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## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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EVIDENCE

**Monday, October 19, 2009**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Shawn Murphy**



## Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Shawn Murphy (Charlottetown, Lib.)):** I would like at this time to call the meeting to order and welcome everyone on behalf of the committee, especially the witnesses here today.

This meeting has been called according to the Standing Orders, and we're here to talk about chapter 1, "Gender-Based Analysis", of the spring 2009 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

The committee has before it today a number of witnesses. This is larger than usual. Representing the Office of the Auditor General we have the Auditor General, Sheila Fraser. She is accompanied by Richard Domingue, principal.

From the Treasury Board Secretariat we are very pleased to have Madame Michelle d'Auray, the Secretary of the Treasury Board. And I should point out, colleagues, that I believe this is Ms. d'Auray's first appearance before the public accounts committee. She was recently appointed Secretary of the Treasury Board.

The Treasury Board, on behalf of the executive, and the public accounts committee, on behalf of the legislative branch of government, have very similar—if not the same—objectives, and that is the promotion of good administration and the exposure of bad administration. And certainly on behalf of the committee I want to wish Madame d'Auray all the best in her new role. We look forward to a good working relationship.

Madame d'Auray is accompanied by Catrina Tapley, executive director and gender-based analysis champion.

From the Privy Council Office we're pleased to have Neil Bouwer, assistant secretary to the cabinet, social development policy.

From the Department of Finance, we have Louise Levonian, assistant deputy minister.

Finally, from Status of Women Canada we have Nanci-Jean Waugh, director general, communications and strategic planning directorate, and H el ene Dwyer-Renaud, director, gender-based analysis support services.

Again, welcome to everyone.

I understand we have two opening remarks. I will ask the Auditor General to deliver her remarks right now.

Thank you very much.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser (Auditor General of Canada):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We thank you for this opportunity to meet with the committee today to discuss the chapter on gender-based analysis from our May 2009 report.

As you mentioned, I am accompanied today by Richard Domingue, principal, who is responsible for this audit.

This audit was performed following a request made by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women in April of 2008. It recommended that our office examine the implementation of gender-based analysis in the federal government. The audit objective was to determine whether selected departments were conducting these analyses. It also focused on whether the central agencies were reviewing gender impacts in cabinet documents on policy and program spending initiatives.

The federal government made a commitment in 1995 to implement gender-based analysis, or GBA, throughout its departments and agencies. GBA is an analytical tool that can be used to assess how spending initiatives and policy proposals might differ in their impact on men and on women.

Despite recent efforts to improve GBA practices in some departments and in the central agencies, we found the selected departments had not met the 1995 commitment to analyze gender impacts.

[Translation]

We looked at seven departments whose responsibilities can have an impact on men and women differently. The extent to which they implemented a GBA framework varied greatly. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is clearly a leader—it is the only department we examined that had fully implemented the elements of a sound GBA framework.

The Department of Finance Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and, to a certain extent, Health Canada had implemented many of the key elements of an appropriate GBA framework. We noted that Transport Canada and Veterans Affairs Canada had no GBA framework.

We found that few departments that are performing gender analyses were able to demonstrate that these analyses were used in designing public policy. We considered an analysis to be a GBA if there was evidence of two key factors, namely: if we found documented research on gender impacts, and if we determined that the impacts had been considered in developing policy options.

We reviewed 68 initiatives to verify if GBA had been performed. In only 4 of these initiatives was there evidence that GBA had been integrated in the policy development process. In 30 of them, gender impacts were analyzed, but there was no evidence provided that the analysis was considered in developing public policy options. In 26 initiatives, we could not find any evidence that gender impacts had been considered at all.

• (1535)

[English]

We also found that the selected departments provided limited information to cabinet and Treasury Board on the gender impact of proposals and spending initiatives. In more than half of the memoranda to cabinet and over one third of the submissions to Treasury Board, we found no reference to gender impacts. There was no indication why this information was not reported.

There is no government-wide obligation to undertake GBA, and the government's commitment to implement GBA has not been clearly communicated to departments and agencies. These are key factors that could explain why GBA practices vary greatly among the departments we reviewed, GBA is not regularly performed, and little information on gender impact is reported to cabinet and Treasury Board.

Some officials expressed concerns over the leadership of the central agencies in promoting GBA. We believe that the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Privy Council Office should provide support to Status of Women Canada to help the government meet its 1995 commitments.

In response to a recent report tabled by the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women, the government stated that it was ready to act on our findings and recommendations.

While conducting this audit, we encountered an issue regarding documentation by central agencies. When reviewing policy and budget documents, all three central agencies play a critical challenge role—that is, they ensure that departments and agencies take into account all relevant factors. However, the central agencies could not provide written evidence that they had reviewed and challenged gender impacts of policy proposals or spending initiatives submitted by departments for approval.

[Translation]

In its response to this audit, the government disagreed with our recommendation that central agencies document the challenge function they exercise when reviewing policy proposals or spending initiatives.

I have serious concerns with the lack of appropriate documentation when I am told that evidence of challenges to gender-based analyses exists only in a Cabinet confidence to which I do not have access. This is not acceptable. I believe that it is crucial for central

agencies to maintain documentary evidence of key responsibilities, such as their challenge of proposals and initiatives going forward to Cabinet and Treasury Board.

[English]

Mr. Chair, this concludes my opening statement. We would be pleased to answer any questions the committee members may have.

Thank you.

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

Madame d'Auray.

[Translation]

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray (Secretary of the Treasury Board of Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for welcoming me and for pointing out that this is my very first appearance before the committee in my new capacity of Secretary of the Treasury Board.

It is a pleasure for me to be here along with my colleagues whom you have already named. Therefore, I will spare you any further introductions. I simply want to say that they are individuals who are responsible for developing policy or who represent departments and agencies with such responsibilities, specifically, Status of Women Canada and three central agencies involved in the challenge function.

As Ms. Fraser noted, the federal government first embraced gender-based analysis in 1995 and expressed its commitment to this type of analysis in the publication *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality*. In this document, the government committed to the implementation of gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies. To this end, Status of Women Canada, departments and agencies and the three central agencies each have a role to play. Status of Women Canada works with departments and agencies to help them take into account gender impacts when developing policies and programs. It serves as a Centre of Excellence for GBA, building capacity for such analysis in departments and agencies.

For example, this involves collaborating on pilot projects, as well as developing and delivering training and tools, case studies and other educational materials. Furthermore, in its role as chair of the related interdepartmental committee, Status of Women follows the progress made in implementing commitments on GBA.

●(1540)

[English]

Departments and agencies have the most important role to play in setting the stage for gender equality, as they are ultimately responsible for the application of gender-based analysis and for the inclusion of gender considerations in their policies and programs. It is the responsibility of each department and agency to determine whether a gender-based analysis is necessary and to ensure that a complete and thorough assessment is carried out.

Each of the three central agencies also has a distinct role to play. The Privy Council Office is responsible for ensuring that policy proposals are consistent with the government's priorities. It plays an important challenge function in the government's policy approval process by ensuring that departments and agencies have considered all relevant factors, including gender issues, before proposals are brought forward to cabinet.

Finance Canada develops policies and provides advice to the government with the goal of creating a healthy economy for all Canadians. The department has a twofold role. First, as a central agency, the finance department also performs a challenge role, requiring departments and agencies to consider all relevant factors when developing a policy or program for consideration by cabinet, including gender issues where appropriate. Second, like all other departments, when the Department of Finance develops policies—for example, tax measures—it performs gender-based analysis where appropriate and where data are available.

[Translation]

Our role at TBS is to ensure that the government is well managed, as you mentioned, and accountable, and that resources are allocated to achieve results for Canadians. Once programs are approved by Cabinet, we perform a challenge function on the implementation of these programs.

TBS carries out three roles vis-à-vis GBA: with the challenge function, the development of policy and the analysis of departmental management capacity. With respect to our challenge function, our program analysts help departments develop proposals for consideration by Treasury Board Ministers. In doing so, they perform an important challenge function against a number of criteria. Part of that challenge is to ensure that the department has undertaken GBA in the development of its Treasury Board submission and that the proposal has no unintended gender bias.

Gender-based analysis is included in the *Guide to Preparing Treasury Board Submissions*. The relevant section of the guide includes clear reminders to departments and agencies to ensure their program proposal is GBA compliant, and to report their findings in the TB submission.

With respect to TBS's policy role, it is similar to that of all other departments. TB officials must carry out a GBA before submitting any policies related to our functions to the minister.

As for our third role, we have a responsibility to work with departments to ensure that the tools we use to assess performance and capacity take into account GBA capabilities. We have many tools that we use to carry out this role.

●(1545)

[English]

In conclusion, Mr. Chair, the government is committed to ensuring that gender-based analysis is used through all departments and agencies. As the Auditor General stated in her report, ultimately the responsibility for performing GBA rightly rests with the departments and agencies.

We would be happy, the champions around the table and the responsible representatives from Status of Women Canada, to answer any questions your committee may have at this time concerning the audit report and with regard to the action plan, which we also tabled with the committee last week.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Madame d'Auray.

We'll now start the first round of seven minutes. Mr. Lee.

**Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River, Lib.):** Thank you.

I'll go to the Auditor General first, Mr. Chairman.

Gender-based analysis is the main subject matter, but given that we have the Auditor General and the Treasury Board here, I couldn't help but be a little distracted today. And I want to ask the Auditor General, in her role as Auditor General, if she would be in a position to do an audit for compliance with the Treasury Board's federal identity program with respect to these hundreds of political glamour cheques circulating with Conservative Party logos on them. Is that the kind of thing where you could do an audit of compliance with the Treasury Board's guidelines?

**The Chair:** Hold it there, Mr. Lee. I think I know where you're coming from...

Go ahead, Mr. Saxton.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** I would like to interject with a point of order.

This is not the topic of discussion before us today. Perhaps there is a different location and a different time for the honourable member.

**The Chair:** Mr. Lee, I'm inclined to agree with Mr. Saxton. I think we have enough work to keep us going for two hours on this report.

There's always a little leeway, Mr. Lee, but I'd like you to try as best as possible to stick to the report, within reason.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Saxton may make a good point here. It was the subject of discussion in the House earlier, but here we have our own agenda.

I'm actually going to seek unanimous consent in the committee to allow each party today three minutes each to ask questions on this very subject of compliance with Treasury Board guidelines and the federal identity program. That's three minutes for each party.

I'm going to move that right now.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** It's time-sensitive. It's a critical issue.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Yes. This is something the House spent a fair bit of time on today.

I'll seek unanimous consent to move it.

**The Chair:** Does Mr. Lee have unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Chair:** There's not unanimous consent, Mr. Lee.

I'd ask you to go back to chapter 1, "Gender-Based Analysis", from the spring 2009 report of the Auditor General of Canada.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Okay.

Let's get back to this other important issue, then. I was struck by the low take-up, almost insipid take-up, among government departments, at least as revealed by the audit. Four out of 68 is a very weak take-up. It's almost as rare as the redbreasted nuthatch, an endangered species, in the Rouge River back home.

Do you have any sense, Madam Auditor General, of the factors lying behind the weak take-up, the low evidence of subscription, to gender-based analysis across the public service?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Thank you.

As was mentioned, for the 68 initiatives we looked at, in only four cases did we see evidence that the analysis had been integrated into the policy development process. There were, though, about 30, a little less than half, where the analysis had actually been conducted, but we weren't able to see any evidence that the analysis had been put into the policy development process.

There can be, I think, a number of factors for that. One could be simply documentation; we were not able to see it through to a policy development stage. That's a possibility.

As well, as we mentioned, there is no actual policy requiring departments to do gender-based analysis.

We believe as well, as we have recommended, that the guidance to departments should be strengthened and help them to improve this process.

• (1550)

**Mr. Derek Lee:** You must have come across some examples where gender-based analysis was not needed. I mean, it's possible in some cases that it's just obvious to everyone that you don't need to do a gender analysis.

How often would that pop up? I don't need you to put a statistic on it, but conceptually, would you agree that perhaps in most public policy issues, gender-based analysis is appropriate, but there would be some component of policy-making where it needn't occur?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** In the analysis we did of the 68 initiatives, we saw eight cases where there was a rationale provided as to why it had not been done. I would expect, you're right, that there would probably be more than eight cases. But in 26 cases, there was no evidence that it had been considered at all, even to exclude it as being not relevant.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** In the government reply to your report, the government said it was too difficult—I'm paraphrasing—to document the challenge function. My reaction to this is that it might be difficult, but in the absence of documentation, how will we ever get a record of how we're doing?

Would you agree with the way I put that question?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Yes, I would.

Chair, we were told that the evidence of the challenge function was only in advice to ministers, or cabinet confidences, which we do not see, nor do we request to see. We certainly would have expected to have seen some evidence, even e-mails, of a challenge function going back: Have you thought about this? Have you done this? Why haven't you done that?

I find it very surprising that there was nothing in writing. We are being told that because of time pressures, this was all done orally. I must admit that I'm finding that surprising. I would have thought that there would have been at least, as a minimum, a notation to a file somewhere that this had been conducted. If it was never recorded anywhere, then how would supervisors know if those questions had ever been asked?

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Okay. Yes, if it's important enough for the government to make a formal commitment to embrace GBA, it surely must be important enough to record the components of the process, particularly inside the cabinet policy-making and the Treasury Board policy-advising function.

Do you have any suggestions? Maybe this is more of a Treasury Board...no, this is for the Auditor General. Well, okay, it can go to Treasury Board, but if I wanted to put a little WD-40 into this—

**The Chair:** Mr. Lee, your time is up, so I'm just going to ask you to come to your question and then we'll move on.

**Mr. Derek Lee:** If I wanted to spike this process, where would I put my money? Where would I spend my administrative dollars to make sure that GBA took hold, that we gave birth to a real living thing?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Well, as we mention in our recommendations, we obviously think that more can be done to give guidance and to clarify expectations of departments. That has largely been the role of Status of Women Canada until now, but we are saying it's also very important that they get the support of the central agencies to make sure that the departments are doing this.

Even when we mentioned the submissions to Treasury Board or to cabinet, half of the ones to cabinet had no mention of this, and yet they're supposed to be doing it. There perhaps needs to be a little more challenge, more clarification to departments on what should be done. When we see certain departments—we mentioned Transport and Veterans Affairs—which have very few or none of the components of the system that we would expect, there obviously has to be more monitoring of those departments as well.

• (1555)

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

Madame Faille.

[Translation]

**Ms. Meili Faille (Vaudreuil-Soulanges, BQ):** Thank you.

I have a question for Ms. Fraser.

Can you tell us if there are any indications within the various departments that GBA analyses are currently being performed on recently implemented programs?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** I can tell you that according to a table that we have drawn up, of the 68 initiatives, thirty or so analyses have been performed.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** And has anything been done recently in connection with the new programs implemented in recent years, that is in 2009-2010?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** The initiatives selected were announced in the 2007-2008 budget, or in the 2007 economic statement. In other words, these are programs that were recently implemented.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** However, there has been no indication from the follow-ups that you are now doing that these analyses have been performed. Is that correct?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** This is not something that we looked into.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Perhaps Ms. Auray from the Treasury Board could answer that question.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** In some cases, to reiterate what Ms. Fraser said, analyses have indeed been performed. With respect to the challenge function, discussions have taken place.

Perhaps my colleague from the Department of Finance would care to respond.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** First, however, I have a quick question.

Do you currently keep a record of the exchanges that you have with officials from the various departments?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** No, because the challenge function involves verbal exchanges. In addition, when we respond to the report of the Auditor General, Ms. Fraser, rarely do we not agree with her recommendations. We do not want to find ourselves in this situation too often.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Could it be because there is no legislative framework or no legislation similar to the Official Languages Act in place? Would gender equality legislation resolve the problem? If legislation of this nature was in place, would you be obligated to manage the situation with the help of an information system?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Not necessarily, insofar as the challenge function is concerned, because this is a verbal function. Analysts from the Privy Council Office as well as from the Treasury Board Secretariat ask verbal questions and interact verbally with their colleagues from various departments.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Has a gender analysis been done of the budget? Having served in the House since 2004, I know it's a question that comes up every year. I heard the question each time I sat on the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Will a gender-based analysis be done of this year's budget?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I will ask my colleague from the Department of Finance to answer that question.

**Mrs. Louise Levonian (Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Finance):** The Department of Finance does a gender-based analysis for each component of the budget. The information is passed along to the department and is taken into account by the minister in the decision-making process. The Department of Finance has an excellent record on GBA.

In addition, Ms. Fraser audited our department and found that it satisfied all of the criteria, with one exception. GBA has been implemented very well at the Department of Finance and we have their assurances that a gender-based analysis will be performed on each budget component.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Ms. d'Auray, do you produce a report in which you periodically follow up on the performance of the different departments in the area of GBA, and does it have a name?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** We do not produce a report to assess performance in the area of GBA, but we do have a tool with which to evaluate departmental performance. As part of the process of making management accountable, one section looks at the department's capacity to satisfy optimum conditions for TB submissions. We evaluate departments' ability to meet our requirements for TB submissions, with GBA being one such requirement.

• (1600)

**Ms. Meili Faille:** I have one last question. Could you give us an overall idea of how the different departments are doing or where they stand in terms of incorporating GBA into their policies?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** If you don't mind, I will get back to you with a report on that matter. Perhaps we may be able to tell you the extent to which the departments are satisfying our requirements for TB submissions. This is one component of our management accountability framework.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Could you also identify in your report which departments have a GBA champion and which ones do not yet have one and indicate whether or not they have taken steps to appoint one?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** All right. If it's fine with you, I will also consult with our colleagues from Status of Women Canada who have much of that information.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** I just want to clarify that last request, Madame d'Auray. This is probably going to take a little bit of time, so would that information be available in say two months? I just want to set a time limit.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I think if you give us three months we'd be able to comply with that, to look at the components of champions and the extent to which departments are fulfilling their Treasury Board submission requirements.

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

Next is Mr. Christopherson, for seven minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre, NDP):** Thank you very much, Chair, and thank you all for your attendance today.

I'm pleased to be joined by my colleague, Irene Mathysen, who is our critic for women's issues. She will lead our second round of questioning, so welcome to my colleague.

I want to focus in on the strong language contained in the auditor's opening statements. I've been on this committee for quite some time, and I can tell you it's very rare that the auditor uses language that is this severe and unambiguous, deliberately, to state, as she has in paragraph 12: "I have serious concerns with the lack of appropriate documentation...". The next paragraph begins with "This is not acceptable." If it's not acceptable to the Auditor General of Canada, it ought not to be acceptable to this committee.

I'd like to hear a response. I don't think I've heard a direct response from Madame d'Auray to the serious issues the auditor has raised and the way she has raised them, so I want you to revisit that for me, because we can't let this go. We're not going to let this go, so let's have at it.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Thank you.

The central agencies did respond to the recommendation made by the Auditor General in her report. And we still remain of the view that it is the responsibility of sponsoring departments to conduct appropriate gender-based analysis and that the challenge function that lies at the core of the mandate of central agencies is not something we would document. It is something that is done on a day-to-day basis of verbal interaction, informal meetings, and informal discussions. We do it on a wide range of issues. And we do not document.

Where we do find the documentation is in the result, and the result is the advice that we provide to ministers. That advice is not documentation that is made available to the Auditor General.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Madam Fraser, what are your thoughts on what you just heard?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** I must admit we haven't gone in to audit all of how this happens. But I find it quite astonishing that everything is done verbally. Even when we submit submissions to the Treasury Board, there are reams of e-mails that come into the office. So that there are no e-mails that can be made available to us to show that anybody's question of gender-based analysis has even been considered I find astonishing, actually.

As the audit office, we should be able to see documentary evidence that this challenge has occurred. We are not asking to see cabinet confidences of this type. But if it's the only place it exists, which is what we were told, then why can't government extract it and give us the indication that it is happening? Right now we have absolutely no indication, written documentation, that any of these things are being challenged or being reviewed. And as we say in this report, we believe this is a really critical function that is being played by these central agencies to ensure consistency with commitments and policies that are being made, not only on gender-based analysis but also more generally across government.

●(1605)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you.

Madame d'Auray, notwithstanding that we haven't resolved entirely what's happened to date, but on a go-forward basis, are you offering to change this so that there are records in the future, so that another audit down the road could be done properly? Are you acknowledging that verbal is not sufficient because it does raise these questions? And will you be changing this so that from here on in there will be a record?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** In terms of the challenge function, we are not proposing to change the way we operate.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** But how is anybody supposed to check whether it's done or not, Madame?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** What we are proposing to do is work with departments and agencies to strengthen their capacity and to strengthen the documentation they put into their own analysis to demonstrate they have taken those issues into account.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** I'm sorry, I don't mean to be abrupt or rude, but we're short on time.

You can appreciate this doesn't allow anyone to check whether it is being done. We are a committee of accountability. Everything is supposed to be accountable. If this is serious to the government, then it would seem to me, even if you want to avoid a difference of opinion on what's happened up until now, that moving forward, there ought to be a commitment. I'm just shocked.

I'd like to know what Status of Women Canada thinks about this being continued on a verbal basis with no ability to check whether it's really being done. I want Status of Women to respond, please. How do you feel about this? You're supposed to be the advocates on this file.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud (Director, Gender-Based Analysis Support Services, Status of Women Canada):** I need to think. It's obvious that right now, with the support we are having from the central agencies, things are moving in the right direction, as we've never had it before. The challenge function is obviously something that could be added in the realm of accountability, and it would be very useful. But I think we are, as you say, going forward with new ways and means.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** That's fine. Thank you.

I'm hearing from the lead agency that they think it would be a good idea. But I'm back to you, Madame d'Auray.



The Auditor General thinks something needs to be done. I think you'll find that the majority of us, if we don't get partisan, would agree this needs to be done. The Status of Women, the advocate agency, thinks so. You seem to be the only one who doesn't think this is important. I just don't understand why, if a challenge process is important, there isn't at least some kind of record. There's nothing. It's all verbal. And isn't it easy when it's verbal to say yes, we did it? How can that be checked?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** If I may, there are two aspects to this. One of them is in fact that departments and agencies should demonstrate that they have taken these issues into account. And we do take the point, as the Auditor General has indicated, that we have to do more and better work on that front.

Ultimately, it is the policies and the programs that are developed by the departments and agencies. It's not the central agencies that do that. It really is the departments and agencies—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** You had the responsibility to perform the challenge duty.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Yes, but the documentation around whether or not departments have taken that into account should actually be coming from the department—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Absolutely, but that's step one. Step two is the challenge process, and you won't commit to doing it in writing.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Step two, if you'll allow me, is in fact—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** If you'll answer my question, I'll let you.

**The Chair:** Please let the witness answer the question.

Your time is up, David, so we'll let the witness answer the question.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Step two is in terms of the advice that we give to ministers, and that is included. It is documented, but it is not, as the Auditor General has indicated, provided to the Auditor General.

That said, we also see the results in the policies and programs themselves, and I think that ultimately, at the end of the day, that is really where we should be looking to see whether the policies and programs are creating the opportunities and addressing the issues as they should.

• (1610)

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

Go ahead, Mr. Saxton, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton (North Vancouver, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First of all, I'd like to welcome the Auditor General back to the committee, and I'd like to welcome everybody else to the committee, with a special welcome to Madame d'Auray on the occasion of her first time before the committee in her new position.

My first question is for the Auditor General. A previous government committed to GBA back in 1995, but not much of anything was done until 2005. That is almost a full ten years. Can you explain why nothing happened during those ten years?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Mr. Chair, our audit did not go back to look at a retrospective of the progress over ten years. We mention, in the cases of some departments, that some work had been done after the commitment of 1995, and then it seemed to taper off. I would note, though, for the committee that one major event that occurred was the creation of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women in 2004, which has obviously given a lot of impetus to some of these issues.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

My next question is for the secretary. When did gender-based analysis become a compulsory component of Treasury Board submissions and memos to cabinet?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** In terms of the Treasury Board Secretariat, I believe that the first time we put it into our guide to submissions was in 2007. In fact, it has been quite clearly prescribed as a component of Treasury Board submissions that departments have to fulfill.

With regard to the Privy Council Office, I would turn to my colleague, Mr. Bouwer, to respond to that.

**Mr. Neil Bouwer (Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Social Development Policy, Privy Council Office):** Thank you.

I'll have to check on the date for you, sir. We have required that for a couple of years as part of the memorandum-to-cabinet template. We have advised departments that gender issues should be incorporated where appropriate and, as has been mentioned by the witnesses already, we play an ongoing challenge function role: we ask departments how they are doing that and we look on a case-by-case basis at how it is being done.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

I will come back to the secretary. Was there a process in place to monitor the implementation of GBA prior to 2007?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I'd have to defer to my colleagues to determine whether there was a specific process, but I think the issues around gender-based analysis have been incorporated more informally; it was not until we actually issued a revised guide that it was specifically written up as a requirement for submissions per se. It has been a part of the management accountability framework, which I referred to in my opening remarks, as one of the elements that is required in our assessment of whether a department measures up to the quality of Treasury Board submissions per se.

I would turn to Ms. Tapley to see if I have missed anything on this issue.

**Ms. Catrina Tapley (Executive Director and Gender-Based Analysis Champion, International Affairs, Security and Justice Sector, Treasury Board Secretariat):** No, that is a fairly complete response, but I will add on the management accountability framework that we are now into round 7 of the framework, and this particular area of management is one of 19. On this we've evolved, and we've become more specific around this as well in terms of what we consider to be a quality Treasury Board submission. We look at a number of lenses—economic, fiscal, official languages, environmental—and they include gender.

As the secretary has indicated, since 2007 we've been very explicit in the guide on the need for gender-based analysis to be conducted in all Treasury Board submissions. Prior to that, gender was certainly a consideration, but we've been much more specific since 2007 about what is required and what we expect.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

My next question is for the Auditor General. Madam Fraser, can you give us an example in which of the implementation of GBA resulted in a positive outcome for women that would not have happened had the GBA not been implemented?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Mr. Chair, I think that question would better go to either Status of Women or the Treasury Board. We didn't look specifically at outcomes. We only looked to see if the analysis had been done and had been considered in the policy development process.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Okay. Perhaps Status of Women has an example.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Yes.

We know, for example, that the Canadian experience class category that came out from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration did do a good GBA and looked at the impacts of some of the things they were considering originally. With this new category that came out, by looking at some of the impacts, at things like full-time continuous work, for example, they saw that it might have a negative impact in terms of the labour market patterns of women. They changed that requirement. Now it's much more open in terms of women and looking at part-time work.

I have another couple of examples. I don't know if you'd like to hear more.

• (1615)

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Please carry on.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** You obviously know about the matrimonial property legislation coming out from the Department of Indian Affairs. There, an extensive GBA was done in terms of the impact it would have on women. Obviously that legislation in particular will help women, even in looking at situations of being able to flee violent situations. In how this legislation was developed, we used GBA quite extensively.

The examples that come forward all depend on the implementation of the frameworks and the practice of the analysis in departments. When you have leaders, you obviously generate good examples, so we have Indian Affairs and Citizenship and Immigration. In part, you have other areas. For example, Health Canada is very strong on the research side.

Actually, I brought GBA kits for members. In each kit is a very good example on cardiovascular disease and how Health Canada was able to show that the symptoms are different for women. Therefore, program response needs to be different.

We can provide you more examples if you wish.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you very much.

Mr. Chair, how's my time?

**The Chair:** You have 40 seconds.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Okay.

First of all, I want to compliment you on the cardiovascular disease research you've done, because as a director of the board of the Heart and Stroke Foundation, I note that this issue has come up with us as well.

Finally, I'd just like to ask the Auditor General this question. Where does Canada stand internationally on the application of GBA?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** We don't have that information. We didn't do a comparative study.

**Mr. Andrew Saxton:** Thank you.

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

I just want to clarify one issue before we go to the second round. Perhaps I'll deal specifically with the Department of Finance.

My question is to you, Ms. Fraser. From reading the report, am I led to conclude that you're not certain whether you have all relevant documents in the performance of this audit?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** We were not able to verify certain assertions made to us around, for example, the challenge function, because we were told that the only written evidence of that was in the précis, which is considered advice to ministers and which we do not see.

We are not asking to see that, but we would have expected such an important function to have been documented and available to us.

**The Chair:** So the response or the statement you received from the department was that, other than the actual memorandum to the minister, which we all recognize and acknowledge you're not entitled to receive, there were no other e-mails, letters, or anything else they could show you.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Okay. Well, it's surprising to me as chair that the cupboard would be totally bare, that there would be no memos, no letters, or anything.

So perhaps to clarify this issue, what I'm going to do, Ms. Levonian, is ask if you could file with the committee—and I'm going to be very careful in the wording—all documents, including reports, memos, e-mails and letters, related to gender-based reports in relation to budget numbers, other than submissions to cabinet or précis. Could you file those with this committee, please?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** I can actually answer that question now. When the Auditor General did an audit of our department, we did a search of all that information. What we were able to provide, we did provide. Everything that we were not able to provide is a cabinet confidence, and we wouldn't be able to provide it here either. We've provided to the auditor everything that we had that was available.

**The Chair:** So your evidence before the committee.... There are no e-mails and nothing else other than what the auditor was provided.

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** That's correct.

**The Chair:** Do you find that surprising, Ms. Fraser?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Well, Chair, I know that when we do a submission to the Treasury Board Secretariat, correspondence is through e-mails. I could even present one to committee where we had a question on gender-based analysis, so I'm sort of surprised that we would somehow be treated as special and have written e-mails while other departments don't.

But I have no proof, obviously, other than that, so I have to rely upon what has been said, and the process, we are being told, is all verbal.

**The Chair:** Okay.

We'll go to the second round.

Mrs. Crombie, you have five minutes.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie (Mississauga—Streetsville, Lib.):** Welcome, Madam Fraser. It's always nice to see you.

And Madame d'Auray, welcome to our committee.

I want to thank the Auditor General for conducting this review. Obviously, it's very important subject matter for all women—all people, in fact. I have to say that I was also extremely disappointed with the findings. I especially realized how little is being done with gender-based analysis. To me it seemed like there was a real lack of commitment on the part of the government. We've seen some departments, like HRSDC and Justice, that were role models. Justice, in fact, pioneered the GBA. Both have now stopped performing them.

As I read the chapter I had difficulty believing that the government is committed to continuing to perform GBA. I think there is a lack of political will. Political will is missing. Despite the good intentions, we still have a really long way to go. And we know that, because there's lots of evidence that has been documented in the chapter, and today in our discussions. There's no government-wide policy requiring departments and agencies to perform GBA. Even in those departments that are doing it, there's little evidence suggesting it goes into the analysis, that it's being used to design public policy. We have some evidence to the contrary, which I'm going to table shortly. Of the 68 initiatives, only four showed the GBA was integrated into the policy development process. We can go on and on.

Mr. Bouwer said earlier that we incorporate GBA where appropriate. Where isn't it appropriate? And it's done informally and verbally.

I want to know if the government is committed to this process, and I'd like to hear from each of the agencies.

• (1620)

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I can start, if I may.

Yes, the government is committed to the process. Yes, we have made some strides. We have, in some instances, been quite specific as to what we require departments to provide to us. From a Treasury Board Secretariat perspective, we have also spent quite a bit of time and effort training our folks to actually understand, because part of that is not just what other departments do, but also what we do as a central agency to train our own analysts, look at our own policies, and make sure that we have the right components in place so that we can assess and play that challenge function appropriately. As the Auditor General noted, over time some initiatives were taken in some departments and were incorporated in some of their ongoing activities.

We have started, again, to engage departments directly on this issue. We have started meeting with their management teams. There is a cyclical aspect to this.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Granted. You know, I'm afraid we're going to run out of time, so I'm going to try to get in a few more questions.

Ultimately, who's responsibility is it to ensure the implementation of gender-based analysis? What is the role of the minister? Is she committed, and ultimately, does she push it on cabinet to perform GBA on every other policy and legislative matter? Have we asked her why it isn't being done in certain circumstances across all departments?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** In terms of the obligation, it rests with each institution, with each deputy head. The accountabilities rest with each of the departments and agencies to fulfill the obligation for gender-based analysis. So it really is with each organization to take that on and to fulfill those obligations.

The policy organizations—Status of Women, as well as the central agencies—each play a set of roles and responsibilities in relation to that. But ultimately it is up to each organization, each department and agency, to fulfill that obligation.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** I need to get one more quick question in, because I know I'm out of time.

What if there are negative impacts? I know Mr. Saxton talked about positive impacts. What if a GBA has been done, or in many cases hasn't been done, and we find that there are negative impacts on women? I'd like to highlight the legislation that eliminated pay equity for women in the public service. What recourse is there when there are definitely negative impacts? Can the decision be amended?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** With regard to the equitable compensation act, our analysis would show that by integrating discussions around equitable compensation within the collective bargaining sphere it actually integrates the gender-based analysis into the collective bargaining process, as opposed to leaving it entirely outside the process and having to play catch-up with it. We have also found that in a number of instances these issues were dealt with over a 15-year timeframe, as opposed to being dealt with where it should be dealt with, which is within the collective bargaining process.

• (1625)

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

Mr. Kramp, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp (Prince Edward—Hastings, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will actually agree with my colleague across the floor, Ms. Crombie, on part of her statement, when she mentioned that there really was a lack of political will. I arrived here in 2004. I believe it was in 1995 that the commitment was made for a federal plan for gender equality, and I can recall sitting in the public accounts committee in 2004 and literally nothing had been accomplished or created. That was shameful, so I think the record does deserve to be set straight there now.

I would also state that, of course, there has been some activity. Is it fast enough? Is it strong enough? Is it acceptable enough? That's what I think we all have to debate here. But I would note that, in 2005, the previous government finally moved and the Department of Finance tried to implement an analysis. In 2006, our government granted access for the first time to advice to cabinet documents to the Auditor General so we could start to bring some light on this. In 2007, Treasury Board Secretariat guidelines were changed to incorporate, finally, gender-based analysis. In 2008, our government took action to ensure that all this memoranda went to cabinet, including gender-based analysis.

My concern is that it's going there, but then what happens there? This is my question for Madame d'Auray.

You stated earlier that the responsibility for this rests with departments and agencies. But where in the political process are we involved? Either with either parliamentary committees or with ministers or deputy ministers, where's the ball now?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** It rests first and foremost with the deputy head, the deputy minister. The deputy minister is accountable for ensuring that analysis, for ensuring that policy development incorporates program development, incorporates a range of factors, including gender-based analysis. Therefore, the secondary impact is that when a new development or a new proposal is brought forward, it is then brought to the Privy Council Office and that analysis is done.

Perhaps I could turn to my colleague Mr. Boucher to explain how that then gets incorporated within the cabinet and the ministerial component.

**Mr. Neil Boucher:** I would just add that the Privy Council Office, as the secretariat to cabinet, looks at proposals when they are still in development—that is, at the policy research stage—making sure that

data is brought forward and the analysis is being done. We ask challenge questions.

As is being discussed, this is a very informal process, and I understand the questions that are being asked about why that isn't formalized. I understand the questions that are coming from the Auditor General, although I should say that you're shining a light here on a very informal, small part of the process.

In the main, good policy advice comes out of departments. That's where the accountability lies and that's where the good ideas come from. It is ministers, ultimately, that bring forward proposals to cabinet for discussion in cabinet committee and by full cabinet, and for decision. So they manifest themselves at all stages of that process: at the cabinet table, in the lead-up to that and the challenge function, but also in the development and documentation proposals. That would hold true for the Treasury Board as well as for cabinet committees and full cabinet.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Thank you.

If I might just comment briefly on that, in concert with the thoughts of the chair and certainly Mr. Christopherson, I think we are a committee of accountability. Verbalization of literally anything really makes it very, very difficult to have a trail of accountability. As such, I would certainly hope that as we move forward the various respective authorities understand that reality and adjust their thinking to that reality. I have no idea, of course, what the will of this committee will be with regard to recommendations, but at some particular point I would hope that this would be factored into a solution so that we can be confident and assured that what we see is what we get all the way through and there's no slipping of facts or motives either one way or the other, for the government or against the government, on this. We need the facts. That's what we need all the way through.

Madame d'Auray, thank you so kindly for helping clear this up. If we have a grey area, that's what we have to have established so that we have a work process, something we can plan on now.

Do I have time for one more quick question?

• (1630)

**The Chair:** You're out of time, Mr. Kramp.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** Okay, thank you.

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

Madame Faille, five minutes.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Thank you.

What bothers me a great deal at this point in time is that departments and agencies are being asked to perform gender analyses, although this remains a voluntary function. All of this leads me to ask a question about another matter considered by this committee, namely the computer systems profitability studies that are a requirement of Cabinet submissions. If these profitability studies are not carried out, how can we expect departments to do gender analyses on a voluntary basis?

How can we expect that to happen if there is no way of verifying information, if there is no information system in place and if there is no formal tool for documenting results?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** There are two parts to your question. Firstly, as to whether departments document their own achievements in this area and can prove that they have done their own analyses, we agree—and we have discussed this with the Auditor General—that we must step up our efforts to work with the departments to ensure that gender analyses are performed.

As for the transparency of the discussions resulting in a notice or advice to the minister, there is a tie in here with a comment made earlier by Mr. Kramp. There are limits to what transparency can provide. Our advice to the minister is ultimately reflected in the decision he makes. The question of confidence remains and the result is the policy, program or initiative that flows from this process. The results will ultimately dictate whether or not the decision was the right one. But ultimately, the decision rests with the ministers.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** So then, given your approach, what benchmark do you use to gauge the effectiveness of policies and programs?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** The effectiveness of programs and policies is measured against the objectives initially stated and the results achieved. Objectives and outcomes are identified in the accountability framework associated with each program, policy or initiative.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** The various departmental components will each experience a different kind of pressure. The results will be uneven.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** The aim of each separate program or activity is very different. What matters is to ensure that GBA is taken into account in the policy formulation process.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** In your presentation you alluded to the year 2005. We were in this very room when Finance department officials refused to carry out gender-based analyses. I am happy to hear you say that the department is now on board with GBA. However, I want to know how the outcomes are made public.

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** GBA results are not made public. Ultimately, we provide advice to the minister. The results cannot be made public. Measures implemented ultimately become public knowledge.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** I once worked for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. GBA has been mandatory for the department since 2002. Prior to then, studies were carried out on a voluntary basis.

How would you rate the efforts of the Department of Finance?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** What exactly do you mean? Are you asking if the department does gender-based analyses?

• (1635)

**Ms. Meili Faille:** In your opinion, are the measures that you are proposing more effective and fairer? Will they directly impact women?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** We have a responsibility to advise the minister who ultimately decides on the measures that will be implemented.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** I understand, but if the minister is replaced by someone else, could we possibly see some backsliding and an end to GBA?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** No. The Department of Finance has a duty to carry out gender-based analyses. Our role is to ensure that it fulfils that obligation and that the information is conveyed to our minister.

**Ms. Meili Faille:** In its response to the government, Status of Women Canada said it was prepared to play a more prominent role in ensuring the successful implementation of GBA. However, it said it would require additional resources to take on the job.

What commitment has it received to date and when was the formal request for additional resources first made?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I am not aware, unfortunately or perhaps fortunately, of any formal request. Perhaps Status of Women Canada officials can answer that question.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madam Waugh, do you have an answer to that question?

**Ms. Nanci-Jean Waugh (Director General, Communications and Strategic Planning Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** Yes. With the approach that has been taken with the action plan, we want to see and assess where we're going with the resources we currently have.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you very much.

We're going to now move to Mr. Shipley, five minutes.

**Mr. Bev Shipley (Lambton—Kent—Middlesex, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you again, Madam Auditor General and other witnesses.

I have a quick question, if I might, to the Auditor General.

Can you help me understand a bit where you're at now with this review? What access did you have prior to 2006? Did you have any access to information, particularly prior to 2006?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Let me clarify: there are many documents that are classified as cabinet confidence, and we have always had access to certain documents that were categorized as cabinet confidence. There was an order in council—I can't remember the exact time, probably back in the 1970s or 1980s—that clarified our right of access after a case that went to the Supreme Court.

Anyway, the issue arose again in 2006 when we were auditing certain IT systems being managed at the Treasury Board Secretariat. We were told at that point that practically all documentation at the secretariat was considered a cabinet confidence, which had never been the approach of government in the past. We had a bit of discussion back and forth, and then a revised order in council came out to clarify our access to documents, in particular at the Treasury Board Secretariat.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** So that hadn't been there before.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Well, there was an order in council from 1985; it was the application of the order in council that had changed over time.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** I want to go back. When we were talking earlier, Mr. Lee and Ms. Crombie mentioned the issues about compliance. I mean, this thing only goes back to 1995. Unfortunately, there had not been any movement that had taken place in terms of gender-based analysis until about 2006.

So now we have started a process—and I'm glad that Ms. Renaud is here, and I'm glad for her frankness—and there's a lot that has been happening. Something has been started, some of it has been completed, and obviously we have a lot of catch-up to do.

I'm hearing, and I heard that strongly from David, and obviously from the Auditor General, and from my colleague Daryl also, that the verbal transactions don't cut it. There has to be a change in terms of how the documentation is kept. It's the only way we can have accountability. There hasn't been much, from what I can understand.

I'm pleased that some of the departments have taken that initiative and through the verbal context have actually moved ahead, as we've heard from witnesses. I think that is the impetus of what we're talking about. It was brought about in 1995.

I want to ask Ms. d'Auray about training. One of the things about this whole gender-based analysis is training people. I don't really understand it enough, but it has to be an important part of any government operations.

I don't know who I should refer to, the Department of Finance or one of the organizations, but how is that training done? How does that help us understand and then get that analysis out so we then have a fair written analysis of some type to compare?

• (1640)

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I have two quick points before I turn to my colleague about the training.

We agree there needs to be better documentation and it should be in the departments and agencies. They're best placed to tell us whether they have done the analysis, how they have done it, and where it is linked to their own policy and development. So I don't want to leave the impression that we're against the documentation. We would welcome the documentation as well, and that's why we would like to see it done in departments and agencies. That would make our challenge function a lot easier.

**Mrs. Catrina Tapley:** On training, I'm happy to report what we've done over the past couple of years. We do it in three different ways. We have something called boot camp for new Treasury Board Secretariat employees, and gender-based analysis is part of that training.

In addition to that, we have specific sessions on gender-based analysis—what to look for and what questions to pose for departments. This training is for analysts and we do it on an annual cycle.

The third thing we've done this year is bring in a world expert on gender-based analysis, Dr. Olena Hankivsky. She did a full

workshop with Treasury Board analysts and was able to provide an informed, common-sense approach to gender-based analysis.

These are things—outside of Dr. Hankivsky's workshop—that we do on an annual cycle.

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** The Department of Finance has also embraced training, in conjunction with our colleagues at the Status of Women. They are the centre of excellence and expertise. They provide the training for us and we model it to fit within our organization.

We have offered training every year for the past couple of years. We just offered four sessions and they were very well attended. The feedback was extremely good, in that they were helpful and gave people the tools to be able to do good gender-based analysis.

We also have an orientation session for new employees. They're made aware right off the bat that they have to conduct gender-based analysis. It's also part of our course curriculum for new employees

We've had quite a number of people take the training, so we're proud of the fact that we're giving the tools to our analysts and senior managers to take training.

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

Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here. I truly appreciate the work that's being done. As you know, the status of women committee did indeed take a look at GBA, and we're grateful for your report.

We've heard a great deal from the departments about conducting GBA and passing that analysis along to various ministers. Then of course it's up to the ministers to respond to the analysis.

Is it possible that despite the 1995 federal plan for gender equality, government ministers are disregarding the advice? There seems to be a great gap between what we're hearing about the efforts of departments and the reality of outcome in your report, Madam Auditor General.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** I believe it's always the prerogative of the minister to not take the advice or recommendations made to them. As we note in the report, we saw only four cases out of 68 initiatives where GBA was performed and we could see evidence it was integrated into the policy process. That doesn't necessarily mean all 68 GBA would have been appropriate, but we would have expected at least an indication that it wasn't appropriate and the reasons for that. So there is obviously still a lot of work to do.

•(1645)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** It seems that the departments genuinely want to do good GBA, but they are very much at the mercy of their political masters.

Reference has been made here to the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act. It's interesting, because we heard very clearly in the committee on the status of women that unions—the women who are actually governed by that—were very much in opposition to having pay equity or equitable compensation as part of the collective bargaining process with the market forces process that was in place, because collective bargaining is about wages and benefits, and pay equity falls off the table.

It feels very much like the government is trying to avoid GBA as much as they were trying to avoid anything real in pay equity. The reasons are numerous on GBA—policy environment, departmental leadership, the degree of understanding of GBA, the extent to which GBA framework is in place, the availability of analytical tools, practices, and even the impact of reorganizations in departments and agencies. Are any of these legitimate excuses?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** In reference to the question on the Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act, a number of the issues were not addressed through the collective bargaining process. Because they ended up being addressed outside the collective bargaining process, it ended up being fairly lengthy, and sometimes costly, for both the proponents and the government. Equitable compensation within the collective bargaining framework actually ended up costing women quite a bit. The purpose of bringing it into collective bargaining is not to sidetrack. Now it's integrated. That's the reason for the change in legislation.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Women feel quite differently—they were clear that pay equity gets lost in the shuffle. One of the reasons it was protracted was that the government kept appealing the decisions.

I want to move on to the Department of Finance. Does the Department of Finance have a special gender unit?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** No, we do not.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Why not?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** We feel that the gender-based analysis is more appropriately done where the policy is developed. That's where the expertise lies. We're training all our analysts to be able to do appropriate gender-based analysis. That's where they know the data; that's where they know what the measure is supposed to do. We feel that it's most efficient that those analysts be the ones who conduct the gender-based analysis.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Yet there's this gap. In 2008, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives produced an alternate budget that included a gender analysis in every chapter. Why haven't we seen that from the Canadian government in our federal budget? Is there a reason?

**Mrs. Louise Levonian:** Gender-based analysis is one of the many lenses the department looks through when analyzing specific measures. The department considers impacts on the environment, various sectors, and the economy as a whole. It provides all this information to the minister and decisions are made on that basis. At the end of the day, the budget documents put forward the fiscal and

economic projection as well as the funding for specific budget measures. It doesn't elaborate on how all those measures are going to impact the environment, seniors, or women. It puts forward the measures. It would be inappropriate to focus on one specific area in the budget.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** So we're right back at the minister and whether the minister is listening to the advice.

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathysen, your time is up.

Mr. Weston.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** I would like to welcome Ms. Fraser and the other witnesses to our committee.

[*English*]

Thank you for the honest approach, which has characterized everybody's testimony today.

I was trying to put this in terms my nine-year-old daughter would understand. Madam Fraser, you do a good job of that. You said early in your testimony this was about how policy might ultimately impact men and women—and, I might add, boys and girls. If we could boil this down, it seems that a 1995 initiative, which for many years bore little fruit, has finally started to show signs of life.

First, Madam Fraser, am I understanding correctly that you have significantly more access than you did prior to February 2006, based on the developments we've heard about?

Second, we often talk in this committee about best practices. Madame d'Auray, you mentioned in your testimony that you identified an excellent practice at INAC. I refer to paragraph 1.30 of your report, where you say that In 2007 INAC appointed a senior assistant deputy minister to be its GBA champion. The champion acts as an advocate for GBA-related activities within the department and ensures that policy analysts and all employees are informed of any news and developments. INAC is clearly a leader in gender-based analysis.

Third, we heard from Madam Dwyer-Renaud that this very department has created the Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act, which has improved gender-based equality in the whole country.

So there are three parts to my question. First, are we getting better access? Second, Madam Fraser, or perhaps Madam Dwyer-Renaud, are we seeing some best practices modelled by this government? Third, Madam Dwyer-Renaud, are we seeing results?

• (1650)

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** On the question of access, I must say that I don't know that we had less access in the past. The new order in council that came out in 2006 was to address an interpretation that severely limited our access earlier that year. I don't know, going back, if that interpretation would have been true in the 1990s, but we certainly had a very serious issue of access to Treasury Board Secretariat documents in late 1995 and early 1996. That was what that order in council clarified afterwards: that we did have access. I don't have the comparators going back further than that.

It is true that in this audit we do point to INAC as being clearly a leader among government departments, in that they have all the elements of a framework that we would have expected to see, and in particular had actually evaluated their practices within the department. They were the only one of the seven that we looked at that did so.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** Best practices results are basically the objective of this action plan that we've tabled with the committee. You will see that we are using an approach of self-assessment and identification of initiatives, because we do need to see the evidence. That is one way that we will be able to see if departments are indeed using GBA in the development of their policies and programs.

We also want, even from the best practices, to look at the results. We are asking departments to report in their RPPs and DPRs so that that there is a reporting of the evidence that is coming forward, a reporting of results, when they are using GBA in the development of policies or programs. These are aspects that we did not have before; these are new aspects. They are accountable aspects, and that is the kind of information that we really have not had access to in the past because of the volunteer aspect.

Best practices have always been there. We have an interdepartmental committee, and there is a sharing of best practices between the more established departments and the ones that are less.... Even in the leaders there are different degrees of leadership, but we're hoping that once we have more experience and more established departments with results, then we're going to have a better baseline of results that we can use and also share with what we would call the non-initiated departments.

• (1655)

**Mr. John Weston:** How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have time for one last little question.

**Mr. John Weston:** Given that I have three first nations in the riding I represent—Sechelt, Sliammon, and Squamish—isn't it especially exciting, if not encouraging, that the department that is supposed to help vulnerable women—and I'm thinking vulnerable aboriginal women—is a leader in this area? You are particularly negative on this one, as has been pointed out, and I'm looking for you to see the signs of improvement, progress, and leadership that can be evidenced in your report.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Mr. Chair, we are always very pleased to note when departments are implementing and meeting government commitments, and we are particularly pleased to have a report in which we signal that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada is actually a leader. As the committee knows, we have many reports in which the results are not quite so good. I think this is obviously very important to this department. It is, I think, very encouraging to everyone, and it shows that it can be done.

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

Ms. Crombie, you have five minutes.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Bill C-47 died on the order paper because of an unnecessary election call, and I don't believe it has been reintroduced. I'm looking at you. My question is for the Auditor General. Why have HRSDC and the Department of Justice stopped performing GBA? The Department of Justice had at one point been a leader and a pioneer.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** I think the explanation we got was that they had integrated. They had a separate unit; they disbanded that separate unit and integrated it into their activities throughout the department.

As for HRSDC, I'm not sure. I think it was in part because of the reorganizations of the departments. I think that had an impact upon that activity.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** It's clearly a loss.

I want you to comment on this impasse we're at. You've made a clear recommendation that the agencies document their challenge function and they've clearly said that they will not. You've obviously seen the need to formalize the challenge function. Do you feel it's an important tool? Where are we at? How will we overcome this?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Clearly, government disagrees. Quite frankly, when we make a recommendation I would rather they disagree and say they disagree than say that they agree and then do nothing. I think this is showing honesty in the response. I guess we will have to try to work with government officials to try to be able to see some evidence of challenge functions going forward.



Quite frankly, if all the memoranda to cabinet and all the Treasury Board submissions had included all of the information about gender-based analysis, why it was or was not done, we might not have put so much emphasis on the challenge function. But given the fact that half the memoranda to cabinet make no mention of it, we have to question why the challenge function is not picking that up and rectifying it. That's how we got more into the challenge function. It's the same thing with a third of the Treasury Board submissions. They did not meet their own guidelines.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Do you feel that you should have the ability to access these documents, or at least those portions of them?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** We do not ask to see recommendations to ministers, nor discussions of cabinet. I think that is appropriately not available to us. But we do think we should be able to have some kind of documentary evidence of what people are asserting to us has occurred.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** I think Mrs. Tapley made the comment that you took an informed common-sense approach to GBA. What does that mean, and how does that differ from the traditional analysis as we understand it?

**Mrs. Catrina Tapley:** Thank you for that.

This was an approach we took. Dr. Olena Hankivsky is a professor at Simon Fraser University and she's a leading expert in gender-based analysis. It was recognized that there were times when it may not be appropriate to see gender-based analysis in a specific initiative or program, but that most times it was. So how do you go about performing a common-sense test that said we might not see it here, but we should see it here, and then peel back the layers a bit and ask the questions we should ask that may even surprise us with the results?

She helped us produce a pamphlet that we use with our analysts as a desktop tool that shows some of the questions that I should pose on specific initiatives. If my common sense tells me I might or might not see it, then there are some additional questions to either say it should have been there and perhaps I'm looking at other things, or indeed this was the right approach or what I expected to see.

• (1700)

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Do you think that process should be more formalized?

**Mrs. Catrina Tapley:** We do have a fairly formal process with our own analysts in terms of how we train, the questions we ask, and the tools that are provided to them to take a look at it. It's one of the things we've done with the guide to Treasury Board submissions. We've made it more explicit on what we expect departments to include in Treasury Board submissions with respect to gender-based analysis. Then we point departments to Status of Women Canada for further information on how they can enhance their own training and understanding around GBA.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Thank you.

I'd like to ask the Status of Women Canada some questions.

What role should you have in helping the government fulfill their commitment to implementing GBA?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** We very much have a capacity-building role. We have had that role since 2000. Basically within the

departments we try to increase both the individual capacity to be able to do the practice and also the capacity at the organizational level. It has been demonstrated internationally that the practice can only be sustained if there are certain key organizational elements in the department. We help them obtain these elements and build their frameworks so that there's a sustainability to the practice within the department.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Why did it take so long for us to realize? It's because of the audit of the Auditor General obviously that we realized GBA wasn't being performed uniformly across all departments and agencies. You've given agencies the tools, provided them boot camps, told them to select champions, and yet so few were actually performing the analysis. Are you concerned that so few have champions?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I'll start with the champion question.

This is not necessarily a question of the right or wrong model. It's really the best fit, what fits within an organization's culture. In some departments, a champion works. In other departments, a champion would not necessarily bring the results that are anticipated and it's better to have a whole unit be the responsible centre within a department. That's the way we've been trying to do it. You will see that in the response, in the action plan, we still require that as one of the elements for a framework. However, we really leave it up to the departments to determine what the responsibility centre will be and if it's a champion or not.

I forgot the first question.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** It had to do with why it has taken us so long to realize that it wasn't being performed uniformly across all departments, and also, if you had a plan to do it, what the timeline was and all of that.

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** I think the timing issue is an interesting one, because we have, through our own experience, noticed that it takes about 18 months for a department to actually start picking up on what it requires to do the analysis and what kinds of organizational elements it needs. It is a bit of a long-term type of process, especially, as it was noted here, since there is no obligation for departments to do this.

It has really been dependent on the goodwill of certain key leadership departments, such as Indian and Northern Affairs and Citizenship and Immigration, to be able to move forward in some of these areas and to see some of the evidence. We are greatly appreciative that for many years now we also have had the partnership of the central agencies to indeed start looking at the results at the end of the day. It's a full circle that we're now trying to put forward, along with the reporting of results by departments.

We now should be able to get things in motion better than we have in past years, but a lot of time was also spent in developing the tools and the knowledge and in having all the key players understand the role they play in this process.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Crombie.

Mr. Young, you have five minutes.

**Mr. Terence Young (Oakville, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Madam Fraser, there are a couple of things I'd like to ask you about in a detailed question.

I think there's a misunderstanding on the committee. When Mrs. Crombie talked about stopping the performing of GBA, I think she perhaps was talking about the detailed written evidence that you were looking for in every case. In your report, I don't see any evidence where you've said that the government is not doing gender-based analysis, but you want to see written evidence of it.

Could I continue? Then perhaps you can answer two questions at once.

Mr. Saxton pointed out that the previous government did really next to nothing for 10 years after announcing a plan for gender equality. I can assume that it came from the 1993 red book, perhaps, along with other plans like a child care program that also didn't appear even ten years later.

But we've seen this before. For example, in the Kyoto commitment, there were years of doing nothing while greenhouse gases went up 30%. There is a pattern of behaviour.

But we're the government that is making it happen now. It's easy to announce a plan, but it's the implementing of the plan that is the challenge. That's the challenge we have, with your help, Madam Fraser.

We need to know how to implement progress and how to provide a reasonable amount of detailed information or evidence that it's being implemented. Considering the fact that the files.... I mean, there are hundreds of policies, they're complex policies, and civil servants very often have to work in very, very short timeframes, so with those considerations in mind, what is a reasonable amount of evidence that you would be satisfied with?

I do want to point out as well that you had.... I think it's important to read from this document, the Treasury Board Secretariat guide for submissions, which was updated in 2007. Point 9.7.3 says:

Federal organizations are ultimately responsible for developing policies and programs that are compliant with overall government policies, including GBA. They are expected to include these considerations while performing their initial analysis, likely early in the process, at the MC stage for example. This should ensure that GBA concerns, along with other horizontal policy considerations, are integrated into the initial design of a program or initiative.

It also talks later about "a last check to ensure their proposal is GBA compliant" and says they should "report their findings" in the Treasury Board submission.

There's a very clear requirement to report on compliance, so there seems to be a disagreement on how much detail is reasonable for each policy. Perhaps you could comment on what would be a reasonable amount of detail.

● (1705)

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Let me just clarify the question of documentation.

First of all, you indicated that our report did not indicate that departments were not doing GBA. What we looked at in this audit was whether the GBA framework was in place in seven departments.

We saw elements of it. There was only one department that had all of the elements. We saw elements of it in four more. There were two where there was absolutely nothing, absolutely none of the elements of—

**Mr. Terence Young:** Excuse me, Madam Fraser, but it's gender-based analysis, the detailed documentation you want, or is it the fact that it's going on verbally and in every consideration that every policy goes through Treasury Board...?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** No. If we see that an analysis has been done, it is documented. The issue—

**Mr. Terence Young:** But could it be done without the detailed analysis?

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** No. I don't know how you can do an analysis without documentation.

**Mr. Terence Young:** Well, verbally. I mean, there's direction. There's a clear direction here from the government.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Sir, the issue we talked about being done verbally is the challenge function that is done by the central agencies. So, for example, departments.... Say the Department of Health submits to Treasury Board a submission in which they are supposed to make some indication of GBA. We found there was no mention of GBA in one-third of the submissions to Treasury Board. In one-half of the memoranda to cabinet, no mention—there may not have been a need to do an analysis, it may have been irrelevant or it may have been a subject that would have not been appropriate, but there was no indication as to why it was not there.

So we would have expected to see even just a line to say why it was not present, and we questioned why the challenge function did not pick that up. And in asking questions about the challenge function we were told that all the challenge function is done verbally and we would have expected as a minimum that there be e-mails, that there be a list of questions, that there be some documentary evidence that people had asked why there was nothing about GBA in this submission.

**Mr. Terence Young:** Thank you.

Madame d'Auray, did you want to answer that, please?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I think I indicated earlier where we would like the documentation to rest and I think this is where I do believe the Auditor General and we agree, that it should be documented in departments and agencies. I think that would make our challenge function interactive and informal and oral. It would resolve the issue of documentation. And to respond perhaps to a number of comments that have been made, that is really where our action plan is also focused, working with departments and agencies to make sure they do undertake the analysis they should undertake where appropriate for them to do so and to make the linkages to the policies and programs.

The challenge function is in essence a last part of the process, because if it's not built in at the front, we're not the ones who will do it for the departments and agencies. They're the ones that have the responsibility.

So that is where our action plan is focused: working with the departments and agencies and preparing materials for them to be able to self-assess, asking them if they have all the right components of the framework in place in their organization to meet the GBA analysis commitment. We're not going to replicate it at the central agency level. It really has to be done at the departmental and agency level. And that's the process.

• (1710)

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

Ms. d'Auray, I just want to clarify the issue of the whole of government responsibility. I look at this report—68 reports were analysed by the Auditor General. Only four said the GBA was performed and integrated, and in 26 reports there was no evidence of any consideration of GBA. Then we go back to another table, and where certain departments have certain components covered, a couple have it done fairly well. Two departments have no policy, no definition of roles and responsibility, no tools, no methodology, no training, and no evaluation of GBA practices.

You say Treasury Board is responsible for the challenge function, but who was responsible to ensure that all departments have the necessary policies in place, the tools, a broad-based governmental commitment in all departments rather than waiting for a challenge function if and when a cabinet submission does come to Treasury Board?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** It really is incumbent on the deputy head of the organization to take on that responsibility. We have taken the comments of the Auditor General quite seriously in terms of the capacity in departments and agencies, which is why, when we tabled our action plan, that is a key component of going to meet with the departments and agencies. We had a first meeting with Veterans Affairs, I believe, in September. This is one of the departments that is identified here as not having the components of the framework in the Auditor General's report. And we are starting to put the mechanisms in place and we're working with departments so they do meet the components of the framework that are most suitable to them. So we are starting and our commitment is to continue to work. And I think that Status of Women Canada has also indicated there will be specific measures and a request to each department and agency

throughout the year to report on an annual basis on what they have put in place. So we are putting in the mechanisms to undertake the due diligence, if I can put it that way.

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

We have a few minutes left, not a lot. We can entertain a couple of quick snappers of perhaps two minutes each.

Madame Faille, then Mr. Christopherson, and then Mr. Young.

You can have two to three minutes, Madame Faille.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Meili Faille:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

You broached a subject of particular interest to me, further to a question from Ms. Mathysen who asked if the will of the government was in the hands of the Minister of State responsible for the Status of Women and wondered about her ability to convey the importance of this file to her colleagues.

That is the question to which Ms. Mathysen was seeking an answer. She did not get one, because time ran out. Is it possible now to have that question answered?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** As I said, I believe deputy ministers and agency heads are responsible for ensuring that GBA mechanisms and approaches are put in place. Furthermore, as we saw from the Auditor General's report, the process can be rather uneven and we acknowledge that to be true. Our work involves getting back to the departments to discuss...

**Ms. Meili Faille:** We encountered this very same problem in 1985, 1986 and 1989. I remember it well. I was a public servant in 1989 and the same issues arose with respect to the Employment Equity Act. There were no mechanisms in place or agency mandated to review activities.

In this particular instance, I don't think that Status of Women Canada is sufficiently autonomous to do the analyses, and the responsibilities appear to be shared by the Department of Finance, the Treasury Board...

• (1715)

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** As we indicated in our action plan and in the government's response to Ms. Fraser's report, we do acknowledge that we must support and work with Status of Women Canada. Consequently, this agency will not review departmental policies on its own, but rather will work with...

**Ms. Meili Faille:** If you were granted more authority, would we get more results and would the GBA process be more transparent?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** As I see it, GBA is a collaborative process and if we do not work with the central agencies and with Status of Women Canada, we will only get partial answers. That is why we work with and support the efforts of Status of Women Canada.

Status of Women Canada serves as the centre of excellence for GBA. We are not a substitute for this agency because it has the necessary skills and expertise. However, we do have the ability to put mechanisms in place to ensure that departments meet their obligations and to help us assess their performance. This is part of our job as a central agency.

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Christopherson, you have two and a half minutes.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm going to try to squeeze in two quick questions. I'll put them on the floor and await the response.

The first is in reference to page 7, paragraph 1.10, where it says, in reference to its 2002 report, "Following that response, CEDAW recommended that Canada consider making gender-based analysis mandatory at all government levels." I wasn't clear on this. I heard that it's on a form, that it's part of the cabinet submission, but does that mean it's mandatory? Is it considered mandatory or not? And if it isn't, why not?

The answer should come, in my opinion, from Status of Women Canada, since they're the ones that are supposed to be making sure all these things happen. And if they are, then why do we have a problem with departments not including it?

My second question is with regard to the transportation department. On page 14 of the report, at paragraph 1.31, it says that Transport Canada "considered their work 'gender-neutral,' and that GBA was not relevant to the development of their programs and regulations".

Again, having been a minister, and knowing the breadth of what's dealt with in a line ministry, I find it hard to believe that there is never an occasion, and therefore that department can just consider this a non-issue for them.

If someone would respond to that, I'd appreciate it.

Thanks, Chair.

**Mr. Neil Bouwer:** I'll take a stab at that just to explain first of all the requirements for memoranda to cabinet.

The Privy Council Office puts out a guide for memoranda to cabinet for departments and ministers. We ask departments to include where appropriate: adverse consequences of proceeding and not proceeding; legal risk assessments including charter and trade; horizontal policy impacts across the government's agenda; privacy impacts; official languages considerations; provincial-territorial-regional considerations and strategies, including federal spending power considerations; gender issues; private and voluntary sector implications; the different groups that are consulted and their views; sustainable development aspects; as well as international perspectives and comparative analyses.

**Mr. David Christopherson:** Is it mandatory?

**Mr. Neil Bouwer:** This is a large group of analysis. What is mandatory is good public policy advice, but we don't dictate to departments exactly what aspects—

**Mr. David Christopherson:** So it's not mandatory. So I'd want to hear from Status of Women Canada, why aren't they pursuing that? Why aren't they pushing it?

**Ms. Hélène Dwyer-Renaud:** That's why we have the action plan right now. This is really the road going forward, without making it a mandatory provision, but making sure that departments are doing good public policy by having the right tools, the right frameworks, the accountability cycle at the end—

● (1720)

**Mr. David Christopherson:** But that's not happening; that's what we're hearing. So you're failing. I really think we should have had Status of Women Canada alone here holding the gun, because you've had the responsibility since 1995. It's 14 years later, and a lot of these failures, if not most of them, rest at your doorstep for not pushing this hard enough and making it known that this is not good enough.

Anyway, on transportation, please.

**The Chair:** We'll let Ms. d'Auray finish, and then we'll go to Mr. Young.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I think we have to look at the results of the Government of Canada's policies and practices. I think that's really where the issues should be addressed. I'm not familiar with all of the components of Transport Canada, but are there some issues that are in their range of activity that are adversely affecting?

I think if you look at the result of policies and programs across a wide range of government activities.... As Mr. Bouwer pointed out, we do an analysis that looks at a wide range of these things, a wide range of components, of elements, criticality, and those are all weighed in a fairly complex assessment. Decisions that ministers will make will take all of those elements into consideration. There's not one that trumps another unless there are some specific legislative elements that are attached to them.

From a transport perspective, I cannot answer for that department, but what I can tell you is that if you look at the results of their policies and practices in the same way that you look at the results of the government's policies and practices, the evolution and the changes we have seen in government programs, policies, and practices—even in the regulatory framework that we've seen since 1995—has been quite extensive in the way in which we address and deal with women and women's issues.

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

Mr. Young, two to three minutes, and then we're going to ask for closing remarks.

**Mr. Terence Young:** Thank you very much, Chair.

May I share my time with my colleagues?

**The Chair:** There isn't much time, Mr. Young.

**Mr. Terence Young:** A couple of short questions, Mr. Chair, if that's okay.

**The Chair:** You're transferring your time, not sharing it.

**Mr. Bev Shipley:** Can I go to your recommendation, Ms. Fraser? On recommendation 1.57, just a clarification, please. You talk about the clarification expectations about when it is appropriate to perform gender-based analysis, and that it's agreed to by Status of Women Canada, and also agreed to by the partnering of the departments. I'd like some sort of clarification on that.

In recommendation 1.79, you talk about the progress in fulfilling the government's 1995.... They want to get a measure of fulfilling. I would ask, and this is going back to the fact that by the summer of 2010, Status of Women Canada will be looking at that progress. I would ask as part of this committee that you just consider starting with the program in 1995 and go back and just sort of give us a schedule of events that have happened to where we are today and how those came about with the recommendations to move forward.

Madam Fraser.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Obviously in doing this work it seemed clear to us that departments did not understand when they should be doing this. I think testimony's been given today that there has been more work done on this and perhaps better guidelines will be given to them, so they can perhaps more easily identify when it clearly should not be done and when there clearly is an indication that it should be done.

**The Chair:** One quick question, Mr. Kramp, and then we'll go to Ms. Crombie for a question before we close.

**Mr. Daryl Kramp:** This is not a quick question, only a statement.

When I take a look at the witnesses here I see, of course, the gender, the quality, and the composition, and I say to myself "gender equality" and I think that before this committee you are very well represented. So thank you very kindly.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kramp. You're very observant.

Ms. Crombie.

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In addition, Mr. Kramp, it's the 80th anniversary of women becoming persons today, so it's very timely.

Quickly, to Treasury Board, I know that Ms. Faille had asked if you performed a gender-based analysis on the stimulus package and economic update because there's a theory that women didn't benefit directly. Obviously, the intent was to invest money in infrastructure and hence create construction jobs. That wouldn't directly benefit women, because if there had been an intention that we create jobs for women, we would invest in SMEs and the service sector.

Secondly, to go back to my original question, can you assure us that the government is committed and there is political will to implement GBA, the framework, across all departments? Is there a plan, is there a timeline, can you ensure it, and what are the next steps?

• (1725)

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** All in two seconds?

**Mrs. Bonnie Crombie:** Of course.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** On the first point, I think my colleague, Ms. Levonian, responded in terms of the GBA analysis for the budget.

With regard to the plan moving forward, we did table with the committee an action plan that does give timelines and does actually indicate the measure that we will be taking, how we're going to be engaging departments, and how departments will actually be reporting on the work they are doing.

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

Before we ask for closing remarks, I certainly want to thank the witnesses for their appearance and testimony here today. However, I have a housekeeping matter.

Madame d'Auray, I want to get a commitment from you. We wrote the minister, and copied the previous secretary, requesting some additional information on follow-up matters. That was back in May. We asked that the information be provided by the end of July and then that was extended to the end of August. The clerk has been following up since September and this is holding up the work of the committee. If you could provide us that information in the next week or two, Madame d'Auray, it would be appreciated. Can you give us that commitment?

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I will commit to follow up. I don't know what the status of the material is at this moment, but I will make sure that our parliamentary affairs personnel communicates back to the clerk and gives a sense of the timelines.

**The Chair:** Well, the timeline that was agreed on was the end of August.

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** I recognize that, and I must admit that I was going to ask before I came to the committee today, but I didn't have the time to do so.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Again, I want to thank you.

For closing remarks we'll go first to Ms. Fraser.

**Ms. Sheila Fraser:** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank the committee for their interest in our work. I think this is a really important issue and I'm actually very pleased that the Standing Committee on the Status of Women asked us to do this audit way back.

I would like to comment on the issue of documentation. To me, the challenge function is a really important function. There are dozens and dozens of analysts, that is the role they play, and I really do believe there should be some documentary evidence that that challenge role has been carried out.

Thank you, Chair.

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

Madame d'Auray.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Michelle d'Auray:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will conclude by making two comments.

First of all, I am proud to be the first female Secretary of the Treasury Board. It is quite an honour. Mine will be the first photograph of a woman to be hung on the wall among the photos of my predecessors.

[*English*]

Secondly, as I said on a number of occasions, we think the documentation that leads into the good policy and program development should be done by departments and agencies and documented by them so that when we do fulfill the challenge function, it is in fact. It can and should continue to be done on an informal and oral basis, but the documentation really rests with the departments and agencies to fulfill.

**The Chair:** Do any of the other witnesses want to make any closing comments before we adjourn?

Okay. Thank you again.

In closing, I want to wish you all the best, Madame d'Auray. We look forward to a very close relationship between our committee and you and your office.

If there are no other matters, I'm going to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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