figure out exactly who should perform that role. Again, my assumption is that the appointment will be made as soon as possible. We certainly take the role of the GBA champion very seriously at the secretariat. I think a fair amount of work has been done, with the champion leading that work, to integrate GBA throughout the organization.

● (0930)

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** For PCO, the role of champion resides with the assistant secretary for social development policy, and that position, as I say, is designated by the clerk. As I mentioned at the beginning, the assistant secretary was promoted, actually, to an associate deputy position in December, so I've been acting in the position.

The function of the GBA champion in PCO is to promote gender-based analysis and to ensure that it's embedded, incorporated, in the training for PCO officers who work directly in the policy development process. The role of champion was created about two years ago as a result of the recommendations of this particular committee. And as a result of having the champion, we have in fact initiated a training program for PCO officers. It's part of the ongoing tool kit, if I can put it that way, for PCO officers, for new officers, when they come to the PCO policy secretariat so they understand their role as doing the challenge function on policy initiatives coming forward to the cabinet process.

The lead, in terms of expertise on gender-based analysis, of course, resides with Status of Women Canada. We turn to our colleagues and our experts there, and they help us in terms of organizing the training on gender-based analysis for our policy officers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** When a memorandum is submitted, must it contain an analysis? You stated that the role of the champion is to promote and encourage, but that person is not obliged to include GBA in a memorandum submitted to Privy Council.

[English]

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** The role of the champion is to ensure that the officers—and the officers are the lead contact point with departments.... Our job as a champion is to make sure that we embed gender-based analysis in the policy challenge function and that we provide our officers with the tools they need so that they understand gender-based analysis and what the requirements are.

So that's the role of the champion: to make sure it's embedded in our training programs and in the culture of PCO officers, so that the PCO officers, who are really the lead contacts with departments in performing a policy challenge function, understand their role. When working on a particular policy initiative, if there's a priority that's

moving forward identified by the government as a priority, the officer dealing with the department will ask the questions, will understand and ask whether the implications have been assessed.

As appropriate, it would be included in the analysis of the memorandum to cabinet. Also, through an interdepartmental process we would look to Status of Women. A key part of any initiative coming forward to cabinet, and the role of PCO, is to ensure that there is in fact horizontal coordination and that we ensure that any initiative coming in has a full interdepartmental process, which includes a meeting where representatives from each department—and that would include a representative from Status of Women—would have an opportunity to review an initiative coming forward and to provide their input.

**The Chair:** This is your last question, Madame Deschamps, please.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** You stated that this is occurring within the development of a new program, a new memorandum, a new priority. Is this work also being done in the case of existing programs that are automatically renewed? I'm referring, for example, to two topics that interest me greatly: employment insurance programs and guaranteed income supplement programs.

[English]

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** In PCO, we focus largely on new initiatives coming in to cabinet. It may be a new initiative, or it may be the renewal of an initiative, if it requires a policy authority because something was sunset and requires renewed authority. That would be an opportunity, certainly, for PCO, at that point in time.

Looking at the renewal of programs and trying, as I say, to get to results-based programming and strategic reviews that Treasury Board is doing is, I think, more of a Treasury Board role, if I may speak for Joe. PCO is largely focused on supporting the cabinet process and therefore new initiatives coming into cabinet. That is where we would contribute, in terms of asking questions on whether gender-based analysis has been performed.

For example, on the EI program, if it's the EI compassionate care leave, we would want to ensure that it's looked at very carefully in terms of the implications for women and for men and how they would be affected by any initiative. That's our role in the policy process.

● (0935)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

You're coming back on Thursday—

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** May I hear Mr. Wild's answer?

[English]

**The Chair:** *Après.*

You can see from the questions we're asking that we really need this flow chart to show where your responsibility begins and ends, so that we're asking you legitimate questions and understand the process. So if you want to respond, make a quick response, because I have to go to the next round.



**Mr. Joe Wild:** Very quickly, there is something new from last year that now brings all spending under review; it's called strategic reviews.

Basically, on a four-year cycle all existing spending within government—what we call the “A base”—will be reviewed. We're doing it in chunks, doing basically 25% of it each year, more or less. That review is being done to assess whether or not programs are properly aligned with government priorities, whether or not they're actually providing value for money. Organizations are being asked to identify lowest-priority programs, lowest-performing programs, as well as areas where they actually may require additional investment to improve performance. These are all then considered by cabinet, as part of the budget-planning process.

The key point about strategic reviews is that this is our tool to get at all ongoing spending. It's not just looking at new spending. It looks at the whole of it, and as part of that process, departments are expected to be reflecting on any of their programs that are addressing gender issues. So it comes in that way.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Boucher, you have seven minutes.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Greetings to both of you.

I am surprised to see that GBA is not mandatory everywhere. How can we ensure that all departments conduct this analysis and establish gender-specific budgets?

If I understood correctly, it is not mandatory and you are responsible for conducting horizontal analysis. In 2008, how can we make such analysis mandatory and ensure that it is implemented? I don't want this to be just a document.

Also, I would like to know whether you have strict rules. When a department prepares an MC, I understand that it is not obliged to include GBA. Why is that?

[English]

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I think there may be a bit of a misunderstanding. Certainly my understanding of GBA is that it is performed at the MC stage, so as the policy or program is actually being developed and submitted for cabinet approval. Then, within the Treasury Board context, every Treasury Board submission that comes forward has to have a GBA performed on it by the department that is submitting the submission, and the Treasury Board analysts review the adequacy of that analysis that has been completed by the responsible department.

As far as I understand the way the system comes together, between what finance is doing with the budget when they take it into account at that point, when the departments are doing it as part of the MC proposal stage and developing a new policy or program proposal, and then ultimately when it comes in to Treasury Board to get the specific approvals that are necessary for the allotment funds, or because it's required by policy to come in for Treasury Board approval to implement the particular program or initiative, GBA is embedded in all of those steps. Certainly from my perspective at the secretariat, our approach has been to try to make this part of the normal policy development process that goes on within Treasury

Board. It is one of the lenses that we examine all submissions through, and as I said before, we're trying to make it a reflex. We're trying to embed it in the organization so that there's a reflex that all analysts use that as part of their challenge function, vis-à-vis departments that are bringing forward these submissions.

● (0940)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Once all that is done, do you perform follow-up to ensure that the GBA that has been requested is applied within the department and provides results?

[English]

**Mr. Joe Wild:** That's a more complicated question. The analysts are certainly challenging whether or not the GBA is adequate. Status of Women Canada, the public, and committees such as this one ultimately oversee and provide a view on whether a particular program or initiative reflects an appropriate GBA. We do assess whether the GBA performed by the department is sufficient. I think we have to keep in mind that it is ministers who are making decisions on these programs, and there are a whole host of interests they're balancing in making those decisions.

Ultimately it is up to parliamentarians and the public to hold the government accountable for how they feel, how those decisions have been made, and whether those decisions are reflective of anybody's given view of the public interest at that time.

Our role is to assure ourselves that analysis has been done and that the analysis is adequate. We're not necessarily there to ensure a given outcome. That's where I think you're going, that there should be a specific type of outcome, and that's not our job as public servants. Ultimately that's the job of ministers, to balance those considerations.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Ms. Biguzs, if I understood correctly, it does not work exactly the same way at the Privy Council Office. PCO conducts horizontal analysis, but it is not obliged to do GBA. How can you make this analysis mandatory?

[English]

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** If I can clarify, the lead department is responsible for doing the analysis in terms of any initiative that would come forward to cabinet. The role of PCO and the PCO officer is to perform the challenge function and to ensure that gender-based analysis has actually been undertaken. The considerations in a memorandum to cabinet, which I mentioned to you, actually include, and it's part of the role of the PCO officer to ask about, the gender-based analysis that has been performed, but it is the lead department that is actually responsible for that. It's also Status of Women Canada that is at the interdepartmental table as well. That's a very important role in terms of the interdepartmental consultation process. So again, it's embedded as part of the considerations.

Our role is to ensure that ministers receive information and that the memorandum to cabinet gives them a good assessment of an issue, the implications of an issue for men and women, and considerations around things like strategic environmental assessment, which is also a requirement. There are many considerations that have to be put in front of ministers in terms of the decision-making process. That's our role. We want to make sure that ministers have the information they need to make the decisions. They are ultimately the decision-makers. We are there to provide them with the analysis and the information on which a decision would be based.

• (0945)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We now go to Madam Mathysen, for seven minutes.

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

You'll have to forgive me, some of this still seems quite erudite, and I'm trying to come to grips with it.

Madam, you said that your role is to provide information to the ministers. But if they reject that advice, it ends there, doesn't it?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Ultimately cabinet and the government are the decision-makers. As I say, our job is to put information in front of them and to make sure they have what they need to make decisions. They do that on the basis of a variety of considerations and issues they have to take into account in the broad policy process.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** I'm very interested in the idea of the champion. I understand that the champion promotes GBA in the department and embeds it in policy. The Secretary of Treasury Board appoints the champion. I'm wondering what the criteria are for that appointment. How does one become a champion? Is it that an individual has a special interest in GBA, or a skill set? Can you enlighten me? I'm wondering how one gets that job.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I don't want to put myself into the head of the secretary per se.

There's a host of different corporate champions for different types of matters that get asked for. There are employment equity champions, gender-based analysis champions. There's a whole host of different champions. Part of it may be that a particular assistant secretary has an interest in an area and asks. They put forward their name and say they would like to be considered a champion in this area.

Mainly, the role of a champion within TBS is a leadership role. It's to ensure that as a secretariat we understand and fulfill our responsibilities with respect to GBA. The champion is really coordinating and promoting the training sessions and trying to make sure that their colleagues, at least at the secretariat level, are sending their analysts to the required training. The champion also sits at the table with the status of women gender equality interdepartmental committee that's chaired by Status of Women Canada.

In terms of special skills or qualifications, I think it's a leadership capacity and ability to motivate the organization. It certainly helps if someone has a passion for an issue, I think. I suspect that those are the types of things the secretary is looking for.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** I was listening intently, and I thought I heard you mention the figure 100 in connection with how many personnel at Treasury Board have been trained in GBA. Do directors and deputy ministers also have GBA training? Does the clerk have GBA training?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I'm not aware of whether the Secretary of the Treasury Board himself has gone on GBA training. In terms of people at the director level, yes, there are people at the director level who have gone on GBA training. I can't speak for the Clerk of the Privy Council.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Would that be a good thing, if everyone had GBA training so there was this understanding, this sense of what it is that goes into the process?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I certainly think it's important to encourage as many people as possible to take the training so that they are aware of the issue and they can understand how it plays out in terms of their own roles and responsibilities, whatever their position may be in an organization. Certainly at Treasury Board our focus is on making sure that the people who are actually performing that challenge function or developing policy have that training. That's our first priority, making sure that people who are actually doing the analysis on programs and policies have the training and are in a position to incorporate GBA as part of their tool kit in developing that. That's certainly our area of first focus.

• (0950)

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Okay.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** May I just comment for PCO as well?

Our focus is on the policy officers who actually do work on the front line with departments in terms of developing policy. That would include directors of operations. I think the role of champion at PCO, as in the case of Treasury Board, is a senior-level public servant in the Privy Council Office. Again, it's a role that's embedded in terms of there being a number of policy secretariats that are responsible for policy initiatives coming forward to cabinet policy committees. That's where the nucleus of real support is.

So the assistant secretary of social development policy is very fitting. That's a very senior-level position. I think it clearly speaks to the importance and the prominence that's given to the issue. It's also the right position for the policy secretariat, because it makes sure that position ensures that the appropriate training is provided the policy officers so they can actually perform their policy challenge function and that they are sensitive to the issues and the kinds of considerations they should be asking at the table whenever an initiative is being developed.

**The Chair:** You have about a minute.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Are PCO and Treasury Board looking at any of the best practices of GBA from other countries?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Yes. I think Status of Women Canada certainly has a lead in looking at those things and helping to articulate within the system what are best practices. There is a working level committee that the secretariat sits on. It's an interdepartmental committee that is chaired by Status of Women Canada.

In the past we have collaborated with foreign delegations—Bangladesh in the past, and shortly, in the near future, South Africa—that are looking to obtain information about Canada's approach to GBA. In general terms, I do think we look at what Status of Women Canada is doing in terms of mapping what best practices are around the world. We have discussions with them through the interdepartmental committees around what the best practices are that we can integrate into our organizations. We work very closely with Status of Women Canada on developing our training, and I think we try to reflect those best practices within our training programs.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Do you have anything to add, Ms. Biguzs?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** No. I think Status of Women Canada is a leader, and I know you've had representatives from Status of Women appear before you in terms of the extent to which they do look at the international perspective. I think that certainly helps inform their approach. The training we receive at PCO is in fact coordinated and provided for us by Status of Women Canada. In that regard we feel we are getting and receiving from them very good expertise and advice that reflect the international perspectives out there.

I think you've received representatives from HRSD; in terms of HRSD, departments as well are looking internationally in terms of the experience out there in incorporating into their analysis on particular policy proposals how best to incorporate gender-based analysis on individual initiatives. Much of it depends on the kind of data and information that you can get. Data is always critical in terms of how you incorporate it into your policy choices and options. I think departments are actually continuing to learn and to look internationally at best practices.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We now go to the second round.

Go ahead, Ms. Neville, for five minutes.

**Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to both of you for coming.

I'm listening to you with interest. I have to say it was somewhat difficult following your presentations as you went through all of the steps of government. As I listened, I was struck by the fact that the processes are in place, but somehow there's a niggling concern of mine that while the processes are in place, gender-based analysis is still peripheral to all of what you're doing.

We heard the comment that it has a profile. We know that there's a memorandum to cabinet on gender-based analysis being done when appropriate. There have been a number of references to Status of Women; we know Status of Women is challenged in terms of their staffing complement and the demands on them. I just have a sense that gender-based analysis is becoming topical because you have a

committee looking at it and a community demanding it, but that it's not real, or that it's just very much skimming the surface.

I'm waiting for finance to come to talk about some of the tax credits. We heard references to the interdepartmental committee; you've referred to it. We've also heard that they hardly ever meet. I'd be interested to know what your understanding is on the role of the committee.

Memoranda to cabinet suggested that gender issues be considered when appropriate. Who decides what's appropriate? Is it appropriate to have it in a defence memorandum to cabinet as well as in a social services memorandum to cabinet?

We've heard that programs are aligned with government priorities. Are government priorities articulated for Treasury Board staff and for Privy Council staff so that...? Is gender-based analysis done independently of government priorities, or is it geared to government priorities? How are those priorities articulated?

I'll let you answer that, and then I've got more questions.

• (0955)

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** If I can just speak from the policy point of view, our role is to ensure that implications are assessed for any initiative coming forward, and that includes gender-based analysis. That includes asking the questions about the implications. If there is a differential impact, what is the impact? That's really our bread and butter at PCO in terms of asking those kinds of questions.

The interdepartmental meeting process for a policy initiative is very important. Concerning the issue of who decides what's appropriate, the department is ultimately the lead for doing the policy legwork. And it's incumbent on the central agencies—and that's PCO and I would include Status of Women Canada there—at an interdepartmental meeting process on a policy proposal to ask the tough questions, to ask what the implications are for women, what the implications are for men, and whether there is equality of outcomes in terms of what comes forward.

That's incumbent in our role as policy officers, as policy analysts, to ensure that the questions are asked and that they get asked and that the information is provided and is conveyed in the documents that are submitted to ministers.

At the end of the day, again, we are not the decision-makers, but our role is to ensure that ministers have the kind of information they need, that they understand the risks, that they understand the consequences, and that they understand the benefits. And at the end of the day, they have to make a decision based on their best judgment, looking at a number of factors.

In terms of the priorities, as I mentioned in my comments, the government's priorities are very much informed on the basis conveyed through the Speech from the Throne, of course, and through things like mandate letters to ministers. But through all of it, a gender-based lens—as it comes through a policy development process—would actually include questions around the gender-based analysis and the implications for men and for women.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** So if a memorandum to cabinet does not have an adequate gender-based analysis, then what's the process ?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** On the memorandum to cabinet, our role is to ensure that we and the department provide the kind of analysis and the information it needs. It's noted to ministers if in fact there are information gaps or data gaps in terms of what's coming forward.

And sometimes you deal with incomplete information just in terms of the data that may be available and it's not always perfect in terms of what we and departments are able to provide to ministers in terms of the implications on issues. And that would be noted.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Neville.

We now go to Mr. Stanton for five minutes.

And Ms. Davidson, would you take the chair?

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

Good morning, and thank you for your presentations this morning.

First, to Ms. Biguzs, in the course of your opening remarks you talked about the preparation of the memoranda and the notion that there are several considerations through which these are vetted, one of which is GBA. Could you give us some examples of some of the other considerations that would be part of that initial look at the proposals that come from the departments?

•(1000)

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** I outlined some of the considerations in my opening comments. I think it goes to the heart of the policy-making process in terms of trying to analyze an issue that comes forward, trying to define the problem clearly. Are the goals and objectives clear? Are the results clear in terms of what the initiative is intended to accomplish and how that might be measured? I think we're trying to build more of that into the front-end process of policy development rather than just leaving it for the Treasury Board process. Looking at what programs are currently out there we ask whether it builds on existing programs. Are there gaps? What are the gaps? How do we determine what those gaps are? Have there been evaluations done to assess what the implications of a program are? Have we looked at horizontal implications and considerations?

We look at things like environmental implications. Has a strategic environmental assessment been done? It's trying to look at the societal benefits of an initiative, asking what the risks of an initiative are, and looking at what the credible options are. So there is a whole range of considerations.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** So it's very thorough. I appreciate that.

In terms of PCO's working with the staff at departments, what kinds of processes are in place to help the departments take all these considerations into account, more or less, before they get to you in

terms of training and development work? Would you say that these are people who are professionals in the public service and understand and integrate those considerations at the outset?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Most initiatives are developed in departments' strategic policy shops. So you already have individuals who have policy expertise and policy capacity working on particular initiatives. Our objective is, hopefully, to always try to work as far back as we can with the departments, so that you have enough time built in to ensure that you can actually have the necessary due diligence done on an initiative. It's a dynamic process and there can be many meetings, many consultations with the department, to actually help provide constructive feedback to departments in actually developing the MC.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** So it's really kind of collaborative.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Yes, it is, and as I say, a lot of it is working closely with all the central agencies and also with a broader interdepartmental community, to make sure any implications for other departments are also taken into account.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Thank you.

Mr. Wild, in your presentation you covered off some of the work that's been under way with regard to the MRRS. You talked about being part-way through a five-step process. The first step was getting an inventory in place. The second step, which I think you indicated you were in the midst of right now, is developing these performance measurement frameworks. Step three appears to be some kind of databasing of all that data. What are steps four and five?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Step four is the database. So after we get through building the actual frameworks, getting the database in place, we then have to start understanding and using the information out of that database. So step four is starting to actually assess the usefulness of that information and then starting to build it into decision-making processes.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** When did this evolution in MRRS begin?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I can't peg it exactly.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** A couple of years ago?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I think we're really talking about the last year or year and a half, in earnest.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Okay. It's massive. You're talking about 3,000 programs of the Government of Canada, each of which have to be compiled in this data. Any ideas how long it's going to be before we really have some usable measurement in place for this?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** It's difficult to put a specific year on it right now. We don't have a specific year on it. We know it's going to take us some years. This is not going to be next year or the year after that. It's going to be a little while before we're in a position to actually start using the information from the database. What we've been trying to do, and it's really been a focus for the last three or four years, is to rationalize the program structure within government. It's a very complicated organization. We're just trying to get everything rationalized so that we can actually see and understand what the programs are that are actually out there. I think we're making good progress on that, but it does take a significant amount of time given that we're talking about an organization that spends over \$200 billion a year and has more than 450,000 people working in it.

• (1005)

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Well done. I commend you on that.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** Thank you, Mr. Stanton.

We'll move to Madame Demers, please, for five minutes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Wild, Ms. Biguzs, thank you for being here today.

I must admit that your statements have confused me somewhat. On the one hand, you underscore the importance of champions in the various departments, and on the other hand, you state that the people who play this key role in your office, Mr. Wild, and in yours, Ms. Biguzs, have left their position over the past few days or months. I find it rather curious that no one has considered drawing up a short list of people qualified to play this role so that there is no gap when these champions are assigned to other positions. If their role is so important, why did no one think to ensure, when the budget was tabled, that the two people most affected by the measures set out therein were replaced when they left their position?

Ms. Biguzs, I realize that you are in this position on an interim basis, but you must also carry out your usual duties. I'm sure that despite all your good will, you cannot play the role of champion, unless you are assigned to that position permanently. I find that rather curious and even ironic.

Mr. Wild, you stated that over the past year, a number of programs have been reviewed, and that this review will take five years in total. To date, it has been shown that programs that have a social impact on women have suffered the most cuts. Why is that the case, given that these programs are supposed to undergo gender-specific analysis?

Ms. Biguzs, can you name a specific program for which you forecast a negative impact for women? Unfortunately, the minister responsible was notified of this and yet still applied the measure proposed. It went through several stages before reaching you and going back to the minister. The various departments and advisors conducted studies, which then went to you. You have given your impression, and yet, these measures are still adopted even though you have determined that there would be a negative impact.

I would like to hear your answers to these questions.

[English]

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I'll start perhaps with the first part of the question about the champion and the champion moving on.

There are two models that one can adopt for how to embed GBA in an organization. One is to basically make it part of the day-to-day work of everyone in their daily function. Another is to have a specific unit with a head who does that function throughout the organization. At Treasury Board Secretariat the process or the method that we've chosen is to embed it throughout the organization. So every analyst, whether they are creating policy or whether they are challenging submissions coming in from departments, has a role to play on GBA.

The role of the champion is one of leadership, as I mentioned before. They're not the ones performing the analysis. They're not necessarily integral to our capacity to perform the analysis and to perform our challenge function. Every member of the senior management team is aware of GBA. Their staff are briefing them on any GBA implications that they have seen in the submission. They're answering the questions from Treasury Board ministers when the submission is being presented. It's embedded throughout the organization.

While certainly the role of the champion is to help ensure that there continues to be an emphasis put on building that capacity throughout the organization, going without a champion for a week or two or three I don't think puts at risk our capacity to play our role in challenging departments on whether or not they're actually undertaking this analysis as part of the submission process.

In terms of strategic reviews, just to clarify, this is a new process that was done for the first time this fiscal year inputting into budget 2008. So this is actually our first year doing it and we'll continue to see where it goes.

I would just note that in terms of at least budget 2007 and budget 2008, I can't speak to specific decisions, again, that are being taken by ministers. Our job is, in a non-partisan way, to provide the best possible policy advice that we can that takes into account all perspectives and interests and gives our best view of what we feel is the best course of action. But ultimately ministers have to take all of that into account plus political considerations and they make decisions. Then we loyally implement those decisions, and that's in essence the process.

So it's difficult for me to speak to the specific decisions that are being taken by government in a budget or a speech from the throne. Those are obviously the decisions of ministers. We do provide our advice. Our advice has a GBA lens on it, and certainly from a minister's perspective, that may not necessarily be the only lens or the determinative lens. I think that's part of their job as an elected official and then they're held accountable for the decisions they've taken.

• (1010)

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you, Madame Demers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Can Ms. Biguzs answer me after Ms. Davidson?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Do you have a comment to make on it?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Yes. I'll try to be brief.

I can assure you in terms of the role of the champion that it doesn't just reside with one person. It should, in fact, live beyond one person or live beyond the champion. I think it's the role of policy advice, and I would say the same thing as Mr. Wild, that essentially you want to embed it in your organization so that it becomes part of a very robust dynamic challenge function that PCO should be playing and asking tough questions, along with Status of Women Canada.

The role of champion is just to make sure that officers have the tools they need. We have actually incorporated this as part of our training program, our learning plans for PCO policy officers working on policy proposals coming forward. In that sense, it has become embedded as part of the regular training for new PCO officers. It's in our materials that we provide to them on how you perform a challenge function, the kinds of questions you have to ask of a department in terms of who's leading on the policy process.

So, as I say, it has to live beyond the champion. The champion is just there to make sure the tools are there, and that can actually provide the leadership.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Can we have a copy of the tools that you provide them with in order to do the analysis?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Madame Demers, we have to move on.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair, can we request a copy of the tools that are given to the people who conduct the analysis?

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Yes.

I believe you're coming back on Thursday. Perhaps you can bring that with you.

We'll move now to Ms. Mathysen, for five minutes, please.

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

Mr. Wild, in your presentation you said that your directorate is responsible for challenging whether those developing policies have considered potential gender impacts. Do you have a concrete example? What would be a good success story in terms of GBA?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** In terms of my specific directorate, what we're challenging on are actually the management policies that the Treasury Board issues to set the standard across departments around how we expect the department to manage in a particular subject matter, whether that's HR, information technology, information management and security, that sort of thing. That's the type of policy I'm talking about. It's actually that old-school management handbook you're handed that tells you how to make things work in your organization.

In terms of a success story, the best success I can point to would be that the overall suite, as it's being renewed, is coming out as a fairly gender-neutral policy suite. We're not running into major issues around unintended gender consequences.

So I don't have a specific thing that I can point to, to say, "Wow, there was some really big, interesting thing." What I can point to is a bit more mundane. It's that, as part of our process, the analysts who work for me in that particular area have gender-based analysis training and they are challenging the policy centres within the secretariat as part of their regular job. So, for me, that's the success, the fact that it's part of their tool kit, it's part of their reflex, and they're doing it. And we're not coming up with major problem issues, which speaks to me, then, that the people who are actually crafting the policy are paying attention to this. They are taking it into account. So I think that, in and of itself, is kind of the symbol of success, in a sense.

It is one of the difficulties when you do it the way we're doing it, which is that when you embed something throughout an organization and you do it at all levels in development and implementation, it's harder to point to something to show a specific result, because the reality is that the issues are being addressed as they arise. The fact that we're not seeing major issues having come to the attention of senior management around these things is, to me, a factor of success.

The problem, I realize, is that it probably leaves some skepticism around whether or not the analysis is real. I think it is, and I think the ultimate judgment of that is the fact that we don't have large criticism being laid at our feet from Status of Women Canada or others who are watching whether or not our management policies are actually avoiding any unintended gender consequences.

• (1015)

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Ms. Biguzs, did you have anything to add in regard to this?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** No, I think Mr. Wild has covered that off.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Okay.

It's interesting that you talk about unintended gender biases. I truly believe that the departments and the analysts are working very hard, but quite frankly, when I look at budget 2008, I have some profound concerns.

I also want to talk a bit about the tools. We heard from Professor John Bartle, who talked about the number of tools that could be used to analyze budgets through the gender lens. He talked about expenditure incidence analysis, gender-aware policy appraisal, gender-responsive budget statements, and beneficiary assessments, and time use studies.

I wonder what tools you use. Are the tools the same as those described by Professor Bartle, or what precisely do you use when you conduct GBA?

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** I just want to tell you, you have less than a minute left for a response.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** In terms of budgeting issues, I think you should actually direct your question to the finance department. I think you are meeting with finance department officials next week.

In terms of PCO, we have worked with Status of Women Canada, and certainly it's the tool that Status of Women Canada has provided us in terms of our training tool, which looks at the policy proposal from the beginning to the end. It includes a number of case studies to give officers an opportunity to work on some practical case examples to understand what kinds of questions they have to ask and to look at what the differential impacts would be in terms of women or men. So we look to Status of Women Canada in terms of the tool we use.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Do you have anything to add?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Those are pretty much the same tools we use. I can think of one example, one particular policy that was being developed. The policy centre went out and actually contracted for a specific gender-based analysis to be done by an expert. It varies, but generally speaking it's what Madam Biguzs talked about.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you.

We will go to Ms. Grewal, for five minutes, please.

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

When the previous witnesses came here they expressed some concerns that gender-based analysis that is being done within the federal government is perceived just as another bureaucratic hurdle to overcome. Could you share with us how, in your experience, the GBA is perceived by departments and agencies? Also, in your view, what needs to be done to ensure that gender-based analysis becomes institutionalized in the central agencies and most specifically in government spending, revenues, and budgetary policies and processes?

• (1020)

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Certainly in the last two years there has been a lot of progress made in the fact that we have champions in the central agencies, in the fact that we have an interdepartmental committee that looks at this question in terms of how we can advance efforts across government, in the fact that you have in departments various approaches and various models for ensuring that gender-based analysis takes place. As I say, inherent in the policy process, the importance of ensuring—again I sound like I'm repeating myself—that we ask the challenging questions and the tough questions in terms of what the implications are for men and women is part of a very robust policy challenge function.

It is also the case that this is within government, but of course to make a process even stronger it means you need voices and advocates outside of government. I think the fact that you have organizations and groups outside government that look for these kinds of questions and that, as I say, challenge government really in terms of how these issues and these considerations are being taken into account leads to a very healthy process. It has to be internal, but it also has to be an external process that makes sure this is an issue that is advanced and that the necessary kinds of considerations are taken into account.

I think there is an onus both inside and outside. There have been a number of good steps taken to try to ensure this happens. I think we can only build on the progress we've made to embed it as part of the culture and the work of each organization. Certainly, as I say, you'll hear from our colleagues in the Department of Finance in terms of

the work they're doing, in terms of the budget process. So I think it's really all part of an overall sort of approach, a coherent approach that has to look internally in government with all of the various players but also in terms of looking at the external organizations and think-tanks and others that can also certainly help to advance work in this area.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Most government spending, as you know, is not new. Over two-thirds of our government spending is statutory spending, authorized through previously approved legislation such as health transfers to the provinces, old age security, etc. So traditionally most programs are continued year after year. In your mind, is there any gender-based analysis done on previously approved funding, spending?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Yes, in the sense that, as I mentioned before, we are now doing something called strategic reviews. It's a new process that was launched during this fiscal year. We did it for the first time and then put it into budget 2008. Strategic reviews require organizations—and basically we take a certain number each year—to review all of their spending, and in reviewing their spending they're looking to ensure that it reflects government priorities, that programs are performing well, that sort of thing.

What happens then is this. To the extent to which any of those programs have a gender-based issue that is integrated into the program design, that is certainly then part of the assessment of that program's performance. So we would assess whether or not that program was actually succeeding in whatever it is trying to do in terms of that gender outcome that it's looking to generate.

There is a means. That is the tool we currently have. There is a host of other issues, of course, that goes into the strategic review: official languages, legal and contractual obligations, the impact on HR, federal-territorial relations. There are all kinds of issues that go into a strategic review, but certainly if there are gender-based impacts, those are taken into account and are put into that mix as well.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** It is the committee's understanding that PCO primarily plays a gatekeeper role for what gets to cabinet. What do PCO analysts do to ensure that departments have done a gender-based analysis regarding their memorandum to cabinet and have also incorporated that GBA into the memorandum?

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** If you could keep your answer to about 30 seconds, that would be great.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** I think again it's part of the challenge function of PCO officers. PCO officers are the primary contact with departments who are the lead on policy development initiatives coming to cabinet. PCO officers ask the questions. They ask for gender-based analysis. It's also incumbent on PCO to ensure that an interdepartmental process take place on an initiative coming forward to cabinet. The interdepartmental process includes representatives from other government departments, including Status of Women Canada. As I say, it's a very important tool and an important opportunity to ensure that questions are asked and that the sponsoring department can basically provide any information that's requested in terms of questions around gender-based analysis and implications or differential implications for men and women. That's PCO's role, to make sure before something comes to cabinet that those processes have indeed taken place.

• (1025)

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you.

Mr. Pearson, go ahead for five minutes, please.

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

I'm not so much looking for answers as just for a bit of assurance.

I'd like to give a bit of an example. I was a professional firefighter for almost 30 years in Ontario. For 20 years a number of us on a committee advocated to bring women on to the fire department. It was a struggle. It went through the advocative stage. It finally passed, and our city council recognized that it had to be done. So it went through that recognition stage.

Then it went to the bureaucratic stage, and they brought in trainers and a number of other people. At that point the whole thing fell on its face. It was because they had developed kind of a checklist program. They came to the officers like me and others and said, "Here's your manual. Here's the stuff you check off if it's being done." At the assessment after the end of two years, we began to realize that what began as a really good idea got lost in these good intentions, because people were so busy checking little boxes off that they weren't actually implementing it.

I guess what I'm saying here—and I'm sure you'll disagree—is that it feels to me today a bit more like a checklist thing. I'm trying to find out from you—I guess I need some assurance—that it's not. But also I'd really like to find a way in which this whole GBA thing would become a natural approach within all departments rather than the kind of thing for which we say we did this and this and this. I'm just throwing it open for your comments to that.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I certainly agree, and I think that's actually the direction we're going in. As I mentioned, I call it a reflex. But again the idea is that when you're sitting there as a policy analyst and you're deciding what advice you're going to provide and how you're going to frame that advice up the line ultimately to ministers, you need to understand, and you need to be able to articulate how this particular program or initiative is going to impact on a whole host of stakeholders and public interests.

Quite frankly, I think it's a question of the integrity of the public service in providing its advice, that it is taking into account whether or not there will be gender impacts, just as I think it's part of the

integrity of the public service to take into account whether there are employment equity impacts, official language impacts, or federal-provincial impacts. There are a whole host of things that we have to take into account in providing that advice to ministers. Our job is to provide the information to ministers so that they can make a decision. They can weigh out all of those public interests and decide from a political perspective what they want to do. Our job is then to loyally implement that after it's been made.

But we don't do our job if we're not giving them the information they need to understand if there is any gender impact on a given issue. I take seriously that it is part of our job to do that. I think that by and large we are doing it. I think it's one of those things for which you don't want to rest on your laurels. You need to continue to work. It's a constant effort to embed these things into the culture of the organization. I think that's what we're doing, and that's the approach we're trying to take.

I think it's far more than a checklist. I think we'll be judged ultimately by outcomes on whether or not we're succeeding. The difficulty there of course is that we're not the decision-makers. Ultimately there's a whole host of things that come in to make decisions. Our job is just to make sure they've got the best advice possible that reflects as many different perspectives on whatever that particular issue may be, and I think that is in fact what we're doing.

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Can I just add to that?

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Sure, go ahead.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Checklists can be important. I agree with you, they shouldn't be an end unto themselves. Sometimes they can be very helpful in terms of making sure you go through all the issues.

Our job is doing good policy analysis and making sure good policy analysis takes place. That means looking at things like risks, benefits, and consequences. It means looking at who the winners are and who the losers are. It looks at the mitigating factors.

As officials, the last thing we want to have is a surprise in terms of any kind of an initiative that moves forward, that somehow government was not aware there would be some kind of an impact, or a dramatic negative impact, on a group of stakeholders that we had not brought to their attention.

We try to do the best work we can in terms of doing the policy due diligence in PCO, in terms of trying to facilitate that work happening with departments to try to advance good policy and good programs at the end of the day that benefit society at large and that don't have differential impacts. That's what we try to do. We may not always succeed, but that's certainly the effort we try to make. It's in that process, to put all of that together.

• (1030)

**Mr. Glen Pearson:** Ms. Minna had....

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thirty seconds, not even. We are going to try to get another round in.



**Hon. Maria Minna:** I'll go into the next round.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Okay.

We will try one more round, but we're going to try to keep your remarks to three or three and a half minutes so everybody will get a turn.

The next person is Madame Boucher, please.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** If I understand correctly, you conduct a horizontal analysis. Regardless of which party is in power, there are ministers and an apparatus that is in place. However, the question is: have they been educated?

Have all the ministers been educated? Have they been told how important it is that GBA be included in certain policies? More and more, GBA must be included in as many programs as possible, so that no one is harmed.

Is there someone at Privy Council Office or at Treasury Board who is responsible for explaining to the ministers how it works and how important it is to perform gender-specific analysis of certain programs?

I realize that this is largely the minister's responsibility, but the department also has a role to play. Depending on which party is in power, the departments do not always follow the same guidelines—

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** We need to leave time for a response.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** I can quickly comment that ministers are certainly supported by departmental officials. Normally, they would be briefed on any item that would come forward to a policy committee and provided with advice from their officials, and their officials would normally brief them on implications.

You also have Status of Women Canada through that process that would highlight any kinds of issues or problems that would have been identified in a policy initiative. You have a minister responsible for the status of women, who also has an opportunity.

As I said, that interdepartmental process at the officials' level tries to make sure the dots are connected and the issues are raised. I think it's through cabinet as well, because cabinet is also a collective body. There is every opportunity to ensure that those kinds of issues are identified through that process.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Mr. Wild?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** With respect to Treasury Board, after the policy has been developed it's much the same thing. There are various checkpoints. There's certainly the department. Our Treasury Board analysts work with the department to ensure their submission is as robust as possible. Ultimately, the department decides what to put forward in its submission through its minister.

Again, it's a challenge process throughout, as the submission makes its way to ministers. Certainly ministers may raise questions

around whether or not a sufficient gender-based analysis has been completed. Our senior managers who present these submissions to ministers have to be in a position to be able to respond to those questions. Again, it's embedded throughout the process.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you.

We will now go to Madame Deschamps, three minutes.

Again, I would remind you to keep your questions as succinct as possible.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Mr. Wild, I would like to come back to what you said earlier about strategic review. I am wondering about this, because I know that tools are being implemented for GBA. It is easier for me to understand what has been done and what already exists, because we can determine whether programs work in light of this GBA evaluation criterion.

You state that currently, and I don't know whether you mean as of 2007, you evaluate 25% of existing programs per year. I would like to know how that works. When you conduct this evaluation, you can determine whether or not GBA has been taken into account in the implementation of these programs. If there is a problem, and it can be shown that what happens is discriminatory against women, what happens then? I realize that promises to embed GBA in the programs are merely lip service, because at the end of the day, it is the government that decides whether it is one of its priorities.

•(1035)

[English]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Some time for the answer here....?

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Time passes quickly.

Did you understand?

[English]

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Again, as part of the strategic review process, the organizations that have been picked to participate in a given year are expected to assess the performance of all of their programs and spending to ensure that they're achieving the purpose for which they were created. Whatever the particular objective is for that program, if the program has as part of its objective a gender-related issue, then it's going to be integrated into the assessment whether or not that program's performance is actually achieving whatever gender outcome that program was looking to achieve.

In turn, if the program is having unintended consequences, again, you would expect that to be picked up in the strategic review process. Ultimately what the strategic review process is doing is requiring organizations to then develop proposals for how they would reallocate and reinvest based on the performance of their programs and spending.

Again, it's very much up to the departments to go through this process. Treasury Board Secretariat performs a challenge function as they work through their strategic review. The department comes forward then with their proposal, which, as I mentioned before, takes into account a whole host of issues. Ultimately that's brought before Treasury Board ministers, who make some decisions. Ultimately it goes to cabinet to be rolled into the budget process.

We're there to provide advice, to give our best advice on whether or not we think a given program has an issue or not. Ultimately it's for ministers to decide.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen, three minutes.

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

I was quite taken by what you said, Ms. Biguzs, in regard to the need to have voices outside of government. Yes, we need those internally working, but there remains that all-important external voice. By that voice challenging, I assume what's meant is those people with the ability to do the research, to do the advocacy, to do the lobbying. Of course we've lost that with the disappearance or at least the underfunding of NAWL and the loss of CRIAW. I guess only FAFIA remains in terms of that external voice with the strength to influence government.

With that in mind, I was wondering if PCO and Treasury have any further plans to implement the recommendations from the committee's 2005 "Gender-Based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success". Maybe that is another kind of kick in the pants to government to stay the course and make sure that we do have the GBA we need.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Ms. Biguzs.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Certainly at PCO I think we've taken very seriously the recommendations from that report. In fact we've acted on them in terms of the role of the champion and embedding training. We're trying to improve the training all the time. Each and every year, I think, we learn a little bit more in terms of how to try to tailor the training a little bit better to PCO. We hope this year's training will be that much better than next year's.

So as I say, we feel it's a building process that we are working incrementally toward, and we'll continue to do so.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** I echo the comments on the training. In addition, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, we're very much looking at continuing with our action plan to address the recommendations that were specific to TBS. And we're continuing to work with our tools, MRRS and MAF, to ensure that we are contributing to departmental awareness of the importance of GBA.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Okay, you have 30 seconds, if you want to use them, for question and answer. So they'll need to be quick.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Oh, my goodness.

We have an official definition of GBA from Status of Women Canada. Is that the same definition you use in PCO and Treasury Board?

• (1040)

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** Yes.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Yes.

**Mrs. Irene Mathysen:** Okay, thanks.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** All right, we'll move, then, to Mr. Stanton for three minutes, please.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Wild, just following along, we got started with the MRRS program, and the second part you talked about was the management accountability framework. In your summary remarks you talk about the two being, essentially, tools that are going to be used for ensuring that GBA considerations have been taken.

Could you tell me the essential differences between those two tools? Both seem to be dealing with the measurement of whether resources have been applied properly. What's the principal difference between those two systems?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** They're actually doing two different but complementary things.

MRRS is about the actual results, about program performance and the results of spending. It's about ensuring that your program is actually achieving the outcome you intended, and it's doing so in a way that is effective and efficient.

MAF is actually about management capacity. It's a tool for assessing whether a department, in certain key indicator areas—and we have 21 of those, so in 21 areas of management—exhibits behaviours that are exemplary in terms of those particular management areas, like values and ethics, stewardship, and that sort of thing.

They come together to form a whole. They give you an entire picture of a department at the end of the day. But MRRS is specifically about program performance and the results the spending is generating.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Is it monetary performance? Is it actual specific outcomes, whereas the other is sort of cultural outcomes?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** No. MRRS is about programs, right? So you have a given grants and contributions program, or whatever it might be that your particular business line is. You're undertaking an activity, and that activity has to generate a result of some kind. The idea behind MRRS, with a couple of other tools, is to ensure that your program is actually aligned with the objective you're seeking to achieve. MRRS gives you a means to measure that performance. So you're required to decide how you're going to measure program performance to assess whether it's actually working, whether it's a success. Is it generating the results you intended?

MAF is about management. MAF is a tool very much about the secretariat assessing whether there are management weaknesses in the capacities of departments so that we better understand where we need to spend time and energy to help departments build up their management capacity. And I'm talking specifically about management of the organization, not the programs.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** How do you measure that in MAF? How are you measuring management capacity?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Well, it's a fairly interesting, lengthy process, and I don't think I can cover it all in the time we have.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** You have 30 seconds.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Perhaps we could talk about it more on Thursday. I'd appreciate that.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Okay, but in 30 seconds, what MAF is doing is that it has a set of indicators, which are basically behaviours we look to see modelled within departments. Under those are a whole host of measures. So there are specific pieces of evidence that would support whether that behaviour is real or not.

We basically go to departments and ask them to provide us with the information on those pieces of evidence we're looking for. Then we assess whether the department is doing well, has room for improvement, and is a leader. We basically have a maturity model we map that against to see where the department sits in each of the 21 areas of management.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Do I have...?

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you. I think you're out of luck.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** I just wanted to find out when MAF started. I asked earlier about MRRS. How far back did this start?

**Mr. Joe Wild:** MAF started in 2003, and we're currently doing our fifth round.

**Mr. Bruce Stanton:** Excellent.

Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** We'll go to Ms. Minna, please.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Thank you.

I have six or eight questions, but I'll ask two and come back to you on Thursday. Both of them are for the PCO.

The PCO plays primarily a sort of gatekeeper role as MCs come through for cabinet. At present, what documents must be submitted by the departments to support the claim that a GBA has been done?

Second, in 2005 this committee's report on gender-based analysis recommended that the government initiate consultations aimed at the development of legislation. This legislation would ensure the systemic application of gender-based analysis to all federal policy and program activities. The committee also recommended that the PCO establish a secretariat with responsibility to ensure the development and eventual implementation of effective gender equality legislation.

Are you aware of discussions since the committee's report about this development, and have you provided any information? I know that Minister Frulla wanted to establish legislation and was getting close to that.

• (1045)

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** You have a minute and a half left for a response, please.

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** The PCO has a policy challenge function role, so as part of the MC process the PCO would ask departments to provide information that would demonstrate the gender-based analysis. It would also, as appropriate, ask them to include a

reference or something in the memorandum to cabinet to explain the implications of gender-based analysis.

The PCO has followed up on the 2005 report by appointing a GBA champion and embedding training. I'm not familiar with more recent discussions that have taken place on the issue of legislation. Because the PCO is a central agency, we wouldn't normally have a secretariat created within it to deliver something. Normally that would be the responsibility of a lead minister, a lead department. So any of the follow-up looking at the options for moving forward with legislation would probably be the responsibility of the minister responsible for the status of women.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** When I say "specific documents", we were told by government representatives that the segregated data was difficult to get, but everybody outside of government has told us that not only is it available but it's easy to get. Stats Canada has all the information, and so on.

What specific documentation or information is required by the PCO when a document comes forward, when a potential MC is looked at, to make sure that the information is quality information?

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** I think we do the best we can in asking departments to provide analysis, data, and information, and incorporate that in the MC, to the extent they have access to it in the department and can include it in the analysis of the proposal being put forward.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Thank you.

A couple of things have been mentioned here this morning. One is the flow chart of responsibility that we would like you to bring to our next meeting on Thursday that the chair talked about.

Mr. Wild, you talked about the strategic review. Could you provide us with information on Thursday about how that relates to a new budget, or is it done on old budgets? There's some clarity needed. So if you could bring that on Thursday that would be good.

**Mr. Joe Wild:** Sure. We undertook strategic reviews this fiscal year. They fed into budget 2008. There are specific references in the budget to how the strategic review was used to reallocate funding from low-priority programming in the departments that were reviewed to other priority areas of spending. It's all set out in the budget 2008 document. I'd be more than happy to provide that.

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** That would be great.

I believe Madame Demers had requested something for Thursday as well, another chart.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** I asked for the tools.

[English]

**Mrs. Anita Biguzs:** We'll have to clarify that the tool we use on gender-based analysis is a manual that's been put together for us by Status of Women Canada. We'll just have to make sure that Status of Women Canada are all right in terms of our being able to share that information.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** You said yourself that in your department, you had developed the tool and strategic questions to be asked to determine whether GBA was indeed part of the different MCs that are submitted to you.

That's what I would like to see, the questions that you ask and the questions you ask yourselves. I don't want to see only the traditional tools used by Status of Women Canada, but also the tools that you have developed within PCO in order to—

• (1050)

[*English*]

**The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson):** Okay, so that's understood. We do need to have the documents in both official

languages, as well, otherwise we can't circulate them to the committee.

Again, I would like to thank you very much for appearing here this morning and answering the many questions that we have, and probably tweaking some more questions that we will have for Thursday.

Before the committee leaves, I want to remind you of the invitation that we're to meet with the delegation of women parliamentarians from Afghanistan. It is in Room 214 Wellington, and it is at three o'clock this afternoon, right after question period. It's for all members of this committee.

We'll declare this meeting adjourned.

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