



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO • NUMBER 029 • 2nd SESSION • 39th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, April 17, 2008

—
Chair

Ms. Yasmin Ratansi

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• (0900)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)): Welcome this morning. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we resume the study on gender budgets. We will call this meeting to order.

Before we start with our first presenters, Ms. Minna would like to make a statement.

Ms. Minna, please.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): I just want to put on the record, given what we're working towards, congratulations to Spain. I know this sounds weird, but yesterday's *Toronto Star* showed a 37-year-old woman, seven months pregnant, as the Minister of Defence while she was reviewing her troops, and a picture with the Prime Minister that showed that the majority of cabinet are females in Spain now. And he says in his comment that he is going to deal with the "criminal machismo" of his country. What I'm saying, ladies, is it's doable.

I just want to put that on record, to congratulate at least one nation on this planet of ours that has actually taken control of the issue and moved on.

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

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ): Madam Chair, the Prime Minister of Spain has also decided to establish a gender equality department. I congratulate him.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Thank you very much, Madam Demers, for your input. That's exciting news for the study we're doing.

Now we will go to our presenters. We have several presenters this morning. We're going to ask each of the presenters to give their presentation for ten minutes, and then we will go to questions and answers after they have all given them. They're all related presentations.

Heather Dryburgh, if you're prepared to start, please go ahead.

Ms. Heather Dryburgh (Chief of the General Social Survey, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada): Thank you for inviting us today.

I'm from Statistics Canada, and I'm here with my colleague, Louise Marmen. We're very pleased to have the opportunity to give

you a brief overview of Statistics Canada's approach to gender statistics and how our data can be accessed.

I'll begin with a brief introduction on the Canadian context for gender statistics. The implementation of gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies has ensured demand for gender statistics at Statistics Canada. This was an important development coming out of the 1995 federal plan for gender equality. Our main contribution is the provision of gender statistics, which are then used by policy departments to conduct gender-based analysis.

Here are the definitions we work with when we talk about gender statistics. Gender statistics are data that reflect the situation of women and men, taking into account their different socio-economic realities. Gender statistics are then used in gender-based analysis to assess the differential impact of policies, programs, and legislation on women and men.

As a statistical agency, our gender-based analysis involves assessing existing sources of data and questioning the assumptions underpinning statistical concepts and collection methods, ensuring that we provide sex-disaggregated data as well as data relevant to both men's and women's experiences.

Statistics Canada collects and analyzes a wealth of gender statistics. They're available in tables, in microdata form, and in analytic publications. I want to talk about each of these sources of information and provide some examples of each type.

First, let me say that a broad range of gender statistics is available on the Statistics Canada website and all of the agency's outputs are announced in *The Daily*, which is Statistics Canada's official release bulletin.

In preparing for today's session, I conducted a quick search of *The Daily* for the word "gender", and I had 82 hits on that particular day. I've put a couple of examples in here. There are many data tables as well as studies. Among the data tables were tables broken down by sex on public colleges and institutions, enrolments, and graduates. There were also data tables on shelters for abused women. Those are just a couple of examples. There were many studies, analytic studies, including recent studies on the rising education of women and the gender earnings gap, gender differences in quits and absenteeism, and employment growth among lone mothers in Canada and the U.S.

Also on Statistics Canada's website are statistics by subject. Under the subject "Society and Community" you'll find "Women and Gender", where there are links to the latest releases, data tables, publications, and analytic studies. So there's a wealth of information there.

A joint project between Statistics Canada and Status of Women Canada is a publication called *Finding Data on Women: A Guide to Major Sources at Statistics Canada*. I've brought copies that I can leave with you in both languages. This excellent resource was recently updated and released in March 2007, and it has summary information on a wide range of surveys and administrative data sources that can be used for gender-based analysis. This publication is available for free on the Status of Women Canada website.

Sex-disaggregated data tables are one of our most important sources of gender statistics. These tables include both statistics and indicators and can be found, through links on or after their release, on the Statistics Canada website under "Summary Tables". For example, you'll find tables on topics such as days lost per worker by industry and sex and many others. Or you can find them in CANSIM II, which is Statistics Canada's socio-economic database, for a small fee. In CANSIM II you'll find tables such as the number of women and children residing in shelters by facility type and reason of admission, together with types of smokers by age group and sex. Those are just a couple of tables

These tables are prepared with policy-makers and the general research community in mind, so they're very easy to use. They're broken down not only by sex, but also, as often as possible, by geography and age. They are the basis for much of the gender-based analysis being done across the Canadian federal and provincial governments.

After each census, sex-disaggregated table series are produced, based on the analytic themes for census releases, including labour, families, income, and so on. These are another source of data tables disaggregated by sex.

• (0905)

Finally, if among all of those existing resources government departments and researchers have specific needs that aren't addressed, then custom tables can also be purchased directly from Statistics Canada. It's also possible for policy departments to access microdata to do their own analysis, and many policy departments do this.

For cross-sectional surveys we have a process of assessing disclosure risk that enables us to protect the confidentiality of individuals while releasing the majority of information to the public as public use microdata files. These files are available for the general social survey, the Canadian community health survey, the census, and more are made into public use files.

Statistics Canada has established research data centres across the country where academics and government researchers can access more detailed longitudinal microdata, as well as many fully detailed cross-sectional data files. Access to these microdata files allows researchers to use much more complex, multivariate methods. Some examples of those are the national longitudinal survey of children and youth, the aboriginal peoples survey, the national population

health survey, and so on. So it's possible to access the microdata in detail there.

Statistics Canada also produces a range of analytic products using gender statistics. One key publication, which I know you're probably aware of, is a statistical compendium called *Women in Canada*, and again I've brought copies that I'll leave with you, in both languages. It's been produced every five years since 1985. This report paints a comprehensive gender-based portrait of the Canadian population and it includes sections on population, family status, health, education, paid and unpaid work, and detailed sections on sub-populations such as immigrants, aboriginal people, seniors, and others.

The census tables and analytic releases include gender analysis on such topics as labour, education, and place of work, which complement the table products I talked about earlier.

Other highlights in Canadian gender statistics have included the measurement and valuation of unpaid work and the measurement of family violence and spousal violence.

A full list of the analytical work on gender can be found, as I mentioned, on the website under *The Daily*, or under the subject link of "Women and Gender".

I will just mention one more analytic product.

The federal, provincial, and territorial ministers responsible for the Status of Women commissioned a report from Statistics Canada in 1997 called *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*. These indicators were updated in 2001 and published in our flagship journal of *Canadian Social Trends*.

Statistical programs are funded either by base funding or by cost-recovery funding. In both situations the norm at Statistics Canada is to collect sex as a variable. Canada has been a leader in the field of gender statistics, largely because of its long history of household surveys, where data are routinely disaggregated by sex. Examples of base-funded surveys specifically addressing issues of gender include the time use survey and the victimization survey, and the census can be seen that way too, because there are many variables in there on family and income. Examples of cost-recovery projects on gender-related issues include the maternity experiences survey, which was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the transition homes survey, which was funded by the family violence initiative. Those are just a couple of examples.

Although Statistics Canada does not have a special division dedicated to the promotion and production of gender statistics, much expertise in gender analysis exists across the agency. For example, the agency provides resources for our involvement in interagency and expert group meetings of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe on gender statistics—that's a long name. As well, we represented at the UN global program for gender statistics meetings. Resources are also dedicated to special partnership projects such as the *Women in Canada* publications, which I mentioned, with Status of Women Canada, and the gender and work database project with York University. Those are a couple of examples. That is currently being updated to 2006.

It is through continuous consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and data users and a willingness to innovate that we've made important advances in gender statistics.

● (0910)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You are running out of time, so I'd ask you to quickly wrap up, please.

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: To conclude, at Statistics Canada we routinely disaggregate data by sex, and we take into consideration the different social, cultural, and economic contexts for women and men in the development of new projects and the planning of analytic analysis.

The Statistics Act governs the collection of data and protects the confidentiality of respondents, and that enables us to gather information on sensitive subjects important for understanding gender equality, such as spousal violence and income.

These departments wishing to access Statistics Canada can do so through free or low-cost tables, custom tabulation requests, microdata files, or in our analytic products.

Thank you.

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

Louise Marmen, do you have a presentation, or are you part of this same one?

Ms. Louise Marmen (Assistant Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada): No, I'm part of this one.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Okay, that's great.

We will then move to the Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, Sheila Regehr.

Ms. Sheila Regehr (Director, National Council of Welfare, As an Individual): Thank you very much.

And I just clarified with the clerk to be very sure people understand that I do not represent the department. I understand that I've been invited as director of the National Council of Welfare and as an individual. And the council is an arm's-length agency, so the department, I think, would be very unhappy they thought I was speaking for them.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Thanks for that clarification.

Ms. Sheila Regehr: May I also have a two-minute warning, so I can truncate some things at the tail end of my presentation and leave it for questions?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): We'll do that.

Ms. Sheila Regehr: Thank you.

First, I'd like to thank the committee very much for the opportunity to answer some of the questions I believe you have related to statistics and data for gender budgeting, especially with regard to three publications, a couple of which Heather has already mentioned: *Women in Canada*, the *Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, and a smaller version we call the mini women and men report, which is an at-a-glance publication based on a Swedish model.

I also understand that the committee is interested in both the content of these initiatives and the processes and mechanisms by which they came to be. And I was involved in all three of these, going back to the early eighties, as well as the sort of international version of *Women in Canada*, the United Nations' *The World's Women*. So I'm kind of the dinosaur in some of this, I think.

I want to use my presentation time, however, not to talk too much about those specific publications but to put them in a larger context. My current position is as director of the National Council of Welfare, where my focus is on poverty. There are clear links, however, between this work and gender equality, and I'm sure the committee is well aware of this. I don't need to tell you that.

But I also deal with questions of process and mechanisms, as well as content, in this job. In fact, the council concluded that the persistence of gender inequalities and poverty in Canada is very much about governance and values. I'm not going to talk to you a lot about data. These people can do that.

This conclusion was reached after an evaluation of 25 years of poverty statistics and countless recommendations that have gone on a shelf. The council advised the government very recently, based on this work that we did, and I'll quote a phrase that's often quoted in the newspapers and elsewhere.

If there is no long-term vision, no plan, no one identified to lead or carry out the plan, no resources assigned, and no accepted measure of results, we will be mired in the consequences of poverty for generations to come.

And I would contest that this is equally true of gender inequality.

Our recommendation for a national plan to solve poverty is in fact the subject of hearings that have just started in another committee of this House. And I want to draw on a couple of parallels. They've only had two meetings, but already gender is very high on the list there.

So there are three points I'd like to highlight that I think are important to this committee. First, all the traditional poverty indicators—and we've had big arguments about these for the last 15 years—do not do a very good job of capturing the situation of women. This is very important to you, I think, because the economic gender equality indicators project that Heather mentioned does fill in some of those gaps.

Second, aggregate indicators are important, but finding the perfect ones should never serve as a diversion from actually doing something. What matters is the impact that programs and policies are having on people and how we can make them better.

Third, indicators are based on values. And numbers will not speak for themselves; human beings need to do that.

And I want to offer here a very short but powerful story that was told to me in a very different context and it makes so many points that I have to tell somebody, and you're my victims.

This is about a project on an aboriginal reserve. The federal government, concerned about accountability as it is, noticed that this project listed ten employees but only one was getting paid and that person was getting a huge pay cheque. So to Ottawa this is an indicator of a problem, maybe even corruption. It could be huge. It's an indicator; that's all the information Ottawa had. They needed to actually go out and find out what was going on, so they talked to people.

It turned out that the nearest bank for this community was three hours away and this group of people decided it was not the best use of time to have all 10 people take a whole day off to go and cash their pay cheques. So one person received the cheque and distributed it to the others and, by the way, this included court-ordered support to ex-wives, who got paid first.

They had it all figured out, but it wasn't a traditional way of doing things. There was a fix found, and it was quite a simple one. But that's not the point. The point is that there are so many lessons—for example, that time is as much a resource as money, and that you need to talk to people.

• (0915)

The next little section I'd like to talk about deals specifically with gender budgets and program data. To me, this is the biggest gap that exists now.

If you start with an objective like advancing gender equality or solving poverty, then you need to know whether programs are bringing you closer to that objective and how they could improve. Employment insurance is one example. I won't go into detail, but I think many people think that clearly this program has been going in the wrong direction recently. The women with low income who need it are now paying in, but their odds of getting anything out are slim. Nobody would buy a car insurance plan like that.

Similarly, mothers of newborns, who need income the most, have the greatest difficulty accessing maternity benefits and get the least out of them. The program works best for the elites like me who designed it.

EI, however, does do a relatively good job of reporting information, and this is in stark contrast to the personal income tax system, which is increasingly being used as a vehicle for social policy. There are some really good reasons for that, but we don't know a lot about the impacts of that, and they're not regularly published.

I think the taxfiler database is probably something that contains a wealth of information that Canadians should know about, which is

quite underutilized. I think the Department of Finance, in particular, is unique in having the capacity to do extremely sophisticated, thorough gender analysis of exactly how some of these impacts work.

I would just very quickly draw the committee's attention to a National Council of Welfare publication, which is a report on the income tax system. It's from back in 1976, so it's really old. Nobody else has really done anything like this since.

I will skip the next little bit and leave it to questions. I was going to talk a bit about the background of women in Canada, and I will certainly entertain questions on that.

The point I would like to make about that publication is I think the greatest value of this compendium is that it helps fill in the detail behind key indicators in order to analyze what's happening. So you can have big indicators, but you need more detail. For many years, the only consistently reported gender equality indicator was the full-time, full-year wage gap. That's really inadequate to understanding the situation. You need to bring things together to look at women's fertility, labour force patterns, education, violence, unpaid work—all of those things.

On the little mini “women and men at a glance”, I don't know if you are aware or have seen this one, but the point of doing that when it was initiated at Status of Women Canada was to make sure that in between this major publication that comes out every five years a key set of indicators could be updated much more frequently for people to use readily.

On the economic gender equality indicators, again, I will talk at only a very surface level about this, but I think the point that's most important for this committee here is that in this FPT ministers' project, the conceptual framework of this document took far more time to develop than the technical data work. This is the way it should be, because the selection of any set of indicators is about values, and in this case the different jurisdictions did not come to a common framework easily. I have some examples here that I can give later if people have questions.

The final thing I would like to say is particularly about the unpaid work—though I don't like using that word and prefer the term non-market work—indicators that are there. They're a critical part of the value system that's really going to work for gender equality, recognizing that women do work of economic value that benefits others, but for which they currently receive little or no monetary compensation.

If Canadians and Canadian politicians decide not to continue to use an indicator like that or don't formalize it and regularize it more, then that's basically like saying that we, as Canadians, know that everybody needs money to live, but some women simply will not get enough money, and that's fine with us. I don't think many people in this room or anywhere else in Canada, when it is put that way, would say that's fine, but tragically our policies make it so.

Thank you.

• (0920)

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: Thank you very much.

Moving on, from Status of Women Canada we have Suzanne Cooper.

Ms. Suzanne Cooper (Research Analyst, Status of Women Canada): I'd like to thank the committee for having me here today.

I'm a research analyst with Status of Women Canada and I am responsible for the gender equality indicator project, so I'll be providing you with a brief overview of the project as requested by the committee. I think you all have a deck to follow along with.

The Government of Canada has, as we have seen from our previous presenters, a wealth of statistics disaggregated by sex; however, we have discovered that there is a need to create a link between these sources of statistics and a development of a clear set of indicators. This development of a clear set of indicators really builds on the previous work, which was outlined by Sheila and Heather, on economic gender equality indicators and violence indicators put out by the FPT forum of ministers responsible for the Status of Women.

We see that gender equality indicators are being increasingly recognized as an important tool for establishing the state of equality between women and men, both nationally and internationally. We're also starting to see elements of these indicators in other countries. For example, Britain and Ireland have started preliminary work on the creation of gender equality indicator sets, and multinational organizations such as the United Nations and the Commonwealth have also started.

For decision-makers, gender equality indicators could be quite beneficial. They provide evidence for setting policy direction; for monitoring progress on equality for women and men; for taking corrective action; for communicating any progress to a wide variety of audiences, such as policy-makers and the general public; and they support federal GBA policy.

The purpose of the current gender equality indicator project is really to develop a policy tool that tracks the situation of women and men over time in certain key domains—which I'll review shortly—on an annual basis; to monitor key gaps in progress between women and men, and of course, diverse groups of women and men; as well as to provide data to conduct gender-based analysis. We often hear from other departments that they lack the ability to access gender disaggregated data, so this project will address some of those concerns.

We are currently in the preliminary stages of the gender equality indicator project. Status of Women Canada, as the lead on the project, does coordinate a working group that has representation

from a number of different government departments. I've listed them here: Agriculture Canada, Citizenship and Immigration, Health, HRSDC, Indian and Northern Affairs, National Science and Engineering Research Council, Statistics Canada, and Treasury Board Secretariat.

The role of the working group is to finalize the draft domains and indicators and present them for approval to our interdepartmental committee on gender equality, who set up the working group; to provide ongoing support to the project and work collaboratively to identify gaps; to liaise with line departments to bring in relevant expertise, feedback, and support—and of course, that includes liaising with our own research and evaluation units to bring in that expertise to help us identify the types of resources and data available. As well, working group members advise on the overall design, measurement, and plan of the project.

The working group has a number of principles that have guided its work. For example, the indicators should be consistent with international reporting, and of course domestic priorities. A key for us was addressing the interrelationship of gender with diversity factors such as race, disability, age, all that kind of thing, as well as addressing data gaps—there may be a need, for example, to collect new data for particular groups. They need to be accessible to users—the policy-makers, the general public, for example. They need to be based on the frequency and availability of data, and provide, of course, data for trends over time—we're not interested in just a finite snapshot in time, but in trends—as well as be selected in key domains. This is basically a notion that less is more. We can't measure everything under the sun, so we have to focus on the areas where women are particularly lagging.

What I'm going to present to you very quickly are the domains we have identified. They are draft domains. If you have questions about them after, I can certainly answer them.

The first one is personal safety and security, which basically looks at improved physical and mental well-being of individuals, a reduced occurrence of violence, and an increased perception of safety. Elements to measure under this domain could be things like health and well-being—so health status, including mental and physical health—rates of violence between women and men—sexual abuse, physical abuse, that sort of thing—and access to justice in trafficking. Other elements to measure in terms of personal safety and security are things like housing and homelessness, not only affordability of housing but also accessibility to housing and shelters.

• (0925)

Another domain is economic security and prosperity. It's basically looking at gender differences in economic prosperity. Elements to measure here would be financial security, so income and earnings, the wage gap potentially, incidents of low income, among other things—as Sheila was saying, it's not exclusive. We would also look at the work in labour markets, so labour force participation; occupational segregation, the segregation of women into what are called pink collar jobs, such as teaching and nursing; unemployment, as well as underemployment; and also measuring things under learning, not only degree attainment as youth, but lifelong learning.

The third domain—and unfortunately Sheila won't like the terminology—is unpaid work. It's the equality of women and men in terms of unpaid work. Although unpaid household work is not an indicator of economic equality, it certainly will have an impact on economic variables. So that's why it was decided to have it as a domain in itself. And of course the elements to measure here are domestic work, such as housework; care work—not only in terms of the care of children, but also care of the elderly, as well as people with long-term disabilities—to illustrate how that can affect the sandwich generation, particularly women; and looking at the impact of unpaid work on labour and income. What are the negative economic consequences of care work for women and men?

The final domain is social-political engagement. What is the nature and level of women's and men's participation in civic activities and in decision-making? Some of the elements to measure here under social and civic participation are voting participation—how many women and men voted in the last municipal, provincial, and federal elections, for example—as well as looking at social networks: What kinds of groups are they involved in? What sorts of social clubs are they accessing? What is the size and composition, for example?

Finally, look at power and decision-making: what's the representation of women and men among elected officials; senior officials in the public service, such as ADMs and DMs; as well as CEOs in the private sector; and in academic institutions, not only presidents and vice-presidents, but also tenured versus non-tenured faculty?

So those are, in a nutshell, the draft domains and indicators. They're bigger than what is probably presented here.

I do want to highlight the crosscut issues and that this project has really focused on the importance of including disaggregated information by diversity factors, particularly because we know that certain groups of women are particularly vulnerable to the effect of inequality.

In terms of next steps for the project—as I've indicated, it is very preliminary, as we just started convening the working group in September—we will finalize the draft domains and indicators in 2008. There will be a verification of these domains and indicators with key stakeholders, and of course that would include this committee as well. We would build on the input to identify specific data to populate the indicators once they're finalized and identify the forum and format indicators. Will they be one publication? Will they be concept papers? Will they be web-based? I hope selected indicators will be available in 2008-09.

That's a brief overview. I'll stop there, and I'm open to any questions the committee might have.

Thank you.

• (0930)

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

We've heard from all our presenters. I thank you very much for keeping your presentations within the timeframe. That does open up more time for questions and answers.

We will go to round one, for seven minutes.

Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Welcome, all of you, today. This is great.

I have to say I feel as if I've come full circle, to some degree. We started out looking down this road some time ago and talked to a lot of different departments, talked to the Department of Finance, talked to different people, then we had experts come in, and here we are. And it's amazing, because some of the information we got from some of the officials, especially the Department of Finance, is that they don't have enough data. And of course our experts told us we had lots of data, and they said to look at Stats Canada. Thank you for coming. You've got tons of information. Obviously, Status of Women Canada has commissioned you to do some good research and so have other people. And then I hear from Madam Regehr, who has a wealth of information of how to pull it all together, what kinds of indicators to look for, what kinds of things to do, and so on.

To Stats Canada, have you been involved in training and working with anyone at the Department of Finance so they can pull together a good and proper gender budgeting analysis pre- or post-budget in the last, I don't know...ever? I'm not trying to be facetious, but since you have such a wealth of information, I'd like to know. That's my first question.

• (0935)

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: I'm not aware of any specific training initiatives. It would likely fall more to Status of Women Canada.

Hon. Maria Minna: It would default over, okay.

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: I would think so. I think they're more involved in the training on gender-based analysis.

Hon. Maria Minna: But I'm bringing in another piece, because I think Ms. Regehr mentioned the text-filer database that only the Department of Finance would have access to. Am I correct about that?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: No.

Hon. Maria Minna: No? You would have access as well?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: We do, yes.

Hon. Maria Minna: But the finance department could use this in its analysis, in the work that it would do. Am I right, in terms of access?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: I don't know if they access tax data, but we have it at Statistics Canada.

Hon. Maria Minna: You do. So you could share that, because you wouldn't be sharing personal information.

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: Yes.

Hon. Maria Minna: The reason I'm saying this is that we got from the Department of Finance two analyses of the 2006-07 budgets on gender-based analysis, which we then had re-analyzed by a couple of experts we brought in. They told us that, apart from two or three items, everything was negative for women. This was quite the opposite of what we were told about the finance department's analysis. So there's a problem of disconnect here. The information is in our hands in this country. We seem to be going around the world telling everybody how wonderful we are with all our data, and I find it frustrating that....

I apologize. I'm not asking you a specific question, because to some degree we've gone full circle.

I want to go over to Ms. Cooper or Ms. Dwyer-Renaud. Actually, all of you can answer. Is the problem that there isn't political will—or I understand that you may not want to say that, some of you—or is the problem that we are going down the road with the wrong model, so that what is expected is misunderstood and what we're doing is not really in depth? I like the indicators, and I guess at some point that will change things. Can you help me with this?

Ms. H el ene Dwyer-Renaud (Senior Advisor, Gender-based Analysis Support Services, Status of Women Canada): Maybe I have a question for you. I'm not sure what is meant by "wrong model". I think I need to understand a little bit better.

Hon. Maria Minna: I guess what I'm saying has to do with the model we're using to do gender-based analysis, the model being used in the system, the depth of training and understanding. We asked the finance department if they had a unit. They don't; they just have a champion. Maybe it's too much for an individual person. The model we're using, is it maybe too perfunctory and not really dealing with all of this? Is that the problem? Or is it not just the training, but also the objectives that we set for ourselves, the actual methodology and all of that and what we want out of it? Are we doing check-off lists? Do you see what I'm saying?

Ms. H el ene Dwyer-Renaud: We're not doing check-off lists. There are some countries who go for the check-off list. We felt it was not efficient. A check-off list never tells you if you actually have reached people and if you've changed their behaviour.

I know that you've had discussions about training. Training is only one element. Internationally—and Canada follows this model also—it's a set of things. I suppose this is where you're going, with respect to model and processes. We're just starting to be able to work with departments, not just from an individual capacity. With individual capacity, you never know if you're going to have the result you want at the end of the day. You have a critical mass, and it could take

forever to train everyone. We are moving towards organizational capacity.

This means you need things like political will, certain structures inside of a department, a governance structure. I think Sheila Regehr spoke of governance structures. These are things we are exploring with the departments. These techniques seem to work in other countries.

Right now, what's the best model? I don't know if I would call it wrong or right. I think we're calling it the best-fit model. What's good for an organization like the Department of Finance may not be good for another organization like Health Canada. That's what we're exploring right now.

I think there was an attempt in the past. I remember, for example, in 2005 the government thought it would be a good thing to have a GBA champion in every department. Is that a good model? Is that a best-fit model? Not sure. Some people will argue that it's much better—I think this is where we're leaning—to have an inherent understanding and a change of behaviour throughout a department, instead of keeping it in the hands of one person or in one unit.

These are things we are exploring. They are part of the accountability approach we're looking for. I think that's where we're at now. We're saying we can train till the cows come home, but we need to make sure that there's accountability with respect to the change in behaviour in a department.

• (0940)

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

Sorry, your time is up.

We're moving to Madame Demers for seven minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning. Thank you all for being here.

Ms. Regehr, you said there was no long-term vision. That's probably one of the consequences of the increasing disparities between men and women. Without engaging in partisanship, do you believe that the lack of progress toward equality could be due to the fact that there aren't enough elected women representatives and not enough women in government cabinets and governments, which leads to greater disparity?

You also said that most of your recommendations were shelved. To what do you attribute that?

As regards aboriginal women, have you made any recommendations concerning battered women's shelters in the aboriginal communities? Those women are even more vulnerable. As they live in an aboriginal community and are victims of violence, it is even harder to take care of these women in the communities. The shelters aren't adequately funded. Have you made any recommendations on that subject? If so, have they been heard?

[English]

Ms. Sheila Regehr: That's a really easy question.

It's very difficult. When I was speaking about recommendations, I was speaking more specifically about the National Council of Welfare's recommendations related to poverty. Obviously there is a large gender-equality dimension in that and in the work we do. The same is true of many recommendations, specifically on gender equality, that have been shelved.

It's hard to explain everything. What we find encouraging now on the poverty front is that, probably in the last two years, there's been a huge convergence in understanding that we have to tackle this issue. There's a significant amount of perhaps embarrassment when we start looking at other countries.

There was a very good presentation on poverty this morning by Alain Noël at the Breakfast on the Hill series. He talked about the situation in Europe. We all recognize that the Scandinavians are far ahead of us in many areas. He was talking about the traditional Anglo-grouping, which includes Britain, Ireland, and Canada, and it being on kind of a different path than the others. The United Kingdom, Ireland, and Scotland are now moving in a different direction, too. It is towards different governance models.

The things we've been talking about, as Ms. Minna said, are tools. To be able to use the tools, you need several things in place. This is what the National Council of Welfare tried to do when it analyzed what was going on around the country and around the world on poverty. It applies to any issue: You need a vision; you need some measurable objectives to aim for; you need the indicators so you know whether you're getting there; you need a comprehensive plan so you know that one program isn't going to give with one hand and another, either in the same jurisdiction or in another jurisdiction, is going to take it away. We do these things.

There's a convergence now. I think there's real hope and real learning from other countries and other examples that the solutions are there. He also said this morning that many people are saying that they see some things changing. I would hope this includes gender equality, as well.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Ms. Dryburgh, when your statistics show an increase in disparities between men and women in the area of poverty, do you inform the departments concerned of that fact?

• (0945)

[English]

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: Everything that comes out of Statistics Canada comes out through *The Daily*, so it's in the public domain.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: But you don't provide any more refined information, more specific to the departments concerned when there is an increase in disparities?

[English]

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: Definitely, we sometimes do that.

Where it's clear that there's an implication for a particular department, a letter from the deputy minister is sent. We do that.

Often when we're doing analysis or publications there's a large consultation process. Often we're starting our analysis or a data-development project with questions and consultations coming from policy departments. Then we produce the data, and of course, they're fully aware of what's coming out. Yes, there is good communication.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you.

Ms. Cooper, how is it that the Department of Finance, which should have a very important role in the development of indicators, isn't part of the project you established to develop indicators and assist in preparing gender budgets?

[English]

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: The working group is actually a sub-working group of our gender-based analysis interdepartmental committee, which the Department of Finance is a part of. We did solicit participation from everybody, and they could self-select into the group. So they're not in the actual working group, but are part of the GBA IDC. They have selected not to be there, I guess.

That's probably a question for them more than for me.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: So it wasn't you who selected the individuals or groups that should take part in this project. It's they who decided to take part in it.

[English]

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: Right, exactly.

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

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Madam Chair, I'm giving my colleague 30 seconds. So next time she'll have five and a half minutes. Thank you.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Ms. Regehr, did you wish to say something?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: In partial response to that and an earlier question, if I could have 20 seconds on that—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Sure.

Ms. Sheila Regehr: One of the interesting things I did when I came on as director was that I asked people at Statistics Canada—not Heather's group, but another group—to come to talk to me about everything that's available, everything that I could possibly use. Then we'd sit down and see.

I think that's something that maybe the Department of Finance could consider doing as well. Maybe there are some areas where they're not aware of data; maybe that would be a useful place to start.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Okay, thank you.

We will now go to Mr. Stanton, for seven minutes, please.

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

Good morning to all the witnesses. Thank you for coming to join us.

I have one quick question here for Madam Dryburgh. We have this little quick snapshot, *Women and Men in Canada: A Statistical Glance*, from 2003. Do you still do this?

I think it's a Statistics Canada publication, or maybe it's a project.

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: It's a collaboration, I think.

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: Yes, it's a collaboration between Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada. It's actually the one Sheila was referring to, which falls between the larger documents.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Do we still do this, then?

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: We've not had an update since 2003. Whether it will be part of the new indicator project is probably something up for further discussion, actually.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Okay, it's very good. I just wanted to pass that along.

To Status of Women Canada, one of the topics that seems to run into some conflict is that we've heard two different scenarios from the departments through the course of our work on gender-based analysis, and gender budgeting in particular. On the one hand, there is the sense that Canada is lagging behind with regard to some UN and international indicators and, on the other hand, we see, even by your own reports to the committee—and I must say this is backed up by some departments as well—that we've in fact made some gains, not only structurally and internally within the departments, but also in terms of your organization even, Status of Women Canada, being sought out by other countries to help them with their development of gender-based considerations in their own governance.

So could you comment on this apparent disconnect?

• (0950)

Ms. H  l  ne Dwyer-Renaud: Yes, I'll do it from the perspective of gender-based analysis processes, and Suzanne may want to add to that from the standpoint of indicators, perhaps, if it's of interest.

This *tiraillement*, this pulling of the blanket—I'm trying to find the right word in English—has been historical and has been with us for many years. I think it's the difference between the notion, carried by a lot of non-governmental organizations, I would say—people from outside the government—who think that gender-based analysis is not a valid tool because it does a comparison between men and women.... I think the groups would rather see a woman-specific tool used in practice, looking solely at the situation of women and not doing any kind of comparison work.

The premise for us, and for many countries around the world—and you're right, we have countries that come to Status of Women Canada practically on a weekly basis to ask for help on their governance structure—is to take the approach of integration into the policy development process, so that the responsibility to consider gender in all policy development and policies is not just the responsibility of a specific group inside government or inside a

department, but of policy makers, and it is in all areas of government business, including decision making.

I think some groups would rather have this done more from what they would call an integrated feminist framework, one in which there's a premise.... I'll take an example. I once heard something like if women make up 52% of the population, they should therefore have 52% of the resources out of the budget. They would have premises and then build the process to achieve the premise. This is not something that is conducive to government making.

Perhaps when I retire, I'll switch sides, but I don't think so. My long term in the public service has shown me that when your average policy analyst, who may never have heard of gender, may never have heard or thought that what he or she is about to develop will have a negative impact on women, changes that behaviour, we've reached a result there. In this, Canada is the envy of the world.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: If I have some time left, Madam Chair, I'll give it over to Madam Grewal for a question.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You have two minutes.

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

First of all, let me thank all of you for all the wonderful work you're doing in your area.

I recall from our committee's previous work on gender-based analysis that Statistics Canada is world-renowned for its work in the area of gender statistics, particularly in the area of unpaid work. I offer my congratulations to Statistics Canada.

What sort of resources and human resources does Statistics Canada devote to the completion of gender statistics? Are they sufficient, do you think?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: As I mentioned in my presentation, we don't have a gender unit at Statistics Canada. First of all, all projects have some commitment to collecting information on gender, so it's rather hard to measure in terms of the amount of resources.

There are person-days devoted to particular projects; we are represented on the UNECE committee and the UN committee for gender statistics; we're involved in task forces for gender databases in both of those organizations; we have a member on the committee who's developing the new indicators; and we devote certain resources to cost-recovery projects. As I mentioned, a lot of the time our base-funded projects are those for which we have longstanding legal obligations to provide data, and then we have a lot of other things we would like to do, obviously, and we work in collaboration. We devote resources to those partnerships as we have cost-recovery funds coming in.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: In your opinion—

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You have just ten seconds left, Mrs. Grewal.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: I think I'll take ten seconds in my next time. I don't want to waste them.

• (0955)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): We'll move along, then, to Ms. Mathysen, please, for seven minutes.

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

Thank you very much. I think the information we've received here today is going to be very useful to our study, and I'm very glad you're here.

I want to start with Ms. Regehr. You talked about persistent inequality and persistent poverty having to do with governance and policy, and that we need leadership, resources, and a measurement of results to really make a difference in addressing those issues.

You went on to talk about programs and policies. We've heard that tax cuts, for example, don't benefit women; women benefit from programs, spending, and initiatives. You said that employment insurance has failed women most in need, as far as maternity leave. We've heard this over and over again.

What would you do to change employment insurance to make it a functional kind of program?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: I'm not the expert on employment insurance. The council's position is that it's something that really needs to be fixed. I would also mention, just to substantiate your view on this, that when we did a major online questionnaire about poverty and insecurity in 2006, we got tremendous individual and organizational response. We asked people about programs that were important and how well they thought they were working. The top two that were considered most important and most broken were social assistance and employment insurance. So I think most people consider that employment insurance worked much better in the past. Obviously the lesson there is to go back to see what worked in the past.

I also know that particularly around maternity and parental benefits there are many organizations of women on the ground who live these situations, and they have made some very practical kinds of recommendations. Some of them are not even going to cost that much. There's so much out there to look at; it just takes the commitment to do it.

On what Hélène was talking about—the business of GBA and the integrated feminist framework—to be really blunt about this whole thing, the problem is that there are no clear objectives. There is no clear vision. When departments go into an analysis, it's not clear what they're expected to come out with, and that's a political thing. There has to be a general consensus that we're aiming toward something, and that's the only way you can hold people accountable for getting there. The analysis is a tool.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: You also mentioned a 1977 document that the national council produced on income tax. I was quite intrigued by what might be in that report. Is there anything in there the committee should know about, in terms of what we're talking about?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: I think the most important thing is that this information is really outdated. It was done by Neil Brooks, who is a real tax expert. To my knowledge, nothing like that has been done since by government or others outside government. I think there are pieces of it, but to us this is one of those governance accountability and transparency issues.

It makes the point that there are so many income tax credits and deductions and things that go out for so many different things. If governments over time generally put these out as direct programs and said "You're low-income, and under this program you're going to get \$5; and you have a higher income, so we're going to give you \$50", people would say that's crazy; you can't do that. But in the tax system those kinds of things happen all the time.

• (1000)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You have two minutes left.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: I was quite interested as well in the discussion about women's unpaid work. I noted in the deck that there is a draft domains and indicators section that addresses this issue about unpaid work, and the work that women do isn't put into the mix. It isn't valued.

One of the big issues we will need to grapple with is how you compensate for this unpaid work. We know it has tremendous value in terms of billions of dollars in our economy. How do we measure it accurately, and how do we set about to compensate women so there is a recognition of what they do and what they contribute, and a way, I suppose, of providing them with better economic security than has been the reality up to now?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: I can't answer how we compensate for it, but I can tell you how it has been measured.

National accounts has a satellite account for unpaid work. They use time-use data: they calculate the amount of time spent in unpaid work and they have a method for giving it value. That's how it's calculated in Canada. The last time-use data were released in 2005. I don't believe funding was put into that project at the time, so we didn't do a formal satellite account project for the valuation of unpaid work.

We have also added questions to the census. There are questions in the census on unpaid work, so that's another source of information.

How to compensate for it is beyond Statistics Canada's mandate.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Thank you very much for your questions.

We're now moving on to round two.

Please go ahead, Mr. Pearson. You have five minutes.

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

Welcome, everybody.

Just for our analyst's sake, we were talking earlier about the fact that Statistics Canada produces a major report every five years. The last one was in 2005 and the next is in 2010. Has that consultation process already begun for 2010?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: That's a good question. As far as I know, the preliminary work hasn't really started yet. The analyst responsible for that publication is actually retiring, and Louise is heading up the section that will be responsible for the production of that report.

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Marmen: Someone will definitely replace that person. In that section, which is called the Social Research section, we want a person to focus first on all the statistics and to coordinate gender-based statistics at Statistics Canada. That person should also be involved in this project, which we consider very important.

For the moment, I don't have a date to give you for the consultation process, but, since we would like the consultation to begin before the other person retires, it should happen shortly.

[English]

Mr. Glen Pearson: Thank you. I think we'd appreciate knowing when that does begin.

Do you do it in consultation with HRSDC?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: There are very many players in the consultation process.

Mr. Glen Pearson: Good.

I have just one other quick question. You mentioned that Statistics Canada doesn't have a specifically based gender unit. Can I ask you why that is, given the way things are going in other countries and to some degree here? Has there been talk about it?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: There used to be one person dedicated to it who coordinated the agency's activities to an extent. At the moment, this is part of the new initiative Louise mentioned. We're in the process of setting that unit up again, because after that person left, there wasn't an immediate replacement. There's now a chief responsible for gender, so that's a good step.

How we've been functioning is we've had a gender focal point for the organization, which has been me, and that's why I was invited today. I represent Statistics Canada on the international statistical groups on gender. I present to delegations and I coordinate some activities, but I actually have another full-time job, so this is a very positive step, I think, in trying to coordinate the efforts.

•(1005)

Mr. Glen Pearson: How much time do I have, Madam Chair?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You have another two minutes.

Mr. Glen Pearson: For Status of Women Canada, you have probably sensed our frustration around the table over the last few months in light of the fact that we're trying to get to a certain place but we keep hearing two different things from witnesses.

We just heard from StatsCan this morning that they do all of the statistics on women around employment, income, education, health, crime, ethnicity, immigration, and age. On the other hand, over the last couple of months we've had witnesses come forward, including some from Status of Women Canada, who feel that there's not enough data out there to be able to make the proper projections if necessary. Judging from what I heard from StatsCan this morning, there seems to be a ton of it. We've also heard from other witnesses that there's more than we actually require.

So I'm just wondering—and perhaps you can answer, Ms. Cooper—what else you require. It seems to me that you have what's necessary. I'd be interested in your answer.

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: I think the disconnect comes from—and StatsCan certainly does tremendous work on gender-disaggregated data—the misperception that we collect disaggregated data across all levels of gender diversity, such as age, aboriginal status, and language. Those really are key components of this project, but in many cases there are gaps. So it's not just about presenting statistics on women versus men. It's all the groups and the converging factors that can exacerbate inequality. So that's what we're really starting to look at, to bring all these into one central point.

The other part of this project is that we do have a wealth of statistics, but they're kind of all over the place, so there's no one set spot where someone, even a member of the public or a policy-maker, can come and say, “This is how I can gauge the state of gender equality in Canada.” We're pulling all that data from different departments to do that kind of thing. So to say that we have all the data, I don't think we're quite there yet. I think we've done a lot of it. I think, though, what we're leaving out is particularly vulnerable groups that really tell us the story about gender equality.

I hope that answers your question.

Mr. Glen Pearson: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Thank you very much, Mr. Pearson.

Just before we move on to Statistics Canada, regarding this document that Mr. Pearson was asking you about, is it possible that you could report back to this committee in September about what the status is of that consultation, just so we don't lose track of that?

[Translation]

Ms. Louise Marmen: With pleasure.

[English]

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

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

[Translation]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC): Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming today.

It's very interesting to see how this is becoming a little clearer and, at the same time, a little more complicated. We've heard from a number of witnesses and received a lot of information, but there's been hardly any talk of education. Some educating must be done in the departments and with politicians.

As women, we had to fight for our place, but that's already established for the women of the generation following us. They don't have to work hard because they think they're equal, even if they aren't. That's a matter of education and has never really been said.

We've talked a lot about poverty, social policy and governments that succeed each other and miss the bus. What can we do to establish something sustainable? Someone around the table spoke the words "long-term". If we have a long-term vision, it won't work. In what other area can we find information? We have the machinery of government, and we've heard from women from certain groups. However, to strike a certain balance, where should the government look? What can we do as a committee to establish a permanent framework—regardless of the government in power—and to say that this is how it will now work for women? Is that possible, in your opinion?

• (1010)

Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud: I'm going to take that and venture a little further.

I don't consider the situation from the standpoint of poverty versus health. In my mind, the world is divided into two groups: people who make decisions and those who implement them and do the basic analysis. I must admit that, at some point, there appears to be a minor obstruction when you get to the top.

The lower levels seem to be receptive to training, but senior management doesn't seem to understand why its people make these kinds of recommendations to it. As we've mentioned for some time now, one of the ways of proceeding is simply to make all the paperwork mandatory. For example, in the context of the orientation of public servants taking up their duties, we could tell them that they have to know how to conduct this analysis. That should also be part of senior management responsibilities. The panel on accountability mechanisms moreover talked about that.

This responsibility could even be linked to their pay, to their bonuses. They have to know that this is going on in their department. It's being done a little. We're currently working with the Treasury Board on the Management Accountability Framework. Under that framework, deputy ministers are asked to ensure that the quality of the analysis they ask their employees to perform takes all the various aspects into account. They are asked to do the same with gender-based analysis and that's part of the accountability mechanisms. This analysis is more voluntary, but perhaps it should be mandatory.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: It should be mandatory. All right.

Mme Patricia Davidson: Thank you.

[English]

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: I have another one.

Mrs. Patricia Davidson: No, I think your time is up. Thank you.

Madame Deschamps is next, for five minutes, please.

[Translation]

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

Good morning, mesdames. Thank you for being here and for helping us improve our understanding.

Ms. Regehr, I was very sensitive to your testimony this morning. It spoke to me personally. You talked about long-term vision. You mentioned that if there is no long-term vision or accompanying resources, we don't have the means to emerge from poverty or to achieve gender equality.

You also talked about models. You referred to the Scandinavian model and to the model which Canada is increasingly trying to use: the English model. The latter is more conservative and traditional than the Scandinavian model, which is more progressive and based on social development.

Can you talk more about convergence? What determines that choice, for example? Will the action plan suggested by the government, which appears in the 2008 budget, make it possible to develop policies that will have a direct impact on the most vulnerable groups, women, persons with disabilities, aboriginal women, single mothers?

• (1015)

[English]

Ms. Sheila Regehr: Shall I answer the question?

Just thinking about models and the way Canada is doing things generally, compared to some other countries, and to answer the first part about vision, I think at the federal level we really don't see this, but it is happening in other parts of Canada. Obviously, on the poverty front, it's in Quebec and in Newfoundland and Labrador. And now we have Ontario and Nova Scotia all going in the same direction. All of this reflects a model of governance that's more similar to what the European Union is doing, and there are several elements that I think are important. They have been outlined in documents that we've produced. One is called *Solving Poverty*. But it's not about poverty, it's about everything. It's about a social and economic plan for the country. It's about gender equality. It's about poverty and exclusion. It's all of those things, so you're not doing piecemeal efforts.

There were common objectives. They have indicators they've agreed on that they're all going to measure. So they all know what the goalpost is. They all know where they're going. They all know they have to develop a plan. They all have to report regularly. They all have to consult. There's a transparency and a coordination.

However, interestingly, as this presenter at the Hill this morning indicated, England and Ireland actually moved faster than some of those measures that were put into place in the Lisbon accord because they recognized how severely poverty, in particular, was limiting their economic development.

Now, all of those poverty plans that are working have gender equality embedded right in them. They're all the same thing. It's not we do one thing here and one thing there. It's a common governance model, basically, and there is this open method of coordination. It's interesting, too, because you have an intergovernmental structure. In Europe it's different nations. In Canada we have different jurisdictions. For example, they would have their common base set of indicators that everybody agrees on, and then each country in its own context would fill in detail. But they're all working towards the same thing, and they're all sharing information so they can build on each other.

I think more and more people are looking to that sort of model. We know that Newfoundland and Labrador have built their structure, in which gender equality is central, based very much on the Irish model. I know that directly. Their method of coordination is brilliant. So this idea of having a plan, of having sort of broad government commitment, some common elements, those are the things that seem to be working, no matter what the issue. Those are models that seem to be working.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Can you wrap up, please?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: New Zealand and Australia are also going that way. Canada really is out of step.

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

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

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you.

I'm going to throw this question out. We have lots of data, or there's an indication that Stats Canada is collecting all kinds of data in regard to housing, affordability of housing, availability of housing, women's participation in the labour force, and women's participation in terms of political and social engagement. In terms of what Madam Demers was talking about, all of this data is collected, and I assume that it must be analyzed to a degree. What is it telling us? For example, there's a labour shortage in Canada, and in Quebec we know there is a first-rate child care system in place, and as a result, women in Quebec are participating in the labour force in greater numbers than in the rest of the Canadian population.

So we have all this data and we can analyze it. What does it tell us in terms of those areas I've just hit on?

• (1020)

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: The analysis that comes out of Statistics Canada is meant to be objective information provided to policy departments. We do produce all of this information, we do analyze the results, and then it's up to the policy departments to kind of take it.

I think the step you're talking about is the next step: asking what this means and what policy should be in place because of it. That's where Statistics Canada steps back, and purposely so, so that we're not necessarily influencing the results we put out because we have a particular project or goal in mind.

Definitely there are lots of results in *Women in Canada* that should give a sense of how Canadian women are doing. In terms of the

income wage gap, it hasn't really changed over the last seven, eight, nine years. It's remained at about 30%, and doesn't seem to be changing.

Recent analysis looking at the wage gap for young women—thinking that maybe the baby boomers still going through are having a negative impact—finds that even amongst young women who are highly educated, there's still a 20% gap. It's probably related to occupational segregation: women are in jobs where the real wage isn't improving, while the men are in jobs where it is.

It's kind of a complex picture. I guess as a general statement, what we produce are the numbers, and that's as far as we go. So it's up to the political people and the policy departments to take the next step.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Sheila, do you have anything to add?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: No, only that I would agree with Heather very much. The wealth of data is there. It really is up to departments to analyze it. I am not sure that I am confident at this point in time that there is a really strong analytical capability in government, and I think there's a strong argument to be made for really needing to bring in stakeholders in a very major way to help sort some of these things out. It goes back to my example of the aboriginal reserve.

There are some very basic common sense things that people know, that the data are never going to tell you. You need to talk to people. I think there are some capacity issues in departments. In my own experience, and I've been in the federal government for more than 25 years, the analytical capacity is not what it was when I started. It's not there. It needs help. I think it's important that that be done.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: We had talked in this committee about opening up the pre-budget consultation and that process to involve more NGOs and more of those organizations that can provide us with the research. Would that help to improve this analytical perspective? Would government benefit then from having a broader consultation before the fact?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): The time is up, but we'll let the answer come to this last question, please.

Ms. Sheila Regehr: Only if people are listened to. I know non-governmental organizations that have made presentation after presentation after presentation and have said the same thing for years and years and years to pre-budget committees, and there's no evidence that anybody heard anything they said. It's a huge frustration.

I think that is changing, but it's still a lot of work. I think very often people in different parts of government speak really different languages. Sometimes the finance people and the social people and the bureaucrats and the public have a hard time understanding each other.

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

Now we will move on to Ms. Grewal for five minutes, please.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

In your opinion are there any areas that have not been explored, for which we do not have an adequate understanding of the differences between men and women? How are the statistics compiled? How do you gather the raw material? That's what I want to know.

•(1025)

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: To the first question, I think there's always more one can do. What you heard earlier from Status of Women Canada is true. I manage the general social survey, which has 25,000 respondents. So if we want to look at women in a particular geographic area, broken down by age and minority status, and so on, you will pretty soon have such low cell counts that the results are not releasable. So there's always more you can do. There is a wealth of data that probably isn't being adequately used, so there's a fine line there.

As to how we collect the data, we have administrative data that comes from the provinces, for example, health data on visits to doctors, and education data on enrolments. We also have survey data, usually developed in collaboration and consultation with all of the key stakeholders, including consultations with academics and expert researchers in the area. And we fall under a structure of an advisory committee, which provides expert advice on all of our surveys; and steering committees are usually directly involved too, which include representatives from the policy departments. The advisory committees are broader; they're usually made up of academic researchers, and NGOs sometimes, or a variety of people who have a stake in the result. That's how we go about developing the survey content.

I think it's important for the committee to know that part of what we do in that consultation or what we are counting on from our key stakeholders is for them, having done their gender-based analysis, to raise with us the issues that we need to know about in order to prepare a good questionnaire. I'll just give you a quick example. We just did a survey on older Canadians, 45 and older, and one of the topics we were asking about was retirement. When we consulted with our partners at HRSDC, they told us that retirement readiness is a different issue for women and men, because women have perhaps had work interruptions through their careers, having taken time off to do care, and so on. So if we don't have an adequate sense from the data whether this has happened to the particular women we're looking at, then we won't really be able to answer some of our key policy questions.

Given that, we then develop a questionnaire that will allow them to do that kind of analysis. So that consultation process is where there's a real opportunity to provide better data on gender.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: And who decides what areas of life we should study when you provide us with the gender statistics?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: Those, again, are decided in consultation. If you're talking about the *Women in Canada* book, definitely, Status of Women Canada brings its expertise to the table.

Also, as I said, we're involved in international groups. A lot of work is being done around the world on this issue, so we try to keep up to date on that.

Our academic people are usually at the cutting edge of what's happening, and we also listen to them.

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

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Yes, you have about 45 seconds left.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: What methods does HRSDC use to gather data on gender differences?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: I missed the question, sorry.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: What types of methods does HRSDC use to gather data on gender differences?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: They have some of their own projects under way. Sometimes they contract out small projects. I don't know if that's what you're referring to.

Most of their data does come through Statistics Canada. They're very involved with us. They're on our steering committees, so that we understand their policy needs. On the social side, they're quite involved.

I'm not sure I fully understood your question.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Thank you, Ms. Grewal.

We will now move to Ms. Neville, for five minutes, please.

Hon. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, and thank you to the five of you for coming here this morning.

Ms. Dryburgh, you just gave a good example with the HRSDC statistic, which pre-empted a little bit of the question I was going to ask Ms. Regehr.

Ms. Regehr, in your comments—I think I took it down correctly—you said that traditional poverty indicators don't capture women's reality. You just gave an example of women's reality not being captured.

I have here the indicators on women in poverty. What else could be and should be done to accurately reflect women's reality, whether it's related to poverty or related to retirement, which could also have a poverty aspect? How do we get that texture in the statistics?

I have an added comment. Ms. Regehr, you talked about the different languages in the not-for-profit, government, and whatever sectors. I'm certainly hearing here this morning that there are very different realities and languages reflected by the organizations that are presenting. So how do we capture the reality?

•(1030)

Ms. Sheila Regehr: I'll try to answer quite briefly.

The comments I was referring to were made by Glenn Drover, who was representing the Canadian Association of Social Workers, which has done a lot of work on women in the economy recently. He was referring to standard measures that both Statistics Canada and HRSDC produce on poverty. There are LICOs, LIMs, pre- and post-tax—the standard kinds of things—and the market basket measure. All these things use household measures, which means that the power imbalances within households are not reflected. There may be women living in very straitened, almost desperate circumstances in households that actually do have some money and wouldn't fall under the thresholds for any of those indicators.

Now, there are only so many things you can do with any one indicator. Again, it seems to be an area of convergence among people working in indicators that we are not going to find the poverty line. We need several measures, a suite of measures, not a gazillion, but a few key ones, and more than one, that will give us a better understanding.

If you, for example, took key poverty measures, if we picked three—most countries seem to have done something like that—and complemented those with things like the economic gender-equality indicators that show what's going on in the labour force, how the tax system is impacting gender equality, and what time use looks like, then you'd get a much better sense of why and how women always end up featuring more prominently in the poverty statistics.

In that aggregate collection of things there's no one measure that's going to give an answer, but those couple of key things—unpaid work, Suzanne mentioned violence as the other key.... It's not just a matter of disaggregating. It's making a deliberate attempt to build statistics about something that we traditionally didn't do for a long time. Those are the two key areas—the non-market and whatever—and with those, I think we could do a good job.

Hon. Anita Neville: Ms. Dryburgh, do you want to comment?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: I agree that the value of having an indicator at a high level is that you can kind of, at a glance, get a sense of things. But you really need to dig deeper to get a real idea of what the issues are and of what's explaining the situation. That's the disadvantage of the indicator; sometimes it masks those kinds of things.

Hon. Anita Neville: Do you have the capacity to dig deeper?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: Yes.

Hon. Anita Neville: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You have 15 seconds left, Ms. Neville.

Hon. Anita Neville: I'll pass. Thank you.

Did you want to say something?

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

Ms. Sheila Regehr: I was going to quickly follow up. Some people get really frustrated when they hear discussions like this. Who in this room understands what goes into the GDP? Anybody? Nobody complains about it as an indicator. Why do we put excessive demands on these gender-equality things? It comes down to what we value, what we believe, and what we want to accomplish.

• (1035)

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

We do have a request to allow Senator Ruth to ask a question.

Senator Ruth.

Senator Nancy Ruth: I'm interested in who's measuring the impact of bills that come before both houses. I have two minutes, so I think I'm going to tell a story, and you can think about it, because I don't think it's being done. Having examined the new budget officer last night, I am convinced it will not be done in the future by an officer of Parliament, and I'm appalled.

For instance, we have passed the reservist bill, which allows federally regulated companies and the federal public service to give time off, save pension benefits, leave the jobs the way they are so they can come back in. So I examined some reservists. Now, we know most reservists are white men. I asked those in the public service, given their training and communication skills, discipline, planning, all the things the military does, loyalty, and so on, if they and their buddies were progressing faster in the federal civil service than others in the group in which they entered. Their answer, after a lot of shrugging of shoulders, was yes.

The implication of this is that more white men will be ADMs and DMs in time. Who is looking at a bill like that and saying this might not be good for women, if it's a public civil service? Who does that among you? And if not, how could you do that, and would you?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: It's not Statistics Canada.

I will say something about that, though, because it goes back to what you heard earlier. If you have a program logic model that says you're putting in place this program and these are the outcomes you hope to get and these are some measurable outputs you could look at, and if gender is taken into account in that, then StatsCan gets together with the departments and they say "This is what we want as our output. Where can we get it? Is it already there, or can we develop it?" I think that's our role.

I'll leave the rest to the others.

Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud: Ideally, that's exactly the process that should happen, and ideally it means that the department that sponsors the legislation should be doing that kind of analysis from day one when it starts thinking about the bill. We're not there yet, so that's why you're seeing bills and legislation go right through as though they had never seen the light of day from a gender perspective.

The other level of challenge that should exist is also starting at the central agencies, and I believe you've heard the central agencies come and speak. Basically, their role is being strengthened to look at legislation like that when it's still in draft form, to start asking exactly those kinds of questions and making the links.

So we're moving in that direction. Unfortunately, as we move there is also legislation and policies and programs that go through, which have not had the benefit of this challenge function and the benefit of looking at it in a much more planned and trained way. They will one day.

Senator Nancy Ruth: How many years will that take? What kind of help can we give you?

Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud: We look forward to your recommendations.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Is there anyone else?

Sheila, do you want to comment?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: I think it's been said. I'm not putting any guesses on it.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Is there anything else, Senator? You have another minute left.

Hon. Maria Minna: Go for it.

Senator Nancy Ruth: Tell me, when Statistics Canada collects its data, given issues that have come up this morning, do you have any real way to measure impact and comment on it?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: Yes, we can measure impact and comment on it. The line is drawn at drawing conclusions or making recommendations. It's at that point. Our role is to determine what the data we have collected tell us.

Senator Nancy Ruth: So you can tell me that 40.4% of women don't file income tax, and therefore tax measures don't do whatever. But you will not interpret anything into public policy.

I don't really have a question, but I need you all to work with the new budget officer. He needs a lot of help. He likes Statistics Canada a lot, but he needs to know how to.... If we go to him with bills for costing, and they don't do a gender analysis in that office, we're in trouble. Let me tell you, this man knows zilch. He's trying. He thinks a course will help.

• (1040)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Thank you very much, Senator.

We'll move on to Madame Demers for the last five minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Cooper, in your presentation, under the heading "Next Steps," you refer to stakeholders and key stakeholders twice. Since Status of Women Canada has stopped subsidizing research groups, rights advocacy groups and lobbying groups, who are your non-governmental stakeholders? How do you choose them?

Ms. Dryburgh, I sensed in your presentation that you were doing a lot more work on statistics. You have segmented data; you can establish specific data for certain departments that request it.

Ms. Cooper said that Status of Women Canada didn't have enough data to establish indicators. What are you lacking in order to be able to provide the data that Ms. Cooper needs? What are you lacking, staff, money?

I'll listen to Ms. Cooper's answer first, then yours.

[English]

Ms. Suzanne Cooper: In terms of the next steps, to answer the question I think you're getting at, if I understand the question correctly, it is how will we consult civil society. I think that's the question.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: The non-governmental stakeholders.

Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud: The exercise isn't based on a partnership model. We're trying to open the door to as many people as possible, whether it be individuals or various non-governmental groups, in order to examine and establish indicators.

The way to do that remains to be determined, but there are various options. We could draw on the consultations that were conducted in 2005. People would travel across Canada and we could also proceed via the Internet.

Ms. Nicole Demers: That wasn't the same thing. There were groups that were still being subsidized by Status of Women Canada and that could take part in those consultations. Now they no longer have any resources to conduct research, engage in rights advocacy or lobbying. The situation is very different. I'm concerned. How will you be able to operate?

Ms. Dryburgh.

[English]

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: There are a lot of data already available. I know that we do have a representative on this group. I've looked through some of the documents. I know that there is already beginning to be some thinking about where the sources of data would come from. It probably won't just be from Statistics Canada. But whatever we have already available is in the public domain, and that's great. If there's special work done, there will probably be a request for costs. It's a cost-recovery project, so there could be implications, yes.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Do you currently have the resources and the capability to meet the specific needs of Status of Women Canada?

[English]

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: We have a unit that's working on it. We have a contact that does all of the gender retrievals for international databases. But again, this would be a cost-recovery project. We would probably be participating in it as partners, I would imagine, although I can't commit to anything, because I don't really know what the agreement is at this point. On a cost-recovery project, the money has to come from some place outside of Statistics Canada. It's not part of our base funding.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you.

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): You have one minute left, Madam.

[Translation]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Ms. Deschamps, do you want to ask a question?

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: Ms. Marmen.

Ms. Louise Marmen: Statistics Canada has a special surveys section, so, yes, if there were an interest, it would be possible to have a group of individuals who could work on new surveys.

Ms. Nicole Demers: Rather than conduct research elsewhere, Status of Women Canada would only have to request the financial resources for Statistics Canada to be able to do it. It would be done much more quickly and efficiently, I believe.

Ms. Louise Marmen: Exactly. First we offer a feasibility study service to determine whether the desired information can be gathered. Then it's possible to conduct a needs survey, if Statistics Canada doesn't have data that meet those needs.

•(1045)

Ms. Nicole Demers: Could we help Status of Women Canada by introducing a motion to that effect?

Ms. Louise Marmen: I'm going to ask Status of Women Canada to answer that question.

Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud: I'm not the statistics expert, but I don't think we're talking about exactly the same thing. The indicators project—I'm going to ask Suzanne Cooper if we have the time afterwards—is gathering data. We don't yet know whether there are any deficiencies in the data.

In the event there are, a logical step would be to turn to Statistics Canada. That's what I understand. However, we're not yet at that point. We're not mentioning either that there are various types of data. Statistics Canada gathers data, but there are also what's called "program" data, that come from the programs of the departments.

Human Resources and Social Development, for example, has an enormous data base, and it doesn't contain the same data as that gathered by Statistics Canada. The same is true for Treasury Board and Health Canada. You have to gather all the data before determining the deficiencies. Then the logical step would be to seek assistance from Statistics Canada. We're talking about a number of months.

[English]

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

The time is up on that.

I have two comments to make before we thank our presenters this morning.

Do Statistics Canada employees get GBA training?

Ms. Heather Dryburgh: No, not at this time.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): My other question is for Ms. Regehr. Could we have a copy of that income tax report, that

1976 report you've been referring to? Could you see to it that the clerk gets a copy of it?

Ms. Sheila Regehr: If I may, I would suggest that your clerk make contact with Jacques Maziade, the clerk of the human resources committee. These are out of print, actually. We really don't have them.

They had taken it upon themselves.... We gave them our last two English and French originals, and they were going to make copies. Perhaps they could provide them to you as well.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Sure, we can do that. Thank you very much.

Again, on behalf of the committee, I thank each of you for coming this morning and presenting again. It's certainly been a very good morning. We've received very good information from you.

We'll now go into committee business.

We are dealing with the motion by Ms. Mathysen. I believe the clerk has circulated in both official languages the motion as amended, with the friendly amendment that was proposed at the last meeting.

Ms. Mathysen.

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The motion is that the Auditor General, taking into account all of the elements of Canada's framework for equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and Optional Protocol and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, conduct an audit to review Canada's implementation of gender-based analysis using "Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995)" as a federal guide, and review the last seven years, and report the adoption of this motion to the House of Commons without delay.

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

Are there questions or comments?

Mr. Stanton.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think this is consistent with what we discussed at the last meeting.

For the sake of being specific, I wonder whether the mover would consider changing "the last seven years" to the specific dates. For example, instead of saying "and review the last seven years", it could read "and review the period from April 1, 2000, to March 31, 2008, and report the adoption" and so on.

•(1050)

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): What is the mover's view?

Mrs. Irene Mathysen: That is fine, Madam Chair. I think it captures my intent. So that would be quite acceptable.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Is everybody clear on the motion? Are there any other questions or comments on the motion as amended?

(Motion as amended agreed to) [See *Minutes of Proceedings*]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): That's carried unanimously. Good work, committee.

Before we adjourn, we have one more item of business. For Friday, which is tomorrow, we need to provide the clerk with the names of the witnesses for the action plan, if anyone has any witnesses they wish to put forth, and also questions for the finance department, if you wish to submit any. They need to be put to the clerk by Friday.

Ms. Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Johanne Deschamps: At the start of the week, I believe it was mentioned that, according to the schedule, we were going to work on a draft report. I don't remember the dates. However, in view of the many witnesses, experts and comments we've received thus far, if we continue on this track... I feel like a dog chasing its tail. I'm anxious for us to get down to business. The analysts and researchers have enough material for us to speed up the report process.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): I will ask the analyst to address that issue and the dates.

Ms. Clara Morgan (Committee Researcher): We're going to have one report based on the gender budget study.

[*Translation*]

We'll have a report on May 27. There will also be another report on the action plan, which will be part of the same report.

Mrs. Sylvie Boucher: So we'll have two different reports.

Ms. Clara Morgan: Yes.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Ms. Minna was next.

Hon. Maria Minna: You asked for questions to the Department of Finance. Could I request that the chair, unless we've already done so, send to the Department of Finance all of the questions that were submitted to us and given to us to help us with the questioning that day from Professor Lahey?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Have those been sent to the Department of Finance?

You want them sent as—

Hon. Maria Minna: As a package.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): —as a package, asking them to please give answers.

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes. They were detailed enough that we didn't get through them.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): We will need them back by a specific date, so that they'll be part of the report. We'll leave it to the analyst to put the specified date in.

Hon. Maria Minna: I apologize. I was busy talking and I missed the report thing.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): It's May 27.

Hon. Maria Minna: The draft report is coming on May 27?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Yes, and then a separate report will be the action plan; that is what the comments were.

Hon. Maria Minna: Do you mean April, not May?

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): I believe the analyst said May, did you not?

Is there a draft budget before that?

The clerk would like to speak to this.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Danielle Bélisle): We're still hearing witnesses when we come back after the break week in April—the official languages commissioner. The feeling of the committee was that what he had to say should be included in the report. So the report will be made after that.

It will be dealt with in committee on May 27, according to the work plan, and then tabled in the House shortly afterwards, once it's all been agreed.

Then the study for the action plan will start after that, and then there will be a separate report.

Hon. Maria Minna: If I may, Madam Chair, I think maybe some of us are saying that.... I know that the official languages commissioner will have some interesting things to say, but I think some of us are saying that we've heard so much now that we really think the staff should start writing the report. We'd like it a little sooner. May is a long time away.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): If it is the will of the committee....

Does the committee wish that we start getting at least a draft report sooner than the end of May?

● (1055)

Hon. Maria Minna: Yes.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Is that possible?

Hon. Maria Minna: I don't think we have to wait for the language commissioner. I think we can start.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Start putting together what we have.

Hon. Maria Minna: I'm not sure we're going to hear all that much that's different.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: In terms of moving the agenda along, do we even need to hear from.... I know we have witnesses scheduled, but if the committee feels it's not necessary, that it's just going to add one more layer, do we need to forget it and just move on to other business?

Hon. Maria Minna: I don't have a problem with listening to the languages commissioner—I think I have an idea of how that office operates—just as an added element for us. But I do not believe it's a fundamental piece to our report any more.

We've actually passed two motions here, in essence, in terms of legislation. I don't think it's an essential part.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): The analyst has just said it takes four weeks to produce the report, but the direction today is to get on it and get it done as soon as possible.

Mr. Stanton, you had a question.

Mr. Bruce Stanton: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I recall at our last meeting, or it might have been two meetings ago, the chair indicated a clarification on a request for cabinet-related documents and cited the verse in Marleau and Montpetit. I go back to that because I was actually involved, and I think Mr. Pearson might have been at the same time as well.

When we are dealing with these questions of access of cabinet confidences, it's my understanding that although committees have the power to order the production of papers in theory, in practice governments generally do not provide them, and they're not obliged to provide them under the Access to Information Act. I don't know that in the end the papers in question would really do anything to improve the volume of information that we already have from testimony from the various departments and non-governmental organizations.

I question whether we need to be pursuing what could be a rather laboursome piece of business to get information that may not add anything to the work we're doing.

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): Very quickly, Madame Demers, as we are running out of time here.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Nicole Demers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We've asked questions about the various departments, programs and policies, and about the measures put forward, or that should be put forward, and studied by the department in order to focus on the issue of gender-based analysis. We were told that those data were confidential and could not be provided to us.

Once measures have been put forward or proposed, those data should not be confidential. We should be able to evaluate them to see how the departments are operating and how decisions are made.

[*English*]

The Vice-Chair (Mrs. Patricia Davidson): If we wish to have more discussion, we can do so at the next meeting on this issue. Perhaps if we don't have access, the Auditor General may. Those are issues we can consider.

The meeting is adjourned.

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

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

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