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**Wednesday, May 13, 2009**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Kevin Sorenson**

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## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

• (1530)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)):** Good afternoon colleagues.

[English]

This is meeting 19 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. It is Wednesday, May 13, 2009.

Today we're going to continue our study on key elements of Canada's foreign policy. We have finished our report on Sri Lanka. My intention is that it will be tabled in the House tomorrow.

Today we're going to begin part of what we decided earlier to study. We will begin our hearings on the Great Lakes region of Africa. From the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, we have Ken Sunquist. We welcome him back. It's good to have him here again. He is the assistant deputy minister for Asia and Africa and chief trade commissioner. We also have Isabelle Roy, director of the west and central Africa division. From the Canadian International Development Agency, we have Allan Culham, acting vice-president for pan-geographics, and André Gosselin, regional director, central Africa and Great Lakes, Africa branch.

We welcome you here today, and we look forward to your opening comments. You have been here many times, so you know that we then move into the first round of questions. We look forward to what you have to say.

Go ahead, Mr. Sunquist, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Ken Sunquist (Assistant Deputy Minister, (Asia and Africa) and Chief Trade Commissioner, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good afternoon everyone.

[English]

Mr. Chair, members, you have chosen a very important topic for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. It's key to how we view Africa. The African Great Lakes region is suffering from a long-standing chain of humanitarian crises, including the present one in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The government shares your concerns and looks forward to your report on this issue. Peace, stability, and development in the Great Lakes region, and indeed in central Africa, will not be achieved unless there is peace, stability, and development in the DRC. The two are tied.

Let me talk a moment about individual countries and some of the issues there. Then we'll pull it together in a region. The humanitarian situation in the eastern DRC is the longest-lasting and most severe in the world. Two successive regional wars and an ongoing conflict have claimed close to five million lives. Close to 1.4 million people are currently internally displaced. Nevertheless, strides have been made on the road to peace and reconciliation in the past years, despite the recent outbreaks of violence in the eastern part of the country.

Only a regional solution will bring about long-term stability to the Democratic Republic of Congo and the region. As co-chair of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, Canada was intimately involved in the establishment of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region. The conference brought together 11 regional leaders for meaningful dialogue that gave birth to the Pact on Security, Stability and Development, the first peace treaty in the region.

Canada, mainly through CIDA, contributed approximately \$1.5 million—as well as a DFAIT team, led by our then special envoy—to the success. In this context, Canada co-funded, with the Netherlands, the November 2008 Nairobi summit, which led to the present demobilization and reintegration of CNDP, the rebel group responsible for the humanitarian crisis, in the fall of 2008.

Sexual gender-based violence has reached epidemic proportions in the eastern DRC. Canada has been contributing about \$15 million since 2006 to support a multilateral effort to help victims of this crime. This initiative helps tens of thousands of victims of sexual violence through medical care, psychological support, access to civil justice, and socio-economic reintegration. We have made the fight against sexual violence a priority, and underline this at every opportunity, including at the UN Declaration of Human Rights' 60th anniversary...which took place at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

On December 10, 2008, we chose to bring to the forefront the extent to which sexual violence is used as a weapon of war by screening the film *The Greatest Silence*, a moving documentary that bears witness to this tragedy.

Since April 2006, Canada, through CIDA, has provided over \$80 million for both humanitarian and long-term development assistance in the DRC. This includes \$15 million for the support of the 2006 elections, the largest UN-organized election in the world, and the first democratic multi-party election in the DRC since 1960.

Current development support focuses on democratic and economic governance and basic health, with gender equality as a substantial cross-cutting element of all programming. To date, in 2009, CIDA has provided \$14.6 million of humanitarian assistance, which is non-food, and \$7 million in food aid to the DRC alone. In the past 10 years, through UN peacekeeping, Canada has contributed \$235 million to MONUC, the largest UN peacekeeping mission ever.

DND's contribution to MONUC supports professionalization of the Congolese army, disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration initiatives, as well as justice reform. In looking for the future in sustainable development, we need to find how we can assist the country and the region. In an extremely challenging business and governance environment, Canada's trade commissioner service strives to improve the business environment and promote an integrated approach to corporate social responsibility as it relates to mining, natural resources, and energy. These are vital sectors for the DRC.

● (1535)

As of December 31, 2008, the Canadian cumulative mining assets in the DRC were valued at over \$5.7 billion. We continue our regular dialogue with both the Canadian NGO community and the Congolese diaspora throughout Canada to ensure that our efforts are inclusive of their views.

Turning now to Rwanda, after the genocide in Rwanda, Canada identified the importance of women working together to improve their lives. To this effect, among other projects in this vein, through CIDA, Canada has provided about \$1.5 million in support of civil society organization to promote women's strategic interests such as rights related to inheritance or violence, and political participation. We also provided assistance to help women build and repair thousands of homes in support of Rwanda's reconciliation and reconstruction program.

Our lead in this sector was followed by others. Women in Rwanda have assumed a greater role in society. Rwanda women continue to make inroads in the country's highest seats of power. They hold half of the seats in the cabinet and 56% of the seats in Parliament, representing the highest percentage of women lawmakers in the world.

In 2007-08, total CIDA disbursements in Rwanda amounted to \$18.4 million, including \$7.5 million through bilateral disbursements. As Rwanda is an agricultural-based society, CIDA's bilateral programming focus is on integrated rural development through private sector development, rural infrastructure initiatives, and local democratic governance. It helps strengthen the capacity of decentralized local authorities and rural associations to plan and manage development programs.

In Burundi, Canada was directly involved in the lengthy peace process ultimately leading up to the signing of the 2000 peace accord. Since then, national reconciliation and peace negotiations have led to greater stability. This has brought security sector improvements and progress in social reforms such as free maternal health care. In 2007-08, CIDA's assistance to Burundi totalled \$6.3 million. From 2004 to 2006, Ms. Carolyn McAskie, a Canadian, served as a senior UN envoy and head of the successful UN peacekeeping operations in Burundi.

Since 2008 Canada has supported the efforts of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, a body created to manage war-to-peace transition in fragile states. Canada has contributed \$20 million to the related UN peacebuilding fund, which provides supports for post-conflict capacity-building projects in Burundi and other states in the region.

On Uganda, Canada's engagement aims to assist the government and people of Uganda to lay the foundations for lasting peace in the region and in the country. Canada was among the principal international supporters, and contributed \$8 million to the northern Uganda peace process. Although the LRA leadership declined to sign the final peace agreement, the negotiations have brought relative peace to northern Uganda, allowing hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons to return home. Canada also provided technical assistance to the government of Uganda to support their efforts to implement the agreement on accountability and reconciliation. To date in 2009, Canada through CIDA has contributed \$4.5 million to humanitarian assistance to Uganda.

Turning more broadly to the region, Canada also supports the Great Lakes region through regional programs supported by CIDA. One such program provided \$4.8 million to strengthen institutional technical capacities of training institutions in three central African countries, especially the DRC, so that they can become centres of excellence for the whole region in sustainable management of natural resources. As well, \$25 million has gone to the multi-country demobilization and reintegration program, which supports the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in the Great Lakes region. It is the largest program of its kind in the world, and currently targets over 400,000 ex-combatants in seven countries, including Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Canada's diplomatic regional efforts continue to promote respect for international and humanitarian law with a view to protecting civilians and facilitating humanitarian access to those in need. We continue to work for peace and stability in the region through national and regional peace processes and peacebuilding initiatives.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to add that our team on the ground at our embassy in Kinshasa and the high commission in Nairobi have close relations with partners in the Great Lakes region, including the NGOs, the international community, and the member states of the region.

● (1540)

Our personnel in Ottawa, both at DFAIT and CIDA, travel regularly to the Great Lakes region to meet with partners and obtain first-hand knowledge and awareness of the situation there. As you know, parliamentary secretary Obhrai visited the DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, and Kenya to obtain on-the-ground perspective of possible areas of Canadian involvement in the Great Lakes region. He represented our minister at the summit when the Pact on Security, Stability and Development was signed.

Mr. Chairman, we'd be happy to answer the committee's questions on the Great Lakes region of Africa. As you have already indicated, we have a combined delegation here from CIDA and from Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

With that, I turn it back to you. Thank you very much for this opportunity to outline a few of the issues that we're covering in the region.

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

Mr. Patry.

[*Translation*]

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

Mr. Sunquist, I want to thank you and your team for coming here today.

I am going to talk about the Congo, the DRC. You said that the humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC is the longest standing and most serious in the world. MONUC has indeed been involved there for a very long time and has cost the United Nations a fortune. You said that only a regional solution will bring about long-term stability to the DRC and the region, and that Canada co-chaired the Group of Friends in the region as well as the setting up of an international conference in the Great Lakes region.

My question is very simple: What has happened since that International Conference on the Great Lakes? The way I see the situation currently unfolding in the DRC is that last February, Ms. Oda, our Minister responsible for CIDA... The four countries in the Great Lakes region, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and the DRC, are no longer Canada's partners.

Is Canada dissociating itself from what is currently happening in the DRC? What does Canada intend to do? Canada should be playing a very important diplomatic role. We are not doing enough for the francophonie. Yet the DRC is part of that. I would like a little more information on that issue.

The international conferences yielded results, and things are going well. The situation has improved somewhat in Rwanda and the DRC. However, we cannot talk about peace. But since Rwanda is the country that exports the largest amount of coltan in the world without having a single coltan mine, we are entitled to ask a number of questions.

What is Canada doing at present? I don't want to know what Canada has donated in recent years nor whether Canada participated in MONUC. However, from a diplomatic perspective, what is Canada currently doing?

Thank you.

[*English*]

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

Mr. Sunquist.

[*Translation*]

**M. Ken Sunquist:** That is a twofold question.

●(1545)

[*English*]

First of all, I think you asked the right question, which is that you work to get to a point in time, but then what do you do to follow up afterwards to make sure that it works?

I think there are a couple of answers I would give to that.

One is that not only do we support through resources of people and dollars; we also support the people and the leaders of the region in tackling the problems together. Indeed, for the first time you're starting to see joint military action; you're seeing the establishment of embassies there. So you're starting to see the actual countries working together. It doesn't happen overnight.

The second part is that, as I mentioned in my opening presentation, Canada, with the Netherlands, co-funded the Nairobi summit, which was the follow-up, and which led to a political process by the UN, as well as other regional leaders. There have been revised accords that have been signed and followed up, and the present disarmament exercise is part of that process.

So there are discrete functions where we're getting people together...if you want to call it diplomatically, I'd call it a little bit more politically. We have different disarmament groups working.

Perhaps I could ask my colleague Mr. Culham to comment on the second part, on CIDA.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Allan Culham (Acting Vice-President, Pan-Geographics, Canadian International Development Agency):** Thank you very much, sir.

You mentioned the very important role that Canada played in the past, but I must confirm that Canada continues to participate in events in that part of the world.

[*English*]

CIDA has a long and rich history in the Great Lakes region. This includes not only the four countries that we're talking about, but also Tanzania, which is part of this area of the world. As you mentioned, the conflict is much larger than these three countries. It encompasses that whole region—Uganda, Sudan, Tanzania, and the whole region.

Minister Oda did announce, three or four weeks ago now, that CIDA would be concentrating its aid in a number of key development partners. But what's been lost in that message is that we are not going to be abandoning these countries for bilateral assistance. While they're not going to be a country of concentration, we will continue to have bilateral programs in that part of the world well into future, in much the same themes that were mentioned by Mr. Sunquist. For example, this year, on the bilateral side, we're scheduled to spend up to \$14 million in the Congo and \$7 million in Rwanda, and we look to continue into the future at more or less these exact same levels.

The other message that has been lost is that it's not just the bilateral channel that we'll continue, but it will be the multilateral and the partnership branch. So we will continue programming with our Canadian civil society groups that are active in that region. We will continue to funnel assistance through the multilateral organizations, whether it be the United Nations or the international financial institutions that are active in that part of the world. So the totality of Canadian involvement in that region will continue to be quite significant for the foreseeable future.

**Mr. Ken Sunquist:** Mr. Chair, could we make one very quick intervention?

Isabelle.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Isabelle Roy (Director, West and Central Africa Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** Thank you, sir.

I would simply like to answer your question about what Canada has done since the second summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes which was held in 2006.

To answer your question, in November 2008, as Mr. Sunquist pointed out, Canada and The Netherlands co-funded the November Nairobi summit which made it possible to bring together all of the protagonists and to come up with a political process, at a time when the crisis was at its worst in eastern Congo.

As you know, that process was led by former president Obasanjo and the former president of Tanzania, and led, later, to all kinds of meetings—as you also know—with the CNDP. That also made it possible to arrest the current leader of the CNDP, a decision that Rwanda and the Congo made alone, since our common objective is for countries in the region to make decisions on their own. So, that was one of the contributions, which was perhaps not well known enough but which is attributable to the international process for the Great Lakes region.

I would like to add two other points on human rights, because significant action was taken on human rights, in particular women's rights and the issue of sexual violence. During the special session of the Human Rights Council held in Geneva last November and December, Canada insisted that the issue be put on the agenda and be made a resolution, which was the case.

A few months earlier, in the summer of 2008, Canada was one of the co-sponsors of UN resolution 1820, which for the first time recognized the close link between sexual crimes and problems with peace and security.

Thank you.

• (1550)

[*English*]

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

Before we move to Ms. Deschamps, I'd like to welcome back Madame Lalonde.

I can tell you that we certainly did miss you while you were gone. It's very good to have you here.

Madame Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

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

Since Madam Lalonde has been away for so long, if I may, I will be sharing my time with her.

I just have one quick question for Mr. Sunquist.

In your remarks, you referred to the mining companies that are in the Democratic Republic of Congo. You say that Canada's trade commissioners are striving to improve the business environment and to promote an integrated approach.

In 2007, a workshop was held in the Democratic Republic of Congo to discuss mining companies' social responsibility. As a result of this workshop, the Canadian embassy made a commitment to sponsor workshops on ways of implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the advisory group to the National Roundtables on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Canadian Extractive Industry in Developing Countries.

I would like to know if, following that workshop, the embassy put in place measures to respond to the roundtable recommendations.

**Mr. Ken Sunquist:** Thank you for your questions.

If I'm not mistaken, 22 Canadian companies are working in that region.

[*English*]

Our head of mission, our ambassador, has met individually with every company. Our senior trade commissioner has met with these companies to follow up on what corporate social responsibility means and how Canadian companies should best address those issues. We continue to do this in face-to-face meetings with the companies. We continue to do it with the host government to ensure that we're talking about the same kind of standards. At every level, whether company-to-company or with the government, we believe in corporate social responsibility. We want our Canadian companies to represent Canada in the best manner possible.

I think you're aware that the government just announced a new corporate social responsibility policy as a result of the national round table; in fact we've enlisted the assistance of many companies to look at the transparency issues and the human rights issues. We're working with these companies on this issue.

**The Chair:** Madame Lalonde.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** Thank you very much for your warm welcome; I thought of you often.

You said that Minister Oda's decision to no longer treat a number of African countries as favoured bilateral partners would not really have any consequences, because you are going to continue to help them. I have worked with documents prepared by the Canadian Council on Africa, and I read that Rwanda was one of the countries that, in 2008, had received the most funding. It says \$291 million here. Does that mean that from one day to the next the country can no longer count on this funding? When you say you're going to continue to help the others, at what level will that be?

I am starting with that question, because the one that concerns me the most is governance, which we talk about all the time. How are we going to help these countries—and I say help them not replace them—develop their economies? I am not talking about assistance in the form of tents, etc., but helping them to develop.

I will conclude on this: The Senate report outlines a terrible finding: development in Africa is a failure. I don't share their approach, but I would like to hear your views on that. What is important is for Canada to contribute to development in Africa. You have worked with the Netherlands, which have a good reputation. Bravo! But is each country going to independently propose approaches, or other pieces of legislation? What are we doing to help Africa develop itself?

• (1600)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madam Lalonde.

**Mr. Allan Culham:** Thank you very much for your question.

You mentioned that Minister Oda had chosen six African countries as countries where development aid will be concentrated, but as I mentioned, we will continue to be involved.

[English]

We will continue to be involved in the development of all of Africa. The six countries listed as countries of concentration are Tanzania, Mozambique, and Ethiopia in east Africa, and, in west Africa, Mali, Senegal, and Ghana. As a fragile state, Sudan also is going to be part of our concentration.

I'd like to reiterate that our concentrating on those seven countries does not mean we are going to be terminating our bilateral programs in the countries where we have traditionally been involved, such as the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi. In fact, we will continue to have programs at the bilateral level in those countries and in others that are also in Africa. As I mentioned, we will also continue to channel our aid through partnership programs and the regional programs and multilateral institutions.

I'll ask my colleague André Gosselin to give you an idea of what we're going to be doing in the future in exactly these countries that we're discussing today.

[Translation]

**Mr. André Gosselin (Regional Director, Central Africa and Great Lakes, Africa Branch, Canadian International Development Agency):** Thank you very much for your question, which is a fundamental one. How can we aid or at least support countries like Rwanda or the DRC? Our efforts as well as those of other donors are guided by what we call aid effectiveness principles. We want to

ensure that aid is as effective as possible. The first principle is to adjust or align ourselves in accordance with the country's priorities.

In the case of Rwanda, our current programming flows directly from discussions we held with the Rwandan government. During these discussions, the Rwandan government called for Canadian cooperation to attach specific importance to rural development. As you are undoubtedly aware, the vast majority of Rwandans live in rural areas. The people are very poor, and agriculture is subsistence farming, where productivity and agricultural production need to be improved. So that is the first area where we can support the government's efforts, by aligning ourselves with their priorities, and supporting agricultural development, agriculture, means meeting their immediate needs but also preparing for the mid and long term.

The second area of involvement for bilateral programming, again in the case of Rwanda, is local governance. The Rwandan government has asked us to work in this area because Rwanda is currently putting in motion a decentralization policy. Along with other donors, we have chosen to participate in implementing this policy. Essentially, here's what we are trying to do. With decentralization, local authorities will receive responsibilities and certain revenues, but these authorities are not necessarily equipped to take on this role and these responsibilities. Basically, what we are trying to do is to support these authorities as well as groups of local people, and civil society organizations, so that they can work together to prepare their development plan based on their local priorities. That gives you an example of our approach.

In the case of Congo, the two areas we are involved in are governance and health.

[English]

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

We'll go to Mr. Obhrai.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to welcome the team back here to again brief us on the issues. Thank you, Ken and the team.

To Madame Lalonde, welcome back. I must say, it's good to have you back.

Thank you, Ken. As you mentioned, I was in the region, and we did an extensive thing; you mentioned the summit.

I want to tell colleagues about the extensive engagement Canada has been undertaking in that region, working on many facets. My colleague here will talk about CIDA's involvement, but I was there with John Gauthier, who is sitting in the back of the room, who was also heavily involved. We are heavily involved—as we said, we were co-chairs—with the Netherlands in working with the Great Lakes region.

The challenges of the Great Lakes region are not limited to development. There is also the conflict that has been going on for such a long time, and that conflict has resulted in this humanitarian crisis. Paul Dewar was recently involved in discussions on the issue of sexual violence, which is so prevalent in that region. It is all coming out of this instability in the Great Lakes region, where there is a lot of fighting. This pact that was signed in Nairobi was one of the first steps we took leading to ensure that there would be peace and that with peace there would be more development and engagement taking place.

One result was the establishment of a secretariat in Bujumbura, with a Tanzanian as secretary to oversee this pact and oversee the development.

I would like you to tell us what the secretariat has been doing, and speak about how calm the region presently is, allowing CIDA and the NGOs to move in to do development and to work towards a reduction in the very high level of sexual violence, an issue of great concern to Canadians.

I know that the two countries have worked together, Rwanda and the Congo, to bring peace to the region, but let's talk about the long term: the secretariat in Bujumbura, and whether the Africans are actually picking up this ball by themselves and running with it, because that was the whole idea.

Please go ahead.

**Mr. Ken Sunquist:** I think Isabelle could answer that better than I.

**Ms. Isabelle Roy:** If you'll allow me, Mr. Obhrai, I'll answer in French.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

That is precisely the point that was emphasized through the international process on the Great Lakes region. It is the issue of ownership; in other words, the countries themselves sat around the table. Bringing these 11 countries to the table—nine of which ratified, in 2006, the pact Mr. Obhrai mentioned—so that they could resume the dialogue was in itself a challenge. As you know, the Congo was recovering from two successive wars during which, for some time, more than seven foreign armies from neighbouring countries battled it out on their territory.

What is unique and important about this pact that was ratified by nine of these neighbouring countries is that it deals with all aspects of economic, social and political life affecting these countries. It is not simply a pact dealing with peace and security, but also one dealing, for example, with basic trade relations among these neighbouring countries.

If I may, I will draw a link with Ms. Lalonde's question. Trade relations among these countries is an essential aspect they have asked for our help with. This week, a trade mission will be traveling to the five countries of East Africa, including Rwanda and Burundi, since these two countries belong both to Central Africa and East Africa. This is a trade mission that they wanted, and on which they have worked a great deal for many months, and it is chaired by the Rwandan minister. There are five ministers from these five countries:

Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Private sector development is precisely one of the issues covered by the pact on security, stability and development in the Great Lakes region.

So to reiterate, that is what is unique about the pact, because it deals with all aspects of reconstruction and not simply with overcoming conflict, as was so necessary a few years ago.

Thank you.

• (1605)

[*English*]

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

Monsieur Culham, very quickly.

**Mr. Allan Culham:** Thank you very much.

Very quickly, in the opening remarks provided by Mr. Sunquist, you saw the response to the humanitarian crisis, the peace process, and the need for reconciliation running through it. Those were the three themes that CIDA tried to support, as part of our contribution to the larger regional peace process.

But we're finding things are changing a little bit as stability has started to take hold. Our programs are now shifting towards rural development, private sector development, health, and education—the more traditional areas of support—as people and governments in that part of the region begin to take more responsibility for their lives following the peace process.

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

Mr. Dewar.

**Mr. Paul Dewar (Ottawa Centre, NDP):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our guests for being here.

The press release I sent out asked if Canada was going to answer the call of the Congo. I'm glad to hear that we have part of the message answered, and maybe we can probe a bit more.

One of the things I was taken by when I was in the DRC is that it has been noted that the DRC has the paradox of the plenty. It is an extraordinarily rich country. It is extraordinarily diverse in terms of the natural resources there, but it is absolutely devastating to see the effects of the wealth on the population.

My questions have to do with what we can continue to do, because we have done some good work. I have to acknowledge the embassy there and the officials I met with. They are doing good work on the ground.

I would like to know, first of all, if we're seeing the \$15 million that was committed particularly to deal with gender violence running out. Are we looking at continuing that funding for that important initiative? As everyone knows, the gender violence hasn't ended. In some cases it's become worse, or it looks different or is in different places. I just want to know, in that particular case, if we are continuing the funding of that project, which I think was due to end this year.

You can always get back to me later on that.



[Translation]

**Mr. André Gosselin:** I can give you a preliminary answer. We will follow through to the end on the \$15 million joint initiative that you mentioned. We have not yet decided how we will continue. We will look at the results and make an informed decision.

[English]

There are many ways we can provide assistance.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** That's fine, and that's what I was looking for in terms of where we're at. I hope we do. There is clearly a lot of work that needs to be done in that area. We just heard testimony on Parliament Hill from people who have been there, and I certainly saw the need for it when I was there, so I hope we see that.

I have a question related to gender violence, and that is Canada's help in initiating, as was referenced earlier, Resolution 1325 and Resolution 1820. Do we have an action plan in the bureaucracy to activate those resolutions?

•(1610)

[Translation]

**Ms. Isabelle Roy:** In terms of an action plan, what we can say is that each time an opportunity arises in a political forum, at a francophone summit—the most recent being the one in Quebec City—these issues are addressed. We can now use resolution 1820, in addition to resolution 1325, which is a new instrument. That is also an aspect we can emphasize during our meetings with stakeholders in the countries involved.

[English]

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** My question is a little bit different. I understand what you're saying, but to date, do we have what I'll call an action plan? I can call it something else. I'm not really adhering to any particular term.

You're saying that to date we don't. Okay.

I'd like to see it probed. Canada has done a lot of work on this issue. We're recognized for it. You can hear testimonies of the horrific gender violence that is going on, violence that some have called femicide. I won't get into the details; people can find out for themselves.

I see this as a perfect tool for Canada to be using to deal with gender violence. I don't know of any other country, actually, that is better suited than Canada to deal with this. I applaud the work that has been done. I see it on the ground. I'll say as a comment more than a question that I hope to see us push that more. I will do everything I can on this side to encourage government to do so.

There is a reference to the Peacebuilding Commission. That's again something that I'm glad to see we're providing moneys for. Are we a member of that commission at this point? I'm not sure if we are. I know that about a year ago or so, we weren't on the Peacebuilding Commission itself.

**Ms. Isabelle Roy:** Yes, we are.

**A witness:** We're a member of it.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Right, but are we on the executive body? We weren't initially, but I'm glad to hear that's changed. There's a

Canadian chairing it, but it's not an official Canadian appointment; she was selected.

But that's a different issue—another issue that I have with government—so I'll leave that for another day.

**The Chair:** Issues, issues, issues.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I have issues, Chair.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** I see the Peacebuilding Commission as another tool that Canada can get behind. For those who aren't aware, this is for post-conflict countries. We might have an argument about DRC post-conflict, but it's well suited for that.

We've done some work on training of police, in particular policewomen, in Sudan. I'd like to know, from any one of the witnesses, if there's any contemplation of using that Sudan model of training police, and particularly policewomen, for the DRC.

**Ms. Isabelle Roy:** Not for the DRC, but we have an extensive police training program, mostly in west Africa. That's not for the DRC now, because they're perhaps not at that point yet.

With reference to the Peacebuilding Commission, in the region of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region there are two countries benefiting from funds from the Peacebuilding Commission, Burundi and CAR. Canada is chair of Sierra Leone.

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

Go ahead, Mr. Abbott.

Again, this is the second round, the shorter round.

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

I had a meeting yesterday with some representatives who had travelled to Canada from the east Africa community. I'm talking about Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Kenya, and Tanzania. We were discussing the country-of-focus initiative that our government has undertaken, which is to make our bilateral aid more effective and accountable.

There are two things they were not aware of. Of the \$4.3 billion total that is in the CIDA budget, \$1.5 billion is bilateral. Furthermore, this is a focus of 80% of that \$1.5 billion, so we're talking about \$1.2 billion being focused now.

Kenya is one of the focus countries. They were surprised to hear that, because they had been persuaded that all of the aid was going to be cut off. I pointed out to them that in addition to the \$4.3 billion that is administered by CIDA, there are many other sources of foreign aid funding available to them from Canada. As a matter of fact—this is really important—from 2005 to March 2009, we have doubled the amount of aid to Africa to \$2.1 billion, obviously not all from CIDA, but from all of the sources. They were really quite encouraged by that information.

I also pointed out that the other countries that had made the commitment to double their aid to Africa were still at least one year away from reaching the goal that we have already reached. So it's something that we, as Canadians, can be very proud of.

My question for our panellists is on the east Africa community. During the course of the dialogue I had with the group, they were quite persuasive that they were pulling together their equivalent of a European Union and a trade group and so on. Relative to the issues that we're trying to wrestle with in respect to the Great Lakes region, how much significance is there, or how does this concept of the east Africa community, these five countries formally coming together as best they can, and the fact that you have the DRC, relate politically and economically, and particularly, in the geographic movement of persons within that area?

• (1615)

**Mr. Ken Sunquist:** You've asked a question that I would run out the clock on.

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

**Mr. Ken Sunquist:** I won't answer it for that long, then.

Our comments are that where you had warring states before, they are now starting to cooperate—economically, politically, militarily. In effect, that is what Canada has been trying to do, that they take charge of their own destiny.

Madame Lalonde asked the question around prosperity and sustainable development, whether it's the Canadian investment fund for Africa, whether it's Export Development Canada, the Canadian Commercial Corporation, or CIDA, using a number of instruments of the Government of Canada to move towards.... We can give aid, but in the long term, it's how to get sustainable development. And the only way you can do it as a region is if all the countries contribute to it.

The answer is very clear: we have to build those institutions one by one and make sure that the countries and the region benefit from them. So you've asked the right question.

This gets back to the other question, about what has happened since the peace accord started to come together. They're actually working together. I mean, to have a trade grouping? I couldn't have even fathomed that five years ago. To have military action together? Well, they were fighting each other.

In fact, they are far better off today than they were five years ago.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Culham, you had a short comment.

**Mr. Allan Culham:** We did in fact double our aid to Africa as of this financial year. It was \$2.1 billion. CIDA was responsible for \$800 million of that. This was a commitment that was made by the government at a G8 summit, so we were very proud that we were actually able to fulfill that commitment. This was not only CIDA, it was the whole of government involving DFAIT and Finance and IDRC, so it was a real concerted effort on the part of many different organizations.

Thirty years ago, the east African community was a thriving institution. Then it fell into disrepute and disrepair and virtually collapsed with many of the economies in that part of the world. Now it's back on the map, so to speak, and it's a thriving organization with real prospects for the future.

Mr. Sunquist highlighted in the opening statement our regional program in that part of the world and the role that Kenya plays in that part of the world. We will continue to be involved in these regional efforts, because maybe even at the end of the day it will be progress in the region that will drive progress at the country level.

So I fully support your comments about regional organizations in that part of the world.

• (1620)

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

Mr. Silva.

**Mr. Mario Silva (Davenport, Lib.):** Thank you. My questions will be brief.

Given the violations of human rights in many parts of Africa, not only in the Great Lakes region but other parts of Africa, and also given the humanitarian crisis taking place in some of those countries, as we see it there is a need for Canada to take a leadership role in supporting and working with regional partners as well as regional bodies.

To that extent, how much funding and support and how much activity are we doing to work with organizations, such as the African Union, for example, and also the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights? They haven't had a case yet, but there is also a huge problem of lack of funding to even get these courts going. Unless they're prepared to support these fundamental institutions to deal with human rights violations, they will never be able to begin to address some of these violations.

I'm not sure how active we've been on that file, that's number one. Number two, would you consider the DRC a failed state?

Those are my two questions.

**Mr. Allan Culham:** With respect to the African Union, going back to the regional program, we are, indeed, actively engaged in supporting the African Union in its very nascent attempts to become just that, an African union. They changed their name a few years ago to reflect their political desire to become closer together.

Reflecting again on my comments on regional activities, we see the African Union as having real potential to drive the values of reconciliation and peace. This is particularly true for the issue you're interested in, human rights and jurisprudence. It's better to come at these issues from a pan-African level than at the country level, because we don't want to be pointing fingers. Working at the African Union level, we have an opportunity to have these common principles bought into by the member governments of the African Union. We will continue to be actively engaged with the African Union out of our embassy in Addis Ababa.

Do we see DRC as a failed state? I would say absolutely not. It has lots of problems, for sure, and we don't want to minimize the poverty and the impact of the wealth of that country on the distribution of incomes, but there is peace in large segments of that country. We're supporting the election process. The humanitarian aid is getting to where it should, and without that basic stability we cannot have development, which will be our objective in that part of the world for the foreseeable future.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move to Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you very much for all of that information. I get a lot of my information on what's going on in Africa from my weekly read of *The Economist*. They generally have a really good section in there on current updates.

I know that we have put significant investment into these areas, so the question is not really just money. We see a lot of NGOs going in there. I have an organization from my own riding of Newmarket—Aurora that is working in Uganda to build a school. This is completely separate from any government funding that comes in. This is an organization that has been over there regularly in the last four years establishing the school, building the facility, ensuring that they have the engineering capability to keep the school going and make sure that there's water and cooling in the hot weather. So there's a lot of money going into these areas.

I'd just pick up on a comment from *The Economist* this week. They're commenting actually about the country of Nigeria, saying, "Fraud and corruption still scare businesses away from Nigeria, even though its market of 140 million people is Africa's largest."

My question is framed around the question, and maybe, Mr. Sunquist, you can run out the clock carrying on with the answer. We need to build other institutions as well. Where are we in helping these countries to build a judiciary whereby contracts can be enforced and whereby businesses can go in and know that they have government organizations they can deal with that are going to promote long-term health, not only of the economy but also of human rights and all of these other things that we look to a society to be building?

• (1625)

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

Mr. Sunquist.

**Mr. Ken Sunquist:** Thank you very much.

I'm sure my colleagues from CIDA can also help on this one.

I think you're absolutely right that Canada's efforts in Africa are made by NGOs, companies, and governments. In fact, what makes it work is that they're all working with the same ideals in mind.

You talked about corruption. Well, where companies may want to make sure that there are level playing fields, transparency, and no corruption, clearly within the CIDA program around governance you want to minimize it at first, but then get rid of it. One of the greatest failures in much of Africa is around corruption, and the fact that resources don't flow to those who should be receiving them.

So it's working with educational institutions, judiciary, and governments at all levels. I'm sure you can find programs from either Foreign Affairs or CIDA, or in really different places. If you go to Angola, the Canadian Commercial Corporation is working with them in terms of procurement issues and making sure that there's transparency. That's a little thing just sitting out there, but it's working.

In fact, that's why we kind of look at the study that this group is doing, those kinds of areas that we should be pursuing, and the priorities the group has here. It's all designed to make sure that Africa, as a continent, is a partner for us. It's not just something out there for aid. The reason we want to be there is to help them help themselves.

I don't know if that gives you the answer. As *The Economist* would put it, I think it's civil society; it's governments; it's business; it's how it all comes together.

One of the biggest problems we can see is that, for instance, there are some countries in the world that believe in a little bit more corruption. If you look at Africa today, you find that there are some places where their public policy is swayed by those kinds of things. We fight against it. We bring it to the attention of the people who can do things and to the attention of the people.

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

Madame Deschamps, did you have another question? It's just about 4:30, so it would have to be a very quick one.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Do you have time for a quick question?

[English]

**The Chair:** You can have a very quick one.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** I have heard that Canada's current contribution is approximately 0.29% of its GDP. That isn't very much, in my view, to enable African countries to achieve one of the millennium objectives for development and to reduce the dire poverty currently afflicting Africa by 50% by 2015. In the global economic context, with the crisis countries are facing, won't the reduction in aid from Canada represent a major setback for these countries that are beginning to emerge? In the global economic context, are we not inflicting more suffering on these countries, all the more so since some of them have been removed from CIDA's priority list?

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Culham.

**Mr. Allan Culham:** On the financial crisis, we initially thought that Africa was going to be spared the impact of this. But what we are seeing in the past month is that it's starting to accelerate and deepen the impact on many African economies. We're in danger now of people sliding back into poverty who had actually emerged from poverty through very hard-won efforts over the last 10 years.

The same is true of the food prices. Food prices skyrocketed. They have come down, but the impact on the poorest members of society has been absolutely devastating in some parts of Africa.

Within CIDA, we're looking at our programs to try to help mitigate the impact of the financial crisis by getting some of our resources into general budgetary support for the government more quickly so that social services will not suffer as greatly as their own revenue sources begin to come under stress. We're looking at these issues right now. We will try to manoeuvre our programs to try to mitigate some of the impact of this crisis.

I'm not minimizing it in the slightest. In fact, it's a real tragedy in that as this financial crisis begins to bite, people tend to be slipping away from the development goals that were set for them.

• (1630)

**The Chair:** We're pretty well out of time.

Mr. Patry has a question he wants you to respond to in writing, because we simply don't have time today.

Ten seconds or less.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Canada provides funding to the African Union. At its most recent meeting, it seemed to bring together increasingly important players, including Libya, with its leader, Colonel Khadafi. He appears to control the African Union's agenda.

I would like to know a little more about that. You can provide me with a written response, because it is very serious seeing this region... Mr. Khadafi wants to do many things in Africa. That does not mean it's the direction Canada would like to see Africa taking.

[*English*]

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

Thank you to the departments for coming. As you can tell, we probably still had questions that we weren't able to ask. Perhaps we will have you back again sometime.

We're going to suspend for about 15 seconds to let our guests exit their seats and allow our new guests take their seats. We'll begin very shortly.

One other thing, committee, is that because we're having steering committee tomorrow, unless anyone has anything for committee business today, we will omit committee business today.

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** That sounds good. We'll have steering committee tomorrow. That gives our next guests a little more time.

• (1630)

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

• (1630)

**The Chair:** Welcome back, everyone. We're going to move right into the second hour of our study.

Our first guest is Denis Tougas, the director of programs for Africa. We also have today, from Development and Peace, Serge Blais, program officer, Africa International Program Services; and from Alternatives Canada, Michel Lambert, executive director.

We welcome you here. We apologize for the confusion of some guests leaving and you coming.

As you've already heard—I notice that you were sitting through most of their presentations—we're really beginning today our study on the Great Lakes region in Africa. We are beginning today to also recognize that it is a key element of Canada's foreign policy.

We certainly welcome the three of you to the first part of this study. We look forward to your comments. If you each have an opening statement, we'll probably only have one round, but we look

forward to that. We would ask you to keep it under 10 minutes, if possible.

We'll start with Mr. Tougas.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Tougas (Director of Programs for Africa, Great Lakes Region of Africa Issue Table (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda), Entraide Missionnaire inc.):** Thank you. I will make some brief general remarks.

First of all, I can only emphasize the importance of the standing committee's study on the Congo. I assume that you are already aware of the importance of the DRC, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Canadian policy. We are very happy to be here.

There are good reasons to study Canadian policy as it pertains to the Congo. I came in late, unfortunately, and so I did not hear the presentations made by your guests from the Department of Foreign Affairs and CIDA. As far as we are concerned, on the civil society side, we note and deplore Canada's loss of interest in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and we don't understand it. We deplore it and feel the situation must be rectified.

If I may, I am going to go back in time a little to make some comparisons, but very briefly, without giving any history lessons. In recent years, for 10 years, Canadian policy has focused on building sustainable peace and dialogue with other partners. That is because Congo is very important for stability in the region, but also because Congo plays a major role in rebuilding and kick-starting economic development in the continent.

Despite that, we seem to be seeing, and I reiterate, a loss of interest by Canada. One might think that since the last election, stability and peace have returned to the region and to the Congo, especially since the agreements, the Rwanda and Congo joint peacekeeping mission in North Kivu to combat the FDLR. On the ground, we are hearing that is not really the case. We hope that is the case, but we cannot say that peacekeeping and sustainable peace are there to stay.

There have been significant improvements over a large part of the territory, but I remind you that in one of the five territories of the province of North Kivu, 100,000 people have been displaced over the past month. Those numbers may seem negligible for the Congo, because there is always a tendency to exaggerate, the problems are so enormous, but that is the case.

I want to take a step back to point out how Canada's involvement has been consistent and regular. May I remind you that in 1996, Canada launched a military and humanitarian mission to mitigate the crises: the humanitarian crisis and the security crisis in the Rwandan Hutu refugee camps in eastern Congo. That was a Canadian initiative. I won't go back over that mission, which was doomed to fail, and we could see why. Today, Canada's involvement in MONUC is limited to a military contribution of some eight or nine officers. In that regard, the contribution is somewhat lacking.

Since the signing of the Lusaka peace accord in 1999, Canada has been quick to provide political and financial support for the work of Botswana's former President Ketumile Masire, the facilitator organizing the inter-Congolese dialogue. Canada provided that support until the conclusion of the inter-Congolese dialogue, which led to the creation of a transitional government. That was up until 2003. From 2003 to 2007, at the invitation of other influential foreign countries involved in the Congo, Canada participated in the Comité international d'accompagnement de la transition (Congolese transition support committee), which existed to closely support the government. At the same time, Canada became massively involved with the Netherlands as a coordinator of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, from 2003 to 2006. In 1998, Canada appointed a special envoy who had the status of an ambassador.

• (1635)

In July 2008 that position was abolished, and since then, Canada's diplomatic position in the Congo has been unclear. What remains at present is an ambassador-at-large position, as it is called, or an advisory position that is now linked to Central Africa, with considerably less power, of course. That led to a considerable loss in terms of understanding of broad political issues in the region, what is happening, and knowledge of political players, which we had during that period.

I will conclude by saying that one of the reasons why we don't understand Canada's loss of interest is that Canada, as you know, has become a mining superpower on the African continent. That is how statistics from Natural Resources Canada present the situation. Thirty-three to thirty-four per cent of all investments in mining on the African continent come from Toronto, Canada. The only other country that invests as much—a little bit more—is South Africa, but it is investing in its own country. I will give you an example, and I am talking about the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2001, Canadian assets were worth \$340 million. In 2007, Canadian assets in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were \$2.6 billion, or eight times higher. In the Congo, Canada is the leader in mining. When we introduce ourselves, when we travel around now, people who do not know us and who learn that we are Canadian ask us if we work in mining.

Of course these investments come from agreements signed during rather troubled times. The contracts signed by Canadian companies—there are now about a dozen—were signed during the transition period, at a time when the government or the authorities were dealing either with people from Kinshasa or rebel groups. That is why the legitimacy of these contracts leaves a lot to be desired, and has resulted in the Congolese questioning, and lumping together all of these contracts saying that these contracts are leonine ones which have clearly lost some legitimacy, as I was saying.

There have been several reports, three, including a United Nations report by the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which singled out nine Canadian companies from among the 90 foreign companies involved for having violated OECD guiding principles. The United Nations Security Council did not want to take further action. But the Congolese government did. The Congolese government set up two commissions of inquiry. The Lutundula Commission, during the transitional period, raised the

rather dubious aspects of most of these contracts. The report was never debated in the Congolese parliament. However, Mr. Kabila's new government, which was formally elected, set up a commission for negotiation, a commission of inquiry, on 60 mining contracts including eight or nine Canadian contracts. None of the 60 contracts were spared criticism, but on the list of contracts to be rejected completely were four from Canadian companies. The renegotiation process is underway, at present, and there seem to be some problems. Arrangements have been made for the majority of contracts. Among the last six contracts, where companies are slow to reach an agreement, are four Canadian companies.

I will conclude by saying this: Last year was a record year on the stock exchange. Mining securities hit unprecedented highs. What was the benefit in the Congo for the people of the Congo? Nothing. There were very few benefits for the Government of the Congo.

• (1640)

So for the Congolese whom we meet with regularly, life in the mining zones depends on foreign markets, the Toronto or the London stock exchange. As a result, during the period I mentioned a little earlier, Canada was seen as a middle power but an effective one. At present, Canada is part of the problem.

Thank you.

• (1645)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll move to the next one.

Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Blais (Program Officer, Africa, International Program Services, Development and Peace):** Good afternoon. My name is Serge Blais. For the past 17 years, I have been working for a Canadian organization called Development and Peace. Since the early 1980s, I have also been working with African and Canadian civil society organizations. I salute this initiative and, with our African partners, we feel that it is time to ask questions about Canadian foreign policy and Canadian cooperative policy in Africa. As someone who has regularly visited Africa for the past 30 years, I see that the situation throughout the continent is now worse than it was 30 years ago, in terms of development, security and the humanitarian situation. We are talking in particular about Central Africa, since we will be using the Democratic Republic of Congo as our reference point.

Living conditions are getting worse. Infrastructure has become large-scale ruins and we can question Canadian diplomatic policy, in my opinion. When we meet with our civil society partners from Central Africa, these questions get asked.

Today, massacres occurred in North Kivu. There were some yesterday. For the past week there has been an increase in the number of people killed in North Kivu. Rebels were pushed out of North Kivu about a month or a month and a half ago, but they have regrouped and built new headquarters in South Kivu.

Canada had applauded the agreement between the Congolese and the Rwandan armies which was presented as a solution to the problems being caused by the rebels, who are creating insecurity, terrorizing the populations, raping women and trafficking in natural resources.

Once again, we feel that this is a short-term approach, a sort of half measure, like all of the solutions that Canada has supported with regard to resolving the problems in Africa. I don't want to go back too far in time, but with regard to Central Africa, we can all look to what happened in Rwanda.

[English]

**The Chair:** Dagmar, we're missing some translation.

Okay. We found the technical difficulty. It was the wrong button.

Continue, Mr. Blais, from your last sentence or so. I'm sure you know exactly where you were.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Blais:** As a Canadian civil society organization in discussion with African civil society organizations, particularly civil society in Central Africa, we are asking questions about Canadian foreign policy which, like that of a number of wealthy countries, is promoting half measures to resolve deep-rooted problems. If we look at Central Africa, we should realize that this series of half measures that we have supported since 1994 has resolved nothing. At present, people are being killed and raped, houses are being burned and villages are being emptied, after having subscribed to the belief that support for a joint initiative between the Rwandan army and the Congolese army would be a solution.

We know that combatants are responsible for the massacres, and Canada, like the entire international diplomatic community, supports initiatives that seek to integrate rebels who are responsible for killings and rapes within the Congolese army. We then see that the Congolese army is unable to resolve the problems caused by the rebels.

We supported a joint initiative with an army that supported other rebel groups. So, each time we appeal to the international community, for example to reinforce the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Congo and to ensure increased participation by wealthy nations, we wind up with a short-term solution being passed off as a local solution.

Denis talked about initiatives that Canada took in 1996. Following the disaster in Rwanda, more than one million refugees wound up in the Kivu regions. At the time, the Canadian government initiated a peacekeeping mission. It claimed that there was a local solution that would enable the problem to be resolved. This local solution was supporting the Rwandan army when it bombed refugee camps to force some of the refugees to go back home and when it pursued those refugees throughout the Congo. In fact, this destabilization continues in the Congo and has led to five million deaths and left the country in ruins.

So something that was presented as a local African solution—in fact a less costly solution for the wealthy nations—could not have turned out worse. For example, when we engaged in the inter-Congolese dialogue, we supported the inclusion of the various rebel

groups within a national unity government. So, people who are criminals can become ministers, can share the power and not adopt policies on good governance or policies to fight impunity, to the extent that no progress is made.

Now, integrating the rebels within an army is being proposed, only to then see how powerless this army is in resolving the problem. Then we are told that this is a failing state. We believe that it is essential to reflect on these policies and on the refusal of wealthy nations to make a clear and effective commitment to peacekeeping missions in Africa.

After Rwanda, everyone said that peace missions in Africa were under-equipped, too small and underfinanced. Denis said that there are no more than five or six Canadian soldiers taking part in the largest peacekeeping mission on the planet. In fact, all western nations together, out of 18,000 troops, have provided no more than some 100-odd soldiers over the years.

• (1650)

Generally, when the situation on the ground becomes truly troubling, when there are problems, the troops there will hole up in their barracks. Canada and wealthy nations are paying, but they are refusing to get involved. Consequently, we wind up with peacekeeping missions on that continent which are quite ineffective. Afterward, local governments are blamed.

I would like to reiterate the request made by representatives of civil society organizations and churches in Ottawa to members of Parliament and the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Canada, which is for the Canadian government to more actively take part in this peacekeeping mission involving a large part of Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo shares a border with nine countries and has vast resources. A destabilized and weak Congo has negative consequences for a large part of Africa.

I would also like questions to be asked about Canada's policy on cooperation in that region. The Democratic Republic of Congo is a country that shares one of our languages and it is the largest member nation of the francophonie. It has immense resources in which Canada has interests or, at the very least, expertise, and could contribute to development both there and here. I am referring to mines, forests, energy, electricity and transportation. I would note that this region is experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War. Yet, since the mid-1980s, not one single Canadian minister has set foot in that country.

With regard to the envelope for cooperation, we salute the fact that, after about a decade of attempts, a program framework for Canadian cooperation has been developed and adopted. We feel that this is important. Last year, the regular program envelope, excluding humanitarian aid, for the Democratic Republic of Congo was lower than it had been during the years under Mr. Mobutu. Despite the fact that we're talking about a country that has a key role to play, and despite the fact that it has been stated that we need to double Canada's aid to Africa, the envelope was lower in 2008 than during the 1980s.

• (1655)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Monsieur Blais.

We'll now move to Michel Lambert.

[Translation]

**Mr. Michel Lambert (Executive Director, Alternatives Canada):** Thank you.

Going last is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Many people have already said the things that I had wanted to speak about, but I fully agree with them. If I may, since I agree with what my colleagues have said, I will continue on from where Serge left off. Perhaps he would have gone on, had he had more time.

CIDA's current cooperation framework was put in place, and we are extremely pleased with it. We hope that it will have a significant impact in the areas of health, governance and women's rights, which we talked a lot about during the previous meeting when we arrived a little late.

This is not just about the Congo; it's a much broader issue. However, since I have but few opportunities to appear before you, this is the time to say it. In some way, this code of cooperation excludes players with important political knowledge about the Democratic Republic of Congo. We can talk about the Congolese civil society, which plays an extremely minor role in the implementation of Canadian initiatives and, of course, Canadian civil society.

I really feel it is important to mention this, since Canadian civil society organizations—mine, that of my colleagues and many others—have not been involved in implementing the choices that Canadian cooperants have made recently with regard to implementing programs such as Alesse, in the context of women's rights. Instead they have chosen to turn to multilateral organizations under the UN, which are clearly quite efficient in some ways, but which have at least two small defects. First, they are quite expensive. That little detail is often forgotten. Second, they are not required to report back to the Canadian government. There are few to no Canadian organizations benefiting from this support, from this work. It's important to say this because Canadian civil society organizations, including mine, have been working in the Democratic Republic of Congo for many years now.

There are perhaps several hundred local Congolese partners working on women's issues, who could implement projects. Finally, a project was undertaken that had been supported by another country, fortunately or unfortunately. It concerned the rights of women in Kinshasa and was an opportunity for us to provide information in all the national languages. Thanks to this project, we were able to turn the spotlight on this issue, but unfortunately, Canada has not undertaken the same kind of initiative. In my opinion, this is a significant loss.

That is essentially what I wanted to say.

• (1700)

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

Mr. Patry, you—

[English]

Monsieur Patry, you have five minutes.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** You can say it in French: you have five minutes.

**The Chair:** You have five minutes.

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Bravo!

Thank you very much, Mr. Blais, Mr. Lambert and Mr. Tougas.

The Congo is a huge country, geographically speaking, and the Kivu region is quite far from Kinshasa. I have never been there, but my colleague Mr. Dewar has just returned.

Mr. Tougas, you talked to us about the importance of Canadian mining companies in that region and the difficulties they have at present negotiating with the government, particularly since there are very few benefits for the population and for the government. That is what I understood.

In the DRC, is the fighting limited to the Kivu region or is there fighting elsewhere in the country?

You also said that, starting in 2008, there was no longer a Canadian special envoy in the DRC and that there was only a special advisor for Central Africa. Central Africa is an extremely vast region, so ultimately this means that there is no special envoy or advisor for the DRC as such. It's as simple as that.

Would the appointment of a special advisor ensure better understanding and, then, better ability to find solutions along with other European partners?

Do you think that the African Union is throwing spanners in the works, with regard to northern nations finding solutions for Africa? By the African Union, I mean in particular Libya, headed by Mr. Khadafi whom I mentioned earlier.

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** Thank you.

The fighting is now limited to eastern Congo. We are talking here not only about North Kivu and South Kivu, but also about a large portion of the eastern province, where the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army is hiding out. So the fighting is limited to that region. It is, nonetheless, quite a large region. This is having an impact on nearly the entire population in that region, some four million people. If we include the surrounding regions, we are talking about eight million people. So it is quite significant.

With regard to your second question on resources—

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** Is the issue of mining resources and the fighting connected? We know that there is coltan in that region. Mining companies didn't go to Kivu for nothing. They are there because of the coltan.

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** Yes. You are correct. Canadian companies, I can assure you, are not mixed up in the fighting. As far as I know, only one Canadian company, Banro Corporation, which set up shop in Kivu in 2004, is still doing exploration. It is the source of extremely localized fighting because people are waiting. Exploration work has been underway since 2004 and people wonder when extraction will begin. The answer is as follows: once the company's shares on the stock exchange have sufficiently increased in value. That is my answer.

To the more important question that you asked, as to whether greater diplomatic representation within the country would help the situation, I would answer: of course. I am not in the best position. I told you about an advisor who is here with us. He could talk about this in greater detail, if you want to know more about it. Our opinion is that there has been a decrease. From having met all the ambassadors working throughout the region, I know that they had an excellent knowledge not only of the problems, but also of the players. They were able to talk with each of these players, which, in my opinion, is no longer possible at present.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Mr. Blais, it is your turn.

**Mr. Serge Blais:** I wanted to say that the fighting in the eastern part of the country is having repercussions throughout the entire country. It has a destabilizing effect both politically and in terms of security. As a result, progress or the process of democratization is impeded, for example. In fact, if there is fighting in one part of the country, resources and attention need to be mobilized. All of that has created a climate that is extremely favourable to the signing of unclear contracts. It seems to me then that the persistence of fighting in the eastern part of the country is having repercussions on all of the contracts being signed in the country.

There is something else I wanted to mention, which is Canada's leadership. We feel that there is some slippage. There were perhaps, when the Canadian embassy was re-opened in 1997, a number of initiatives supporting democratization, such as the inter-Congolese dialogue in support of civil society. Canada played a leadership role in that initiative. I think that analysts looking at the reasons why the election was successful think that it was in part due to the work done with Congolese civil society. Canada played a role in that regard. Since the election, Canada has no longer been around to deal with such issues. Since 2006, Canadian cooperation funds often contribute to projects designed by others. Canada is adding something to programs in which it plays no role.

[English]

**The Chair:** *Merci.*

We'll move to Madame Deschamps.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Do we have only five minutes, Mr. Chair? We want to give the witnesses time to speak.

**The Chair:** You have five minutes.

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** I will be very brief, because I'd like to hear from you, Mr. Tougas.

In 2007, you took part in a workshop on the responsibilities of mining companies. In the report that I read, participants said that the voluntary principle was not well-suited to the operational needs of companies. At the end, we see a commitment by the Government of Canada, the embassy, to sponsor workshops on ways to apply the recommendations set out in the report by the National Round Tables Advisory Group.

I don't know whether there was any follow-up to this. I put this question to people from Foreign Affairs and International Trade earlier. I think results were quite mixed. There was, however, a

commitment that came out of it. I would like to know where this is going.

If we look at what is happening at present, we see that the mining companies are being fingered. What we're hearing in our offices from the civil society representatives is that there are serious environmental problems, among other things. We are also hearing that terrible things are being done in violation of human rights.

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** Are you talking about the Congo or about the National Round Table Advisory Group?

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** It was a workshop that was held in 2007 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to talk about the social responsibilities of companies. Your name appeared on the list of participants.

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** Of course.

As far as I know, I will say it again, there are now between eight and nine Canadian companies on site among the biggest. We always remain on the ground with the voluntary commitment of companies to apply their own internal policies on the environment and in other areas.

With regard to individuals who have visited the Congo, the nation has not been able—and is still not able—to assume its responsibilities. I can give you an example. Part of the Department of Mines burnt down. The mining companies built the new building. Just to give you an idea, only two government employees are conducting the feasibility studies of some 100 companies. Do you see what I mean?

Currently, companies are applying their own, self-defined standards on the environment, hiring, local development. In some provinces, such as in Katanga, there is a civil society and provincial administrative officials checking things out, but probably in light of the status quo.

What we have heard about the current situation is that the effects of the financial crisis mean that all companies, except for three, have actually stopped operations by laying off—putting on technical unemployment—large numbers of individuals. That's all. The only answer I can give you, is that, consequently, companies are being left to apply their own standards.

With regard to the Canadian Embassy, based on my experience, it is very vigorously promoting Canadian interests, in keeping with its mandate, I believe. This is problematic in a country that is one of the poorest economically speaking, but also one of the richest in terms of resources. The problem is figuring out what Canada's interests are. Do they take precedence over the interests of the people? Since the review and renegotiation of mining contracts has not yet been completed, it seems that, for the embassy, Canadian interests take precedence over the country's development.

• (1710)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Please be very quick. You have about 30 seconds, Madame Lalonde.



[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** What institutions need to be supported or created in order to introduce democracy? I understand that we are talking about authoritarian regimes.

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** The Congo has a Parliament that works, although with difficulty. During the last parliamentary session various decisions were made including ones on requiring audits of six systems such as mining contracts and crown corporations.

Speaking of institutions, the Parliament works and wants to work. However, we are talking about an African political climate, in a very young democracy. Clearly, there are attempts to curtail this.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Blais.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Blais:** We feel that there can be a combination of supports for various institutions. For example, Mr. Tougas mentioned the Parliament. There are members of Parliament who were elected and who have the confidence of the public. At the same time, it is important to support civil society initiatives, civic education programs, so that the public can play a role. A policy on decentralization is being developed. Public participation is being encouraged. However, it will remain entirely theoretical without a program allowing for the training and education of the public, the establishment of local development committees, support for initiatives on governance, transparency and accountability at the local level.

There are many civil society organizations in that country that are prepared to work and that have already played a role in past progress that was achieved, but which are often forgotten. Mr. Lambert talked about the trend, since the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, to promote harmonization and cooperation by donor countries. However, this means that money is being sent automatically to multilateral agencies, which have difficulty working with civil society organizations.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Lunney.

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, CPC):** Thank you.

I'm trying to reconcile some of the concepts we've been hearing, since this discussion is rather new to me but not to our witnesses.

Mr. Tougas, you were saying that stability and peace has returned to the area, at least compared with the terrible conflicts that were going on a few years ago. Now we're describing regional conflicts on the eastern side of the DRC.

Am I getting it right that the worst destabilization force in the eastern DRC is the LRA, which has come over from Uganda? Or is it other forces? Who is the worst destabilizing force in the eastern part of the DRC?

• (1715)

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** In the eastern province, meaning in North Kivu, you are correct, it is the LRA, the Ugandan rebels who are hiding out in the eastern province and who have taken control of part of that territory. Uganda, along with Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, tried to neutralize these foreign rebel groups. This joint mission was truly a disaster. They did not succeed in weakening this militia. On the contrary, now, it has reached into the Central African Republic. Again today, we are hearing reports saying that they remain active in that area.

Among the destabilizing groups, as you called them, there are still those groups called the *interhamwe*, the FDLR. The Congolese have been very careful to make a distinction between the FDLR, those who want to go back to Rwanda—they have their own demands—and the Rwandan refugees, who are not members of those rebel groups. Unfortunately, when we talk about these *interhamwe*, these FDLR, they get confused with that other group.

There is still that group called the CNDP, which was a group supported by Rwanda and which is now apparently about to integrate with the army. To date, based on reports, they have not yet been disarmed and are not yet part of the army. According to truck drivers who circulate freely in that region, they apparently still control part of the area.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Blais, very quickly.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Blais:** I would like to say a word about the rebels who have been terrorizing, raping and massacring the people for the last 15 years. These are not high tech armies with extraordinary resources. There are leaders who are well organized, but many of them are young people, adolescents who are forcibly conscripted. When we encounter them, we see young people in rags holding kalashnikovs.

I simply wanted to make an analogy with what happened in Sierra Leone in the 1990s. There was a rebel movement over there that controlled part of the territory. This is much like what is happening in Kivu. They completely destabilized the country and controlled an area that has mineral resources. There was a peacekeeping mission some 12,000 to 13,000 strong, which for a country the size of Sierra Leone was significant. For years, this mission was foundering and was ridiculed by the rebels. At one point in time, they kidnapped 500 members of the United Nations force at once. The entire country was subjected to rebel terror. Amputations were carried out. After the seizure of the 500 UN troops, the British government sent over 600 marines. Three months later, there were no more rebels. Elections were organized, and this country was able to embark on the path to peace.

Some claim that if, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, there was a firm will and commitment on the part of the wealthy countries, the problems there could be solved as well. But there is no such will.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Dewar.

• (1720)

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

Thank you to our guests.

It is notable that in the last couple of days, about 60 to 90 people have been killed. As was mentioned, this goes on, this is regular. The sad thing is that this is normalized somehow, because we hear the stats and it gets washed away.

We've talked a little bit with department officials about some of the programs we're funding, and maybe some of the initiatives we should continue to fund, but one of the questions that didn't get asked, and you've touched on it, was on MUNUC. We know that they've been asking desperately for resources. It's a peacekeeping mission that has had the stamp of approval of the Security Council, so it's not a matter of waiting for a plan from the UN, which often is the case, because there is one in place.

First of all, would you agree that we should be supplying troops? When I was over there and talked to some of the *Casques bleus*, and some of the peacekeepers from Ghana and Africa, I asked, first of all, if they had seen any Canadians: "No". Secondly, I asked if they would welcome them: "Yes". We are seen as leaders, still.

Of course, as we go back to 2004, there were problems with the peacekeepers. They were actually abusing civilians, along with some of the others.

So they see us as being able to bring in some professionalism, some management that is needed. Do you agree that we should do that?

Secondly, if we look to corporate social responsibility and we look to Canadian companies, what is your opinion of where the government is going in response to the round table that was recently laid out by the government?

I don't have a preference; any one of you.

[Translation]

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** As far as the Canadian involvement with the MONUC peace mission is concerned, last December we accompanied a delegation of the Congo National Episcopal Conference, brought over here by Development and Peace, which came to plead for more Canadian troops. You are quite right: you may know as well as I do that the Pakistani, Indian or Guatemalan troops that are there are sent by their countries as a contribution to the United Nations and often, for the Guatemalans, they're under orders to take no risks. It is a peace mission.

I would mention operation Arthémis, organized by France in Ituri in 2003. Mitterand convinced the Prime Minister to make a contribution, to participate. Canada provided 60 soldiers and some planes. This strong intervention, with professional soldiers who had a mandate to take certain calculated risks, as a professional army does, managed to solve the problem within the space of five months. Therefore, I would answer yes.

As for your second question, I think that the government's response is a step forward, but if I put myself in the African context, in the Congolese context, it will not change much, it will not solve

the problems. More must be done. I have in mind, in the Congo, at least two, three or four cases where indeed communities or people who were affected by the actions of mining companies did not obtain justice from the Congolese justice system. This is not coming from me, but from Louise Arbour. In one very specific, very particular case, justice was not rendered. This is a case where communities could have gone to speak to a representative, an ombudsman or to someone who could have received and assessed this complaint. There are other cases. One could say it represents some progress, but in my opinion, it will not solve the problems.

[English]

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

We'll go to Mr. Pearson, quickly, and then we'll come back to Mr. Goldring; I missed him last time.

Go ahead.

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

Mr. Blais, you said that Canada has been disappearing since 2006, and Mr. Tougas, you said that Canada is losing interest in that region.

I appreciate that, because that's my sense from speaking with people on the ground as well, but I would like to ask you this. If they want Canada to be involved, what do civil society leaders in these nations want us to be involved in and to re-engage in?

• (1725)

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Blais:** I believe that Canada's contribution to one objective that was appreciated was the support for the process of democratization, the support of civil society organizations to prepare people for the elections, the support of the Independent Electoral Commission. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the process of democratization, there were plans to have local elections after the legislative and presidential elections. In a country without a democratic tradition, people can often learn about democracy at the local level, where they can begin to exercise a certain control over the work of their leaders, to ask for accountability and transparency. The holding of local elections is currently an important issue.

The Independent Electoral Commission of the Democratic Republic of Congo is requesting support from the international community for funding, and within that, Canada could support civil society organizations to help prepare the populations. This could be a short-term objective.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Goldring.

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

This is more of a comment on peacekeeping or the prospect of sending in more military help. My understanding is that we have 11 members of the Canadian Forces there now. We are stretched pretty thin worldwide, so the capacity to do it is one question. Also, in the region of the Sudan I believe there was a specific request that only African soldiers be engaged. At the very outside of this, we are contributing some \$235 million per year for the military aspect of it. I think that would be a substantial enough contribution.

I see we were asked to provide a deputy commander, but we declined because the multiple national rules of engagement make it very difficult to operate, even for a deputy commander. Maybe it was a wise decision not to participate. I'd like you to comment briefly on that.

On the issue of corporate social responsibility, you mentioned Canadian companies. Maybe you can tell us what companies those are specifically. In short, what types of violations do you see them committing?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Denis Tougas:** Certainly, sir.

As far as the involvement of MONUC is concerned, you are right, there are problems in terms of the rules of engagement. That is why, when a top Spanish general was appointed, he resigned. Seeing that his hands were tied and realizing what the rules of engagement were, he stepped down. On this subject, you are correct. However, the amount you mentioned is enormous, and this has been going on for years. You must understand that this could last for many more years. All of the expenses incurred with this kind of organization, with these kinds of rules of engagement, with the available troops, have produced this result, which means that this goes on and on and costs an enormous amount of money.

Canada could always find a niche within MONUC where it could be effective. Whether or not it is in terms of training police, as we mentioned earlier, I believe it is important. Canada did so in Haiti and could very well do it there, given its ability. The problem with the United Nations mission is that no country providing troops is francophone. That poses a major problem, because interpreters must always be used, or, rather than speak, people give commands using hand signals. This always causes friction. This is an advantage Canada could have.

As far as the companies are concerned, if I may, I would suggest having a meeting specifically on that issue. In order to find out what we criticize the companies for, one has only to look at the report of the Congolese commission of inquiry. That will tell you—it is written down there—what the difficulties are with each of these contracts, and I could easily bring you these reports.

● (1730)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're pretty well out of time. If you want to provide answers to any of the questions we've had here today, you may submit them in writing.

We have votes, and at 5:30 we adjourn.

I'd like to thank each you for attending today. We appreciate your attendance here. We look forward to having you back some day. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

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