



House of Commons  
CANADA

# Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

---

FAAE • NUMBER 006 • 3rd SESSION • 40th PARLIAMENT

---

EVIDENCE

**Thursday, March 25, 2010**

—  
**Chair**

**Mr. Dean Allison**



## Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Thursday, March 25, 2010

• (1110)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West—Glanbrook, CPC)):** Order, please.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), welcome to our meeting with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, His Excellency Antonio Guterres.

Welcome, sir. It's an honour to have you here today.

Certainly I understand, in terms of time constraints, that you need to leave at approximately quarter to the hour. We'll make sure that we get started right away. We apologize for the delay as we changed the rooms.

As was mentioned before, we did informally invite the immigration committee. I don't see any members here from that, so you are just speaking to the foreign affairs committee....

Okay, one member. Welcome.

After your opening statement, we'll try to get at least one round of questions in for you, just so that we could have some questions and answers.

Welcome again, sir. The floor is yours.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. It's a great pleasure for me to be here.

I spent 25 years in my own parliament, so as you can imagine, I feel very much at home attending this committee session. I'm very grateful for your wish to have this dialogue with me.

First of all, Canada is an exemplary partner of the UNHCR, a partner in support of our operations worldwide with very significant financial support. But I would say it's not only financial support. This is a very engaged country in the debates about our strategy, our policies, and our internal reforms.

At the same time, Canada has a very solid asylum system. I had the opportunity during this visit to have lengthy discussions with the Minister of Immigration and with the departments that deal with asylum questions in Canada.

This is a moment of, I believe, great interest in the internal debate on these issues. But I will probably concentrate more on our activities worldwide.

The number of the world's refugees and the internally displaced due to conflicts has been relatively stable in the last two or three years. We have about 60 million refugees, including the Palestinians, and 27 million people internally displaced. But even if this number has been relatively stable in the last two or three years, we are witnessing the fact that most of the refugees are becoming so for a protracted situation.

In 2009 the number of people we were able to help go back home in safety and dignity, namely in the three biggest countries of return in the world—Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and southern Sudan—dramatically decreased because of insecurity in those countries of origin. What we are witnessing more and more is the tendency of countries in which a peace process was established at a certain moment to go back into conflict, or at least to have their security situation worsen. This makes the present global situation a very worrying one.

If one looks at today's world, I usually divide our operations into two groups. One group of what I would call the "arc of crisis" starts in Pakistan, Afghanistan, goes into Iraq, and the Middle East. That's even if UNHCR is not directly involved in the Palestinian refugees in the area, because there is another UN agency, UNRWA, that was there before we were created. Then there is Sudan, Chad, Somalia, the Horn of Africa, and Yemen.

These regions are the origin of two-thirds of the world's refugees and they have a group of crises that are becoming more and more interrelated. These crises are also strongly linked to considerations of global security—many of these countries are breeding grounds for terrorism in today's world—and in this group of crises, to a certain extent, the relationship between the so-called Western world and the so-called Muslim world is at stake.

To a certain extent the solution to this crisis is the key element to avoid the movement of the world into what some would call a risk of the clash of civilizations. The solution to this crisis would be an extremely important element for world peace and stability. Of course it would also diminish the dramatic humanitarian impact of displacement caused by these conflicts that, as I said, generate about two-thirds of the world's refugees.

And then we have all the other crises. Some of them are dramatic from a humanitarian point of view. There's the Democratic Republic of Congo, for instance, Colombia, Sri Lanka, and many others. But these crises only have a local or a regional impact and can be seen in an isolated way. Because of that, because they do not correspond to a global threat, they tend to be forgotten by the international community. The investment of the media and the investment of the international community—political, developmental, and humanitarian—is, I would say, relatively less relevant than in relation to the arc of crisis that I described.

Another pattern that is very important to analyze and that will be at the centre of the policy debates we will have in 2011 during the commemorations of the 60th anniversary of the 1951 convention of the protection of refugees, has to do with the new patterns of forced displacements.

● (1115)

Traditionally there was a very clear distinction. One could be a migrant moving from one country to another in search of a better life. Of course, this is something that we respect. Canada has been a country of migration through immigration since its very beginning. It's a key source of the fabric of Canadian society. One could be a refugee fleeing persecution or conflict. The distinctions were clear.

In today's world, we are now witnessing the distinction becoming a little more blurred. We are witnessing a new trend of forced displacement. In some situations, we see that extreme poverty, climate change, and conflict are becoming interrelated to a certain extent. It's difficult to know the motivation of someone who is moving from one place to the other.

If one looks at the world's mega-trends—population growth, urbanization, climate change, water scarcity, food insecurity, and the movement of people—they are all becoming more interrelated. To a certain extent they enhance each other. It also is a factor of displacement.

[*Translation*]

This is a relatively serious problem for us. How can the international community respond to the challenge of these new forms of forced displacement? It may be someone going in a boat from Somalia to Yemen through the Gulf of Aden. As you know, many people die on such a trip. Did this person embark on that journey because of the conflict? Or is it because of the drought in the region? What are this person's motivations? What kind of protection does the international community have to provide when facing these problems?

This is a very important debate. We would not want to change the 1951 convention on the status of refugees but we do recognize the importance of finding better international cooperation mechanisms in order to respond to the need for protection created by the interrelationships of all the factors contributing to increased population movements. Some of these movements are voluntary—this is the migration phenomenon— but more and more there are new patterns of forced displacement.

Finally, I have to say we are increasingly concerned about our activities. The humanitarian space is shrinking. Security is becoming more complex. Three of our colleagues were killed in Pakistan last

year. More and more of the actors in conflicts do not abide by the rules and sometimes directly target humanitarian workers.

Wars between two armies are becoming quite infrequent. In eastern Congo, they are our five or six armies, militias and groups of armed bandits. All of this creates an extremely difficult situation in terms of security. The humanitarian space is also shrinking because of national sovereignty claims made by some governments. For example, Sudan expelled NGOs from Darfur and it was very difficult to get access to the victims of cyclone Nargis in Burma. Moreover it is sometimes difficult to make a distinction between the military and civil presence of the international community.

There are more and more peacekeeping operations in places where peace does not even exist anymore. Thus UN peacekeepers are becoming a part of the conflict and, when this happens, the protection of the humanitarian space becomes increasingly difficult.

There is a last issue that is certainly of interest to the committee. It is the fact that human rights are losing ground against national sovereignty. This development can be observed in a number of countries. The power relationships in the international arena have evolved in such a way that I believe an operation like the one which was mounted a few years ago, when I was in the government of my country, in order to save the people of East Timor would not be possible today. I believe the protection of human rights has lost ground against the protection of national sovereignty, even though the United Nations General Assembly approved the notion of the responsibility to protect. The truth is that this responsibility is now severely limited because national sovereignty is increasingly invoked, sometimes to violate human rights in the most appalling way.

Mr. Chairman, I am now ready to answer questions.

● (1120)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** *Obrigado.*

We're going to start with the Liberals. We're going to try to get every party in. I'm going to try to keep it to five or six minutes, because His Excellency has other commitments.

Mr. Pearson can start. We'll continue around the room, as we normally do.

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

Thank you so much for coming. It's fascinating.

I'd like to centre a bit on the Sudan situation, if you don't mind, just for my own clarification. I was just there in January, after a period of time during which the number of displaced people who were returning to south Sudan had dipped for a period of time. It has now gone up again fairly dramatically as a result of the elections and the referendum that will be coming soon. I'd like to get your view on that and on how you feel the referendum will affect that.

Second, could you address the environmental refugee situation? We keep being told that it could be a hidden card that could suddenly explode on the world. I'd be interested in your comments.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** First of all, about Sudan, I think one can say, looking at Sudan today, that there is hope of an improvement in Darfur. There was an agreement between the Government of Sudan and the JEM, the Islamic movement that has an agenda that goes beyond the Darfur question. There was an agreement between Chad and Sudan after the visit of Déby with al-Bashir. The situation is far from being solved, but apparently the government of Khartoum has a strategy now not to solve the problem but to manage the problem in Darfur.

The reason that is happening, in my humble opinion, is that everybody now is becoming more and more concentrated on the south and on the future of the south, and there, our worries are enormously increasing. First of all, the south is very unstable. The number of casualties in the south has been higher than in Darfur in the last few months because of ethnic conflicts. The role of the government of Khartoum in promoting this kind of conflict is not entirely clear, but it's a question.

The border problem is not solved. The oil question is, of course, related to that. And the levels of governance in the south are appallingly bad. There is a risk of a new country emerging, because my belief is that if the referendum takes place, the votes for independence would be overwhelming. But the new country would be emerging as a failed state, with the north interested in keeping it failed.

We are now very concerned about the future of the south. We are reviewing our operations for the south and are doing a lot of contingency planning for a hypothetical situation, which is that independence might be troubled by conflict between north and south, or, more probably, that independence will be acceptable, but there will be the kind of deterioration of the situation that might create displacement and lots of difficulties for the future.

Now, when I said that we would like to concentrate next year on debate in the international community with our member states on the question of new trends in forced displacement, naturally, climate change and the environment are key factors.

I don't think we can speak about refugees of climate or refugees of climate change. Refugees, according to the 1951 convention, correspond to a well-defined category of people. What is also clear is that the environment and climate change prospects are an enhancing factor of many other causes of displacement, be it food insecurity, be it water scarcity, or be it conflict. I mean, water scarcity generates conflict in many areas where farmers and others compete for limited water resources.

I believe the international community needs to address it and needs to find ways to respond to the protection challenges created by this factor that enhances other factors of displacement in a very worrying way in today's world, especially in some parts of the world. Eastern Africa, for instance, is probably today the most evident. But tomorrow, if the rising level of the oceans becomes a reality, we might have very serious problems in some islands in the Pacific, but also in places like Bangladesh, for instance. A one-metre rise in the level of the ocean would mean 20 million to 30 million people displaced in Bangladesh. This is a very big challenge for the future.

• (1125)

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

**The Chair:** We'll go to Mr. Rae.

**Hon. Bob Rae (Toronto Centre, Lib.):** I have a personal and fairly indiscreet question, High Commissioner. I noticed from your biography that your first term is up. I'm hoping that you will consider staying on.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** This is a matter for discussion with the Secretary-General.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Well, after your presentation, I think it's fair to say you certainly have my vote. I can't speak for others.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** Thank you very much.

I'm not sure I have my wife's vote.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Hon. Bob Rae:** We all face that challenge.

**The Chair:** You're two votes closer. That's great.

We're going to move to Madam Lalonde for five minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ):** I will share my time with Mr. St-Cyr.

Thank you so much for your presentation, Mr. Guterres, even though the situation you described is quite discouraging.

Do you believe that countries receiving migrants should change their policies in order to admit more? Would it be better to enhance aid in order to reduce migrations? You said in effect that aid goals will not be met. People would have either to stay home or to go elsewhere.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** Thank you for the question.

First of all, I think it is essential to review development cooperation policies and to implement more effective strategies to avoid forced displacements.

In my opinion, there are two key questions. The first concerns adaptation to climate change. We have to create the right conditions for societies to adapt to changes that are already unavoidable and to offer alternatives to migration.

The second issue is that we need a greater effort of community development in rural areas. Many development cooperation policies have encouraged rural populations to migrate to cities even if rural migration is the first step of the uprooting process. Once they go from the countryside to an urban setting, they tend to go from city to city elsewhere in the world. I believe cooperation to promote agricultural production has been greatly neglected. However it is not enough. We have to promote community development in rural areas so that migration becomes more of a choice than an inescapable fate.

This applies not only to migration, but also to refugee protection. I believe that people today have a somewhat schizophrenic vision of these issues in some areas of the world. It is certainly the case in Europe. I think Canada remains both an open country that considers the positive aspects of migratory movements and a very important asylum country for refugees and for people seeking a better life. In Europe however, there is an alarming shift in public opinion. If you ask European citizens whether they want to have more children, their answer is no. The fertility rate in a country such as mine has now dropped to 1.3 or 1.4. If you ask people if they are willing to work in a neighbouring restaurant, they will say no. In Geneva, I would find it difficult to imagine Swiss citizens accepting some of the jobs I am in contact with. The Swiss are not there, they have other jobs. However, if you ask them whether they want immigrants, their answer is no. This is truly a schizophrenic approach because the three negative answers lead to a dead end.

Moreover, the debate on immigration has become quite irrational in Europe, which is a great concern. It is a debate in which populism is taking root and that, in my opinion, leads to a psychological environment opposed not only to migratory movements but, even worse, to the protection of people who need international protection.

Recent events in a country such as Italy, mainly because of the deportation of people coming from other places, are very alarming. This is not the case everywhere, but in many parts of the developed world, issues relating to population movements are dealt with in a completely irrational fashion. Our organization is very concerned about that as we actively participate in the European debate. Our main purpose is to focus attention on the need for a rational debate and the need to realize that all societies are becoming multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious. This is unavoidable. However, many countries still do not understand that and think they can maintain an identity that is not based on diversity.

•(1130)

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur St-Cyr.

[Translation]

**Mr. Thierry St-Cyr (Jeanne-Le Ber, BQ):** In order to control the number of refugee claimants, the Canadian government is increasingly requiring an entry visa, which limits the number of travellers admitted to Canada. This requirement was most recently imposed on Czech and Mexican nationals. Canadian authorities say they are meeting their convention obligations since they process the claim of anyone arriving in the country to verify their need for protection. In fact, they create as many barriers as possible to prevent claimants from reaching Canada.

I would like to know if the signatories to the convention are concerned with this situation and if, in your opinion, it is now more difficult for people who really need protection than to hypothetical illegal claimants to overcome these barriers.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** I had a chance this morning to discuss this very openly with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. I believe a bill will soon be introduced in Parliament to reform the refugee-determination system. If asked to do so, the UNHCR will formally express its opinion within the framework of the parliamentary debate.

I would say that, generally speaking, our policy is the following. The compatibility of two aspects must be guaranteed: an effective protection system for people who need it and system integrity. Four elements must be considered: access which must remain open; the need to make fair decisions, which is essential; the time needed to clarify people's situation, which must be realistic since a process that takes 10 years to be completed is useless; and finally the capacity to deport people who do not need protection. In some situations, states having difficulty either to deport people who do not need protection or to make decisions in a reasonable timeframe use access or the quality of the decision to solve the problem. This is to be avoided.

We had today a very interesting and constructive discussion. Obviously, we are going to wait to see what the government will put forward in its bill. If Parliament so wishes, we would be pleased to give our opinion on the evolution of the Canadian asylum system, which has become a reference for the world because it is very important and sound. We believe it must be preserved.

•(1135)

[English]

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

We're going to move to Mr. Abbott for five minutes.

**Hon. Jim Abbott (Kootenay—Columbia, CPC):** Your Excellency, thank you very much for being here.

[Translation]

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** I sat In Parliament for 25 years.

[English]

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** I want to make note of not only your personal background, but also the position that you presently hold. As for the compliment that you gave to the Canadian people and to the Canadian government on our involvement in these issues in the world, I thank you for that comment this morning.

I want to put something on the record. If you choose to respond to it, that's fine. Otherwise, I will be passing the questions to Mr. Lunney.

To go to a microcosm on where our government comes from, our government announced a renewal and an increase for our support of the Burmese border areas program, which amounts to \$16 million over the next five years. My understanding is that it represents the largest single contribution. We are the largest mover and shaker in that particular area on that program. Canada is taking a lead.

Through a five-year program of building social capital, the Burma border areas program will provide much-needed humanitarian assistance to refugees, provide health services to displaced people, and support many community-based organizations on issues such as violence against women, environmental degradation, forced displacement, access to information, and human rights.

Today Canadian funds have allowed for the treatment of nearly one million cases of malaria and other health problems, provided food aid to approximately 145,000 refugees, and provided health care services to approximately half a million refugees. It's our example of effective and accountable foreign aid.

We have been able to show leadership in the past. The statement I wanted to put on the record today is that I would hope our friends and neighbours who have the capacity to be able to assist in this area would be prepared to follow what I think is Canada's excellent leadership on this and on many other initiatives that we have.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** You should add to that the fact that Canada has a meaningful program of resettlement of Karen refugees from Thailand, and an important, even if smaller, program of resettlement of Rohingya refugees from the northwest of Myanmar. Karen refugees and Rohingya refugees represent two of the most dramatic situations of human rights violation in Myanmar.

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

**The Chair:** Mr. Lunney.

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

It's great to have you here today. We recognize the good work you're engaged in. I note that the 60th anniversary of your organization is coming up next year. You had commented on the tremendous number of displaced persons around the world already. My colleagues have mentioned a number of those places. So it looks like, sadly, work for your organization is not going to diminish or disappear very soon.

I want to ask about a country that we haven't discussed so far and that has recently been a concern in a big way, and that's Sri Lanka. I'd ask for an update on Sri Lanka and the situation of internally displaced persons there, and then I'll pass any remaining time to my colleague Peter Goldring.

Thank you.

• (1140)

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** We are very strongly involved in Sri Lanka. There has been meaningful improvement in the situation, probably linked to the election process. Elections always help in this kind of situation.

We were facing very dramatic opposition from the government in relation to a rapid return of people to their areas of origin; in relation to the freedom of movement of the people still in Menik Farm, the big camp; and in relation to access by NGOs and other organizations to some of the relevant areas. These were three very tough stumbling blocks. There was quite a difficult negotiation, but after some time and due to different factors—I believe the election was probably the most important one—we have witnessed very important progress in the two first aspects.

There has been a very meaningful movement of people back to their areas of origin. I think those who are still in Menik Farm are not there basically because the government doesn't want them to go back but because there are still problems with de-mining. So the resolution of that problem is going substantially well.

Freedom of movement has also increased substantially for the people in Menik Farm. They can now leave the camp. It's not yet perfect, but there has been some progress there.

There remains a meaningful limitation on the access of NGOs to Wannu district. We are still not yet there, but there has been meaningful improvement.

For me, the biggest concern is the future. The war was won, but now the problem is winning the peace. Winning the peace is creating the conditions for full integration of Tamil population in the context of the state. The Tamils are almost not present in the political system, almost not present in the administration, and I would say totally not present in the police and the military. If there is not a very determined government policy now to fully integrate the Tamils, I'm afraid that in five years' time we might go back to a situation of conflict.

This is something on which I believe all countries need to put a lot of influence in relation to the Government of Sri Lanka, to make them understand that winning the war does not necessarily mean that the problem is solved. The problem is still there and still needs to be addressed from the point of view of building a real multi-ethnic state.

**The Chair:** We're out of time. We'll have to finish with Mr. Dewar.

You have five minutes, sir.

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

Thank you to our guests. I have a couple of quick questions, but a comment to start.

As much as I support and laud the government's reinvestment on the border of Burma and Thailand, I am concerned about the drawdown in their support to UNRWA. I know that's not your area because of the nature of it, but it remains a concern for many of us.

Regarding the proposals that we're hearing from the minister—and you spoke with him—just in terms of your perspective, I'm getting from you that if you're going to change anything, you should ensure that there is access to refugees. You've been clear about that. As well, notwithstanding that we might design a system that says we'll designate countries that are “safe”, there still needs to be access from refugees notwithstanding that nomenclature.

I say that because I think of instances where people are suffering from gender discrimination or sexual identification. I think of homosexuals, gays who are being persecuted. If it's seen as a designated safe country that they've come from, and yet there is persecution, I would submit that if we don't involve the system, or have access to the system, that actually we're failing in our responsibilities.

So I'd like you to just clarify; when we see streamlining, I'm hearing from you not to two-tier it, to make sure that we're still having access for all, and it should be based on your claim, not based on your designation of country according to us.

The second thing is on the DRC. We have been asked as a country to support the peacekeeping mission there. What I'm hearing you say is that there's a link between conflict resolution, obviously, and refugees, and since the DRC is one of the top five in terms of internally displaced...Canada has been asked and we have said no, we can't at this point contribute resources. However, in 2011 we are changing our commitment to the mission in Afghanistan.

You can't comment in terms of what we should do, but would you see it as a welcome move in terms of helping the situation in the DRC to support the peacekeeping mission in the DRC that is still under-resourced?

• (1145)

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** This issue has been in the centre of our discussions this morning. I think they were very constructive discussions.

I don't want to anticipate what our position will be, because it depends on texts that are not yet available, but I think we had a very good common understanding with the minister. We do not oppose the fact that there is the possibility of a safe country list, and that is an instrument that allows for a streamlining of procedures. We do not oppose that, provided that fact does not impede first access to asylum, even from people coming from...and a special consideration of groups within this context.

For instance, one can have a democracy with serious problems of genital mutilation. Mali is an example. Mali is a democratic country, but genital mutilation is still a practice there. So for gender, for problems of sexual preference, there is persecution even in democracies.

I believe there was quite an important consensus this morning on the need for whatever legislation is adopted to create the safeguards to allow for these kinds of situations to always be taken into account. Now, of course, it will depend on how the texts are presented, and we will give our opinion based on those texts, but this was very openly and frankly discussed, and I believe there was a common understanding on what needs to be done to preserve access in those circumstances.

About DRC, I can only agree that supporting the DRC peacekeeping operation, the supports to humanitarian action in DRC, is very much welcomed because the level of humanitarian disaster in the DRC is out of proportion. In the DRC, we have people dying every six months, people who should not be dying, dying in numbers that correspond—if you remember the tsunami of four years ago—to one tsunami every six months. So it's really a level of tragedy...and women, of course, are victims of all kinds of terrible things. So DRC is a country in which we are very strongly involved.

I would like to leave a set of tables to the attention of the members of this committee, tables that show one thing that I believe is very important for a relevant donor country like Canada. We are trying to use your money not to spend it on the organization, but to spend it on the people we care for. So in these four years, we have reduced 300 people in Geneva, which means a 30% reduction in headquarters. Headquarters costs that were 14% of our costs are now less than 10% of our costs. Staff costs were 41% of our organization, now they are 27%, which means more and more is used directly by outside organizations, and more and more NGOs are involved in our

activities, and we do our best to make sure there is value for money in the contributions that are given to us.

I will leave a group of tables. There are 15 copies or something, and if they could be distributed to the honourable members of the committee, I would be very grateful.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** I think I speak for my colleagues when I say that it was great of you to be here today. We wish we had more time, but we're grateful for the time we had. We wish you all the best as you spend some more time with officials throughout the rest of the day on your trip here in Canada.

On behalf of all the committee, thank you very much.

**His Excellency Antonio Guterres:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** We'll suspend for five minutes.

• (1145)

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

• (1155)

**The Chair:** Welcome back. We continue, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2).

We're going to have a meeting with the Canadian Global Campaign for Education. We have Kevin Watkins, the director of the *Global Monitoring Report*.

Mr. Watkins, we want to welcome you here today. We were trying to have some other witnesses, but a whole bunch of things were going on today. Regardless, we're glad you're here. Maybe if you could, just take a few minutes to tell us a bit about what your organization is up to. Then we'll go through some questions and answers from some of the MPs here. We'll try to get at least one round in.

Mr. Watkins, the floor is yours.

**Dr. Kevin Watkins (Director, Global Monitoring Report, Canadian Global Campaign for Education):** Thank you very much.

I'm director of the Education for All Global Monitoring Report in UNESCO. We've been working very closely with the Global Campaign for Education globally and here in Canada. In fact, they provided some of the submissions you have before you.

Maybe I'll run through a couple of things very briefly.

I don't think I need to tell anybody on this committee how important education is. I think that in Canada, maybe more than in any other OECD country, you've seen the power of education to transform people's lives and to change the direction of a whole country. In particular, you've paid a lot of attention to issues like equity gaps, inequalities in education, and achieving high average levels of education across the board.



I'm often struck, when I visit developing countries, by the sheer level of drive, commitment, and ambition that people living in the most desperate of circumstances—in slums and drought-prone rural areas—have to get their kids a decent quality of education. I really think this is an area in which Canada has a very proud record, which, if I may say as a non-Canadian, you somewhat understate. If you look at your aid program, I think you're currently giving around \$210 million to basic education. You've doubled the commitment to basic education since about 2002. That aid is being directed to countries in which there has been quite extraordinary progress. In Afghanistan, which is one of your major recipient countries, we've seen the number of girls in school go up by a factor of five in the last seven years. In Tanzania, another one of your major recipients, we've seen the out-of-school numbers drop by about three million. Senegal, another major recipient, has been one of the fastest movers in terms of getting girls into school.

I know that maybe even in this committee in the past you've had witnesses who have told you that aid doesn't work. I think in all of those examples, if you went and spoke to any of those kids or any of those parents, they would tell you a very different story, which is that your Canadian aid has made a big difference. Also, I believe that you have a big opportunity now as the host of the forthcoming G8 to draw on your own leadership and use it as an example of what other governments in rich countries could do to step up to the plate and make a difference in education.

One of the things we do in our report is monitor progress in education across six key goals. I'm not going to go into each of those goals, but really, the headline story that emerges is that there's a lot of good news out there. We've seen out-of-school numbers globally come down by about one-third in the last decade, including in countries that have seen a rapid expansion of the school-age population. That's a very real and a very positive achievement. We've seen gender gaps across Africa and South Asia narrowing, in some cases spectacularly. We've seen dropout rates falling and more kids getting into school and completing education. All of these are very positive developments, and I think they give the lie to the myth that we can't make rapid progress towards these goals that the international community has set.

There's a bad news part of the story. The bad news is that promises were made to the world's children back in 2000, including a commitment to get all children into school by 2015. We estimate that with current trends, that number will be missed by at least 56 million primary school-age children. That is a very big number to miss an achievable target by, and it's only the tip of the iceberg, because of course many kids will also get into school and drop out. Many millions more will get into school and get through primary school but come out without basic literacy or numeracy skills, because the quality of education is lacking.

That story, I think, matters, because education is a basic right. But it also matters for other areas Canada has a deep interest in. For example, you've prioritized as a country maternal and child health for the G8 summit. There's a very strong rationale for doing that. But if you want to cut child mortality, one of the most effective ways to do it is to educate young girls. A girl with a secondary education who becomes a mother will have children who are three times, or more, more likely to survive to the age of five than a mother who has

no education. If you want to save lives, investing in education is one of the stories here.

• (1200)

Also, if you want a functioning democracy and a transparent government, how do you achieve that without education? If you want shared prosperity in an increasingly global-based economy, how do you do that without accelerating progress towards education goals? One of the messages of our report is that we need to think of education not just as a right in itself, but as one of the great drivers and multipliers for progress in other areas.

What do we need to do to change the picture that I've set out to ensure that all kids are in school by 2015 and getting a decent quality education? First and foremost, we emphasize that developing country governments need to do an awful lot more to reach their most marginalized populations, to scale up investment in resources, to train the teachers who are needed to achieve the goals.

But even with the best effort on the part of the developing country governments, we estimate there will still be a global financing gap of around \$16 billion annually. Of particular concern is the fact that we've seen aid to basic education stagnating in recent years. Last year, for the first time, it actually dropped by over 10% globally. It's a little bit of a concern in this context that we've also seen Canadian commitments to basic education aid also tailing off. That draws a worrying picture for the future.

We have an opportunity to change this picture at the G8 summit, but I think we have to recognize the window of opportunity is closing. The year 2015 may seem like a long way away, but it's one primary school generation. You can't leave it until 2013 or 2014 to put the investments in place. We have to act now. That's why we would like to see the Canadian government really bringing education to the centre of the G8 agenda, not to displace child health and maternal health, but to build a bridge between the two, to recognize that progress in both of these areas has to go hand in hand. That involves I think citing your own leadership to call on the rest of the G8 to make the concrete commitments that are actually needed to produce results.

I think we have a huge challenge before us, but we also have an opportunity to solve it. I think, if I may say, to some degree it does fall to Canada to demonstrate real leadership at the G8 and to get us back on course to where we need to be.

Thank you very much.

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

Now we're going to circle the room. Since we have a little bit more time, we'll go back to our seven-minute rounds.

I'm going to start with Monsieur Patry.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Watkins, for being here this morning.

I read your report on EFA yesterday and also a little bit this morning. Is it all right?

[English]

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** Thank you.

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Patry:** I skimmed through *Reaching the margin-alized*. It is an excellent report on EFA. I am very pleased to note the progress made under each of the six goals.

However, it seems it will be difficult to meet one of these goals, which is to get all children into primary school by 2015—you mentioned this in your presentation. One of the main difficulties is the lack of teachers all over the world and the inequality in education between rural and urban areas. I think this is a huge challenge.

How do you anticipate solving this problem of rural versus urban areas as well as the shortage of teachers? Moreover, since Canada will be hosting the G8 and G20 summits, how should we approach this problem? Would more money really help? The lack of teachers is not only a matter of money. Teachers have to be trained. What is your view of the whole picture?

• (1205)

[English]

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** They're both very good points. We estimate that the total shortage of teachers for sub-Saharan Africa in relation to those goals is around 1.2 million.

Of course as a government, hiring a teacher is not a one-off annual commitment. It's a central part of the recurrent budget. But that's also why governments need to make the long-term revenue-raising commitments to finance those investments and why donors themselves have to do far more as well. Because for a country to recruit teachers and put them in place, they have to have security over the flow of future aid resources.

One of the concerns that we draw attention to is that aid flows from some countries tend to be highly volatile and unpredictable, making it difficult for governments to plan. So there's a financing gap part of the story that has to be addressed. Of course governments need to ensure—as I think you've tried to do in Canada—that good teachers are linked up with underperforming schools and disadvantaged regions. We cite in the report a number of examples of countries that have tried to do that with varying degrees of success.

The rural-urban gap that you described is one of the great fault lines in education in developing countries, whether you look at adult literacy, attendance in school, enrolment rates, and so on. But cutting across that rural-urban gap is a gender divide. It tends to be poor, rural girls in particular who are the most disadvantaged and being left furthest behind.

Now there are very concrete proven interventions that can deliver results in this area. Fifteen years ago Bangladesh had one of the biggest gender gaps in the world. It now has no gender gap. Why has the gender gap disappeared? Partly because the government has put in place a stipend program, an incentive program for parents to put young daughters in school. In other words, there's a financial benefit for parents to do that.

Senegal has been trying to do something similar. We've seen a dramatic drop in out-of-school girl numbers in Ethiopia. That's happened because the government has invested very heavily—with Canadian support, actually—in building classrooms in the most disadvantaged rural areas, which has reduced the distance between communities and schools. Distance between communities and schools is a big factor for girls in particular.

I think in all of these areas there are proven results. Canadian aid is already supporting improvements in these areas. Maybe there's something to be said for looking at what has worked well and scaling that up and duplicating it in other aid programs.

**The Chair:** Mr. Rae.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Yes.

Just to confirm, as my friend Mr. Abbott would say, the statistics that we have been shown indicate that in 2006, the Government of Canada's total aid to basic education was \$251.7 million. That was reduced to \$185 million in 2007. In 2008, it was reduced to \$150 million.

Is that right?

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** That is the figure for commitments. These are forward-looking commitments.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** But the year 2008 is behind us.

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** Yes. That graph is recording commitments that were made in the relevant years, so 2008 is the latest data that we have.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** We don't know what 2009 or 2010 looks like?

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** To the best of my knowledge, no, unless there are internal CIDA reports that do that. In our report, because it's global, we take the latest data that's available for a comparison across countries. In this case it's 2008.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Have you received any kind of explanation or are you aware of any kind of explanation for that decision?

We ramped up from about \$70 million in 2000 to \$250 million, and now we're back down to \$150 million. Is there any explanation for that?

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** You know, I haven't personally discussed this with CIDA. I have a meeting with them this afternoon. I should say that one of the issues with commitments and aid flows is that they're very sensitive to lumpy investments and commitments to individual countries.

One of the things that I want to understand from my discussions with CIDA is why the profile looks like it does.

•(1210)

**Hon. Bob Rae:** The logic of the suggestion is that we need to be part of this movement to get every kid in school, that is probably the most intelligent investment we could make. It does seem to be somewhat surprising that we would not be continuing to ramp that up as we move. Obviously there is the 2015 development target, but the millennium targets are not an end in themselves. They're just simply a way of goading all of us, to say here are some targets that we all need to achieve.

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** I completely agree with you. In the way I think of this, it isn't a form of charity. This is an investment in future prosperity and the achievement of the wider goals that have been set by Canada within the international community. Now is absolutely not the time to be scaling down on those commitments.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** Perhaps I'm just feeding you lines, but when we look back at the growth of literacy worldwide, one of the explanations for the success of Scotland in terms of becoming the centre of the Industrial Revolution was the fact that they had almost universal literacy in the middle of the seventeenth century as a result of widespread reading of the Bible.

The more we can encourage literacy, the more likely we are to see not only improved maternal health but improved economic development, improved entrepreneurship, and more innovation within society. There's hardly a thing you can point to that doesn't come from education. Wouldn't you agree with that?

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** Thank you for feeding me the lines. I do appreciate it.

If you had to summarize the great drivers of the progress of nations across history and you had to pick the one that had made the most fundamental difference across time, if you summarized it in a single word, the word would be "education". If you flip the question and name a country that has really succeeded in making breakthroughs in health, democracy, and economic growth without broad-based inclusive education, it's very hard to think of any countries that have done so.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Mr. Rae and Mr. Watkins.

We now go to Madam Deschamps.

[*Translation*]

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

Someone once said that to get an education is to get richer. Obviously, in order to make a population richer, you have to take into consideration the whole financial aspect.

The government has decided to freeze aid financing for the next five years. I would like to know what kind of impact this freeze can have when 2015 is the target year to meet the Millennium Development Goals, among others. I imagine the freeze will slow down the pursuit of the goals Canada set for itself and will have a major impact on all education programs.

[*English*]

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** I think those remarks and the points you raise are exactly the rights ones.

I think Canada, going back to the period since the Gleneagles agreement was made to double aid to sub-Saharan Africa, actually has had a very proud record since then. There have been big expansions to the aid budget. Those expansions have made a difference.

We now have a very different environment in two critical respects. First of all, because of the impact of the financial crisis and the way it interacted with the previous food crisis, we're going to see an increase in overall poverty numbers within the developing world, probably in the order of 150,000 million or so. Secondly, we've seen big increases in the levels of child malnutrition within the developing world. So the backdrop is already worrying.

Because of the combined effects of lower growth and lower levels of revenue collection in sub-Saharan Africa in particular, the capacity of governments to finance basic services such as education has been diminished. In the report, we estimate that the effect of the financial crisis will be to cut per-student spending in primary schools in sub-Saharan Africa by around 13%. In other words, it would have been 13% higher without the impact of the crisis.

To freeze support in a context of rising poverty and diminishing national capacity to finance is a scenario for a bad outcome. We can't on the one hand say to the international community that we want to accelerate progress and on the other hand say that we won't provide the needed resources to achieve that goal. If we will the ends, we have to provide the means. I think the problem at the moment is that we have a gap between the ambition and the commitment that's being demonstrated.

•(1215)

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Watkins, are you familiar with the situation in Afghanistan? You know that Canada is very involved in Afghanistan. Canada has decided to withdraw but it is still interested in development. We know that many schools were built for both girls and boys, but the criticism we heard from a member of the Afghan Human Rights Commission is that education is limited to primary school and that there is no secondary education. So she said: "What kind of development is that for girls?"

What do you have to say about the impact on development of primary education only as compared to secondary education?

[*English*]

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** I can't claim to be an expert on Afghanistan, but one of the cases we look at in this year's report is Canadian aid to education in Afghanistan. Of course, it's one of the most difficult environments in the world to try to do long-term development work. In fact, it's probably the most difficult environment in the world at the moment to try to do long-term development work.

One often hears the argument that you may as well forget long-term development in this context and just focus on emergency and humanitarian relief. I think the numbers from Canada, and in particular from the areas where the Canadian aid program has been most active, really speak for themselves. We have seen a very big increase in enrollment in primary schools. We've seen an increase in the recruitment and deployment of teachers. In particular, we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of girls in primary schools.

In order to achieve that, I think Canada, working with other donors, has really developed some very innovative approaches, pulling resources together, managing the resources on a collective basis, operating on a whole-of-government basis, recognizing that this isn't just a development problem but that there are security issues that have to be addressed and wider humanitarian issues that have to be addressed.

I actually believe the Afghanistan model is one that really could be far more broadly applied. It's certainly very relevant for southern Sudan. It's certainly very relevant for the DRC and other contexts.

I can't really comment in any detail on the linkages between primary and secondary education in Afghanistan, because it's really not my area of expertise. But what I would say is that clearly you can't achieve progress in secondary education unless you put the foundations in place, and there is clear evidence that the foundations have been put in place in areas like Kandahar where the aid program has been active.

[Translation]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Thank you.

[English]

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

We're going to move over to the Conservative side, and we'll start with Mr. Abbott.

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

Thank you very much, Mr. Watkins, for being here. We have this truncated CV for you, which is very helpful. Just so I understand who it is we're speaking with, I wonder if you could tell me, Canadian Global Campaign for Education is geographically based out of what location in Canada?

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** One of my colleagues is here from the Global Campaign, and she'd be much better placed to answer that.

•(1220)

**Dr. Karen Mundy (Member, Canadian Global Campaign for Education):** We have an office in Ottawa, but we are a campaign that includes representatives from universities, the Canadian Teachers' Federation, and 18 INGOs, international non-governmental actors, and faith bodies.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** I have in hand the "Canadian Global Campaign for Education: Education For All Policy Brief". That's the document I'm working from, which I think maybe is something that Mr. Rae may have worked from as well.

Just before I go on, what would be the total annual budget for Canadian Global Campaign for Education and what is its source?

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** The source of the...?

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** The source of the funding for the Canadian Global Campaign for Education.

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** We get some part of our funding from our membership, and we have a matching amount of funding from the Canadian International Development Agency.

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

Now, I must admit I'm rather perplexed with the second paragraph here, which says that "recent OECD data show that Canada's aid commitments to basic education have fallen precipitously over the last three years".

I'm a little perplexed by that, I suppose because the fact of the matter is that it's pretty substantially increased. It's quite the opposite to your assertion. So I'm a little perplexed about that. Maybe we can have an explanation from you.

First off, in the area of basic education, in another brief that I have from your organization, I see that you say, "Currently 72 million children and 759 million adults cannot realize their human right to receive a quality education." You have used the figure for basic education, which is an old figure, by the way. In fact, in 2007-08 basic education was 270 million, not 150 million. Again, I apologize, but I have to contest your assertions here.

With this assertion that you have 72 million children and 759 million adults—and you only talk about basic education—you don't take into account the total amount of education funding that is coming from Canada, which is \$301 million. You're talking about \$150 million. I have to be a little critical of that.

Secondly, in 2008-09, perhaps you weren't aware that CIDA spent \$401 million on education, of which \$329 million was directed to basic education.

I think perhaps the people who did Mr. Rae's research weren't aware of these numbers. I suspect that—

**Hon. Bob Rae:** All I'm basing it on are the numbers that are right here. That's all. It's the same sheet you have.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Okay, well, I'm looking at—

**Hon. Bob Rae:** You have some additional information because you're the Parliamentary Secretary to CIDA. I congratulate you for that job, but I don't have that job.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Well, in 2008-09, CIDA spent \$401 million.

Your assertion in your brief is that it's \$150 million.

I'm having a little difficulty reconciling those numbers.

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** First of all, we're talking about U.S. dollars in our brief and you're talking about Canadian dollars. That doesn't make very much difference these days, as we all know.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** I think they're pretty close to par today, aren't they?

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** Yes, exactly.

Your question is very well warranted. What we say in our brief is that disbursements have gone up every year since 2003. That's a fact and something that Canada can be very proud of. And now we're using the OECD DAC data, the internationally recognized comparable data to what other countries spend. The OECD DAC data show a decline over the last two years in commitments. As you all know, commitments are spent out, they roll out over three to five years after the commitments are made.

This is a worrying trend to us. Perhaps this year CIDA has the plan to launch a new round of commitments, but I rather doubt that, given the freeze on Canadian aid. The concern we have is that the commitments suggest or augur poorly for continued effort on the part of Canada. We are not in any way trying to imply that the effort hasn't been strong to date. It certainly has been, and I think if you look at the back of this sheet, you will see that the disbursement trends are very strong.

There is a disparity, certainly, between the OECD DAC numbers and the numbers that CIDA counts. I don't want to bore the committee with the details, but it is very much the case that the way CIDA counts internally is different from the way CIDA reports to the OECD DAC. We have chosen to use the OECD DAC numbers, which do show some difference in the total volume. It's because of internal counting differences inside CIDA, as compared to what it reports to the DAC.

Do you want me to go into those details?

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** No, no, but I'm a little concerned that Canadians, from your policy brief, could be left with the impression that our government is not very substantially increasing. You are saying decreasing, and you're worried about precipitous decline.

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** I think we're very clear. We say, "The total volume of aid disbursements to basic education has grown in every year since 2003." We're very explicit about that. At the same time, we have to say clearly that commitments have fallen over the last two years.

•(1225)

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** How about in real dollars? What has happened in terms of real Canadian taxpayer dollars?

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** That is disbursements. Disbursements have gone up. We say so. We say that very explicitly.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** Oh, okay. That's the—

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** I don't think we mean, in any way, to undermine that record. That record is a sterling record. It's one that we want to be very proud of. At the same time, we want to make sure that this record is not eroded.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** As I say, I truly apologize for being argumentative—

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** No, no. It's fine. I think it's a good question.

**Hon. Jim Abbott:** —but in 2008-09 we have spent Canadian taxpayers' dollars. I don't know about commitments, disbursements, or any of the other English words that we're into a semantic debate about here, but we spent \$309 million of Canadian taxpayers' money, of which, because of the semantics in your report, they are implying that we're spending \$150 million.... Furthermore, we have gone up

from \$309 million to \$401 million, which is, the last time I looked, darn near a 25% increase year over year.

Yet you are saying there is precipitous decline. I apologize, but I have a lot of difficulty with that, because I don't think it really paints a fair picture of the high, high level of commitment of this government.

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** One thing I should add to this is that although the rate of spending on education, or the volume of spending, has gone up, in relative terms education has actually not received the same share of increase as the total aid budget. So we're looking at a situation where education has been downplayed within the total aid budget.

I don't disagree with you at all. The total volume shows very substantial increases, but so has the volume of the total aid budget, right? We have a very large increase in ODA and we have substantial growth in education funding, but not at the levels that one might expect given the growth of the ODA budget.

So I think we have a reason to be concerned or to want to ask for... [Inaudible—Editor].

**The Chair:** I'm going to wrap this up there. We'll probably have time for another round.

Mr. Dewar, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** Thanks, Chair.

Thank you to our guests for their presentations.

I understand the difference and I don't think it's semantics. I think it's fairly clear that when one disburses and one commits, they're different. I also am quite aware that when we look at outcomes, particularly on gender for girls, one of the variables that has been tracked for decades in terms of success in outcomes for girls is the fact that education is probably the most important variable to invest in.

I say that because when we look at the global picture in education and we look at the issue of maternal health, as you've quite rightly linked them, I don't think there's any argument at all, and I don't think we'd get an argument from my friends across the way. If you really want to have an impact on positive outcomes for girls and women, you need to invest in education at the beginning. However, what we're seeing—and I think you're bang on in showing the success in Bangladesh and other places—is that there has been some slippage in that commitment. I'm not just talking about Canada; I think this is a global picture we're painting.

We're talking about Canada's role here. I think your point is that if we're going to actually take this on seriously, we have a time to do that, and that's coming up with the G8 and G20. Is it your belief that you're seeing the will—because I think we have the way here—from other G8 partners and, if you have enough information, G20 partners? Is it your belief that they (a) understand that linkage between education, commitment...? I'm focusing on gender. I'm not ignoring guys, but that's a clear focus for a positive outcome for men as well. And (b), if they do understand, do they see the importance of actually putting down markers on that right now because we're in the last five years of our millennium goals trajectory?

Do you see that with other G8 countries because you have that position? Do you think they get it? Do you think there's a willingness to push that, particularly at the G8?

• (1230)

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** It's a mixed picture. I'm not going to get into the business of drawing up a G8 lead table of who is doing the most, who is second, third, fourth, and so on, but there are clearly some leaders within the G8 on this, and I would put Canada and the U.K. as being part of that broad leadership group that has consistently attempted to keep this at the centre of the agenda or tried to mobilize resources consistent with the goals, and so on.

There are other countries that are doing an awful lot in education, in terms of the overall aid envelope for education, but tend to direct their effort not to basic education but to higher education and often provide that support in the form of money that actually ends up in the donor country itself—in other words, paying for scholarships for students to study in certain well-known universities in Paris, or Germany.

Of course, there's a place for that in development, and whether we're talking about Canada or anywhere else, hosting students from developing countries is one of the great contributions that can be made to development. But when you have financing gaps in basic education on the scale that we have described in the report, where the majority of kids in many countries don't have a chance to get through primary school, particularly if they happen to be born female, to load your aid support to higher levels of education in the host country is not the appropriate strategy. Ironically, many of the countries that are following that practice, at least in the public statements of their leaders, do recognize the supreme importance of what you've described—equity for girls in education, reaching the marginalized, and so on—but somehow that's not getting translated through into their aid priorities.

That's one of the reasons all of us in UNESCO, through the 1Goal campaign and other initiatives, are really trying in advance of the G8 to get leaders to focus on this goal and to deliver the resources that can accelerate progress.

I'd like to make one small additional point relating to the last discussion that we had. I just want to make it clear and to reaffirm the point that Karen Mundy made that Canada has been a leader in this area and that what we are communicating, certainly in our report and I think in the briefing paper, is that there has been a step increase on exactly the scale you described in terms of real money. If you're using a 2009 figure, we didn't have that disbursement figure when we were preparing the report, but the commitment numbers do matter, because what we've seen globally in recent years was three years of decline or stagnation in commitments, which subsequently translated in the fourth year into a drop in disbursements. That hasn't happened in Canada, and no one is suggesting that it has happened, but I think any shortfall in commitments raises that potential threat, and that's the point being made.

**Mr. Paul Dewar:** First of all, to sum up what you've said, Canada and the U.K. are leaders in this area. To do something positive, if we believe in this campaign—and I think everyone around this table believes in access to basic education for all, and it's something we signed on to—for everyone it's a no-brainer; it's proven. So let's get

on with it and let's set the agenda at the G8 to say let's all get on with it.

But then you have to kick the tires, and when you look at our commitments with the budget we've just tabled, we do see a decline to our ODA. I have to say, that is a concern, and you've seen that trend from other jurisdictions. In other words, notwithstanding the increases we've seen, the commitments from our government are declining after this next fiscal year, and we haven't come close to our goal of the 0.7% UN target, as you know. In fact, we've gone the other way.

Have you seen a similar pattern with other countries as they presented their budgets? Are you aware of that?

• (1235)

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** Again, it's a mixed picture. If you go to the most recent OECD development assistance committee review of G-7 countries, it does cite a number of countries that are falling short of their Gleneagles commitments. Those are 2005 commitments. Canada isn't one of those countries, but Germany, France, and Japan are all cited as falling some way short of commitments in terms of program data in the pipeline now.

Inevitably, that's going to have knock-on effects for education. If the envelope is shrinking, you can't protect every sector within the envelope and there is a real danger that it will have consequences for education. That's why I think the summit is an opportunity to really draw a line in the sand and say, "We are this one generation of primary school kids away; let's set a new course."

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

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I think what we'll do is finish one more round of five minutes each. I'll go to Mr. Goldring then Mr. Pearson, and then wrap it up for today.

Mr. Goldring, you have five minutes.

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

Mr. Watkins, thank you for appearing here today. I think we all agree around the table here on the importance of education and on it being one of the core initiatives we should be concentrating on, even with the millennium development goals, for all the reasons you mentioned here. I could add a few more, too, such as promoting democracy and good government so that people can recognize that their elected officials and elected people will represent them and represent their well-being. The concern here is that education is an easy word to say, but quality education means given the right tools, with properly trained teachers, and proper classroom conditions too. All of these things are very important for economic development, for training people so they can have family-sustaining jobs, which in turn helps the well-being of their families.

On the list of your global partners, one mentioned here is Rights and Democracy. That's exactly fitting into what I just said. I understand they receive some funding from government. You say that it's matched funding from these partners with the federal government contributions? What would the total budget of the organization be?

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** The total budget is \$45,000.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** So \$45,000 is matched by the partners?

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** The partners raise a portion of that, and the other portion would be matched.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** Right.

Looking at the overview of the Canadian aid—

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** We are a volunteer-based education, really depending on our members.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** I'm just trying to get an idea of where the funding is from.

Looking at the overall Canadian aid chart here, it indicates here that it has been increasing rather than decreasing the ODA level. And while appreciating the concern of the 0.7% ODA, which is mentioned time and again, my understanding is that the manner in which other countries tax the system is structured differently from the way it is in Canada.

To make a more accurate comparison, here in Canada, you'd have to take Canada's official development assistance and add the total amount of personal contributions to international charities that Canadians make in order to be able to parallel what the equivalency is of other countries. And wouldn't the funding given, for example, to Haiti and other countries affected by disasters by the diaspora in Canada of the various countries be a very significant amount?

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** That's a really good point. The Haiti example really demonstrates that in the extraordinary outpouring of generosity you've had in Canada and other countries across the world in response to that crisis.

Unfortunately, the limitation of this data is that it captures what is officially reported to the OECD as development assistance by OECD countries. This is essentially bilateral aid and support from multilateral agencies, whether its the World Bank, an international development association, or humanitarian initiatives. They don't capture what you'd describe as personal donations.

What we tried to do in the report this year is look at other sources. I can send you the relevant material. There's actually quite a lot of other sources. There's large-scale philanthropic donations, small-scale personal contributions, and a whole lot of things not captured in these numbers. If you could redo the numbers for every OECD country, capturing these private contributions and philanthropic donations, the picture would look different. Precisely what it would look like, I couldn't tell you, so I can't give you a full answer to that question.

• (1240)

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** It's known full well that it's not just what they contribute for disasters and straight assistance, but also, many of the diaspora contribute money on an ongoing basis to families in the other countries. A very substantial amount of Haitians' national input

comes from the diaspora, not for the disaster assistance relief, but on an ongoing basis.

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** Those numbers would be captured on a different basis, as remittances, which we don't capture here.

But you're right, and I'm not disagreeing with your central point. Indeed, if you look at flows of remittance income across borders, it heavily outstrips what happens through official development assistance. So you're absolutely right to draw attention to that.

**Mr. Peter Goldring:** I would carry that to the other extension that, you know, every country on earth is represented in Canada, so the diasporas are really worldwide. It's rather unique. Many European countries wouldn't necessarily be so. Many of them have larger levels of immigration, of diaspora from various countries around the world, and I would say that kind of distinguishes Canada rather uniquely. That contribution being sent all over the world to countries certainly does aid the health and well-being of children, parents, and families. It would be interesting if we could put a number to that somehow, just to get the real perspective. If you factor in all of the contributions made worldwide, I have a feeling it may very well be much higher than that 0.7%.

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

That's all the time we have here.

We're going to move over to finish with Mr. Pearson.

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

Thank you very much for coming in.

I think what Mr. Goldring has brought up is interesting. If, for instance, you compare Canada with the United States as far as private giving, Canada is way down compared to what the United States has done, even per capita. I don't think we should get these things mixed up. There are certain standards we should be talking about. That's what we should stick with.

Ms. Mundy, I really appreciated what you said about the difference between commitments and disbursements. Any NGO on the ground understands that. It seems to be as commitments come, instead of being 10 years, they're now five years, or they're now three years. As they go through that, even though they might go and increase this year on the basis of programming, they're looking at the back to see how much money will be coming in that's been committed, and they realize those numbers have gone down. That has a direct impact on the ability or the robustness of an NGO to be able to operate on the ground, because it does not know. It's going to be less than it was before.

I think what you're saying is very valuable. I'm not trying to be political with it. I realize that other countries have the same difficulty with Canada on this.

I would like to ask you, specifically, what is, do you think, the one particular reason why the commitment side of things has gone down the way it has?

Mr. Watkins, I was very interested in what you were saying about how we could take the Afghan idea about education, the whole-of-government approach, and apply it someplace else. One of the places you talked about was the Congo. So for my friend, Mr. Dewar, who is very interested in that area, can you just tell me briefly what that would look like? How would we do that?

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** I think that it's very difficult for us to understand what's going on with the commitments.

Perhaps Mr. Abbott can assist us in providing us with further information about ongoing plans in government.

**Hon. Bob Rae:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]...a cheque. He's got the money.

**Dr. Karen Mundy:** I just want to come back to this issue of private contributions. I don't think that any of us who advocate for an increase in the volume of funding for basic education in the developing world imagine that governments like Canada are going to be able to do all the heavy lifting on this issue.

One area where we do feel that Canada may play a very important role is to help to set up a framework to leverage innovative forms of finance. So let's think outside of the box. I think this is an area where we can harness Canadian contributions. We can leverage government funding and perhaps move toward bridging this gap.

I hope we would have a chance to come back to this committee and talk about these commitments in the coming year. We are expecting to receive information from CIDA on disbursements, and we have to unpack that and look at what's going on in terms of forward planning. When we have that, I hope we'll be able to come back to you and share with you what's going on.

• (1245)

**Dr. Kevin Watkins:** Just to echo that, it's not just NGOs that need that certainty and stability. If you are recruiting teachers, you need to be able to pay them in three, four, five years' time. That's why you keep a very close eye on what's happening on the commitment side of the ledger.

Also, this issue about remittances is a really important one, because it draws attention to potential other sources of financing. We know it's not going to be possible to close a \$16-billion financing gap at the next G8 summit. We know at the same time the G20 is already looking at a whole range of innovative financing options to mobilize additional resources.

Again, I think this is an area where there ought to be a far more active and robust G8/G20 dialogue looking at potential avenues, at whether these ideas are being explored around financial transactions, levies, and this sort of thing, but making sure that education figures are a potential beneficiary from those sorts of approaches.

The reason I mention the Afghan example is that what you often hear when you speak to donors about providing aid to conflict-affected countries is essentially that the risks are too high to get involved; the reporting structures are too weak so they don't know what's going to happen to the money; they're not going to have to report properly to legislative assemblies and so on; and we can't afford to get it wrong.

Afghanistan has demonstrated that when donors pool their resources, they reduce their shared risk to some degree. They are pooling risk. That is essentially what they are doing, and they are pooling risk in an environment where they are looking both at the security side of the agenda and how to create a secure environment for development to happen, and how to pool risk, and how to recognize that these governments aren't going to be able to report in the same way as a far more developed, secure, stable country.

If you look at a context like the DRC, you have this combination of insecurity on the ground, very large IDP camps with appalling levels of provision for education and highly variable levels of provision for education, and the collective donor response tends to be that they can't do business with the government because of all the weaknesses I have described. This is a classic example where donors could be pooling their resources far more actively. They could be looking to the type of arrangement they put in place in Sierra Leone or Liberia, a multi-donor pooled fund type of arrangement, and I think they'd be willing to take a little more risk. These are high-risk environments. You're recognizing it may not deliver the same results in the short term, but as a long-term investment in peace and security it could do a very great deal.

**The Chair:** Mr. Watkins, thank you very much for being here and taking time.

Ms. Mundy, we dragged you in here midway. Thank you very much.

That's all for today. We'll see everybody on Tuesday.

The meeting is adjourned.









**MAIL  POSTE**

Canada Post Corporation / Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

**Lettermail**

**Poste-lettre**

**1782711  
Ottawa**

*If undelivered, return COVER ONLY to:*  
Publishing and Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5

*En cas de non-livraison,  
retourner cette COUVERTURE SEULEMENT à :*  
Les Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5

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

### **SPEAKER'S PERMISSION**

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Additional copies may be obtained from: Publishing and  
Depository Services  
Public Works and Government Services Canada  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0S5  
Telephone: 613-941-5995 or 1-800-635-7943  
Fax: 613-954-5779 or 1-800-565-7757  
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca  
http://publications.gc.ca

Also available on the Parliament of Canada Web Site at the  
following address: <http://www.parl.gc.ca>

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

### **PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT**

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

On peut obtenir des copies supplémentaires en écrivant à : Les  
Éditions et Services de dépôt  
Travaux publics et Services gouvernementaux Canada  
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0S5  
Téléphone : 613-941-5995 ou 1-800-635-7943  
Télécopieur : 613-954-5779 ou 1-800-565-7757  
publications@tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca  
http://publications.gc.ca

Aussi disponible sur le site Web du Parlement du Canada à  
l'adresse suivante : <http://www.parl.gc.ca>