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CANADA

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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, May 26, 2010**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** I'm calling the meeting to order. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this is a study on maternal and child health.

On March 31, the Standing Committee on the Status of Women passed the following motion:

That the Committee invite the Minister of International Cooperation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister State (Status of Women) to appear before the Committee to present a detailed plan of the maternal and child health strategy which the Prime Minister intends to present to the other G8 leaders before their scheduled meeting in June.

This is why we're here today. Two ministers are here: the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister for the Status of Women, and the Honourable Bev Oda, Minister of International Cooperation.

We also have witnesses who are here to support the ministers. They are: Suzanne Clément, coordinator, head of agency, Status of Women Canada, and Suzanne Cooper, research analyst, and, from the Canadian International Development Agency, Margaret Biggs, president.

Before we begin, I will let everyone know that you are each allowed 10 minutes to present. That's the rule at this committee. I will give you a signal when you have two minutes left. At the end of 10 minutes, there will be rounds of questions and we will try to get in as many rounds as we can.

We will now hear presentations. I'll begin with the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister for the Status of Women.

Minister.

[Translation]

**Hon. Rona Ambrose (Minister for Status of Women):** Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen members of the committee, thank you for inviting me, as well as my Deputy Minister, Suzanne Clément, and Suzanne Cooper, who are here with me. It is my pleasure to participate in the current discussion on maternal and child health.

[English]

I am proud that our government is committed to helping women in Canada and throughout the world, as demonstrated by the Prime Minister's leadership on the G8 initiative for maternal and child health.

While this particular initiative falls under the purview of my colleague, Minister Oda, in my role as Minister of the Status of Women, I believe that empowering women and fighting for equality,

liberty, and an end to violence against women are not only ideals that we should be striving for in Canada but blessings that should be enjoyed by all women around the world.

[Translation]

Like Canadian women, all women deserve equality, access to education, a life free from hunger, disease or violence, and the right to know that their children are safe at school. These freedoms and possibilities should not be limited to women who are lucky enough to live in western countries, they should be available to women everywhere in the world.

[English]

That is why our government, for instance, pushed for the pardon of a Saudi woman sentenced to jail time and lashings for a crime as trivial as being present with men who were not her relatives. That is why we spearheaded a resolution at the United Nations that censures Iran for its systematic violations of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of its citizens, including women.

And it is why our government has expressed deep concern about the unsatisfactory human rights situations in many countries, especially with respect to women's rights, and called on these countries to live up to their international obligations such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Through the work of our brave men and women in uniform and our allies, Canada is helping to greatly improve the lives of Afghan women and their families. We have now vaccinated more than 200,000 children and more than 175,000 women of child-bearing age against measles and tetanus.

The Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan has provided more than 418,000 Afghans—two-thirds of whom are women—with small loans to start businesses and build better lives. In a country where only eight years ago girls were denied access to formal education, there are now over two million little girls going to school. Also, our most basic and fundamental democratic right, the right to participate fully in the political life of their country, a right that Canadian women have enjoyed for over 90 years, is now enjoyed by all of Afghanistan's citizens—men and women included.

Improving the lives of girls and women around the world also includes standing up for their safety, rights, and dignity as individuals. Here at home, our government is emphasizing the equality of men and women under the law and condemning barbaric practices such as female genital mutilation, so-called honour killings, and all gender-based violence.

•(1535)

[Translation]

I am proud to be part of a government that is committed to ensuring that every woman is treated with respect and dignity, a government that speaks for those who have been silenced.

[English]

But our principled stands abroad never absolve us of our responsibility to address the many challenges that women face here at home.

[Translation]

Working towards eliminating violence against women and girls will remain a priority for me and for our government, as it should be for everyone in this room. We are a strong and determined voice promoting safer communities and environments for Canadian women. This is why one of the Women's Community Fund's priorities is to finance projects that support victims of violence, so as to help women and girls who are marginalized, frightened and abused and offer them real and positive opportunities, the results of which are life changing.

[English]

By providing this funding at the community level, we ensure that the needs of women in remote, rural, cultural, and urban communities are properly addressed so that we can work together to end this bane on our society.

This is in addition to some of the other measures our government is taking to protect vulnerable women, such as raising the age of consent from 14 to 16 years to protect young people, including girls, from sexual exploitation by adult predators.

We've strengthened the peace bond provisions concerning those previously convicted of sexual offences against children, and we have also improved the availability of testimonial aids for vulnerable adult victims and witnesses, including women who have experienced violence.

[Translation]

Human trafficking is an appalling crime that affects women, and particularly Aboriginal women, some of whom are not even 12 years of age.

The Criminal Code is being amended again in order to enact three specific provisions that would make it illegal to participate in human trafficking for the purpose of exploitation, such as forced sexual exploitation or forced labour, to acquire financial or material gains through human trafficking, and to dispose of or keep travel or identity documents for facilitating human trafficking.

[English]

These measures are designed to protect victims, many of whom are women.

**The Chair:** With respect, you have gone through half of your time, which is five minutes, and you were asked to appear before the committee to present a detailed plan of the maternal and child health strategy. You will get to that...?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** I'm here to support the Minister of International Cooperation, and yes, I will be speaking to that issue.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** On the issue of protecting women from human traffickers and preventing serious crimes and human rights violations, I firmly support the bill initially brought forward by my Conservative colleague, Joy Smith, to impose a mandatory minimum penalty of five years' imprisonment for trafficking a person under the age of 18 years.

Our government's campaign to increase public awareness and encourage the reporting of suspected cases of human trafficking has been widely praised by both the legal community and victims' groups.

Some of the most important measures that our government has taken, though, are those that will help some of the most vulnerable and disenfranchised women in this country—aboriginal women. That is why we have reintroduced the Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act, which will significantly improve the quality of life for aboriginal women and children living on reserves by providing them with basic rights and remedies on fair division of property.

It is frankly inexcusable that in the 20th century in Canada, aboriginal women, one of the most disenfranchised groups in Canada, do not have the same rights under the law that the rest of us are entitled to.

[Translation]

Our government has also introduced the Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act, to amend two discriminatory provisions in the Indian Act, thus enabling the grandchildren of aboriginal women who lost their status unjustly to register.

[English]

This year's budget also provides funding to address the disturbingly high number of missing and murdered aboriginal women. As you know, we will be taking concrete actions to ensure that law enforcement and the justice system meet the needs of aboriginal women and their families.

[Translation]

Madam Chair, as Minister for Status of Women, it is a privilege for me to work on improving women's lives. I am extremely proud of the work done by our government for women here and abroad.

I hope that we will be able to work together to truly improve the lives of women and children in some of the poorest countries of the world, as well as the lives of the most vulnerable women here, in Canada.

Thank you.

•(1540)

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Minister.

Now I will go to Minister Oda for 10 minutes.

I will let you have a two-minute warning, Minister.

[Translation]

**Hon. Bev Oda (Minister of International Cooperation):** Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me the opportunity to speak to the members of the committee.

Improving the lives of mothers and their children is key to reducing poverty levels in a real and sustainable way.

[English]

This year the international community will review the progress made towards achieving the millennium development goals before the 2015 deadline. Of all the MDGs put forward a decade ago, improving maternal health is the one that lags the furthest behind.

Madam Chair, although recent evidence indicates that maternal mortality rates are improving, progress has been uneven, not only among developing countries but within countries themselves, with mothers in rural areas and the least accessible areas always suffering the most.

It is also the MDG goal that has received the least amount of support. But more important, progress has not been fast enough, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where maternal mortality decreased by only 2% between 1990 and 2005. According to the World Health Organization, every year more than 500,000 women die during pregnancy and childbirth from largely preventable causes, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

Concerning the results to date for reducing child mortality—MDG 4—the situation is equally concerning. Although mortality of children under five years has declined steadily worldwide, we have not yet achieved the results required to meet the MDG goal by 2015.

Every year three million babies die within the first week of their lives, and almost nine million children in the developing world die before their fifteenth birthday from largely preventable causes, such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, severe acute malnutrition, measles, and HIV. That is why the Prime Minister chose to focus on maternal and under-five child health at the G8 summit in June.

A few weeks ago in Halifax, all G8 development ministers unanimously agreed that improving the health of mothers and children is a top priority for the G8. There was a strong consensus that our scope of action would require a comprehensive approach that includes the full continuum of care, from pre-pregnancy through pregnancy, delivery, and early childhood. This means integrating high-impact interventions at the community level, such as antenatal care, postpartum care, family planning, treatment and prevention of diseases, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, immunization, and nutrition.

Ministers really stressed the importance of improving and integrating nutrition into development goals. The nutrition of mothers is critical for the health of their newborns, and it is absolutely essential to early childhood development and building a healthy population in the long run.

Most important, in keeping with the Prime Minister's focus on accountability, which he has set out as a key theme of our G8 presidency, we agreed to a set of principles by which to guide our work ahead. We agreed to greater predictability, accountability, and transparency of our aid; to pay what is pledged and to fulfill

commitments; to shift the focus from inputs only to sustainable outcomes; to improve coordination using country systems to reinforce the ownership and accountability of partner countries to their citizens.

Specific to our G8 priority of maternal and child health, we wanted to make sure that we are making a difference, so we agreed to the long-term sustainability of results; to build upon proven, cost-effective, evidence-based interventions; to focus upon countries with the greatest need while continuing to support those making progress; to support country-led national health policies and plans that are locally supported; to increase the coherence of our efforts through better coordination and harmonization at the country, district, and community levels; and to strengthen our monitoring, reporting, and evaluation.

We agreed that enduring progress does not require new mechanisms, funds, and structures. Rather, existing mechanisms and structures need to be aligned around a common set of goals and aid effectiveness principles, particularly in support of country plans and systems.

● (1545)

As the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, has said,

We know how to save mothers' lives. Some simple blood tests, a doctor's consultation and someone qualified to help with the birth can make a huge difference. Add some basic antibiotics, blood transfusions and a safe operating room, and the risk of death can almost be eliminated.

Over the past months, I've met with representatives of our Canadian non-governmental partners such as CARE, UNICEF, World Vision, and Save the Children, who shared their collective experience and knowledge with me. Canada is also working closely with its multilateral partners such as the UN, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the OECD, and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health.

Earlier this month, I was at the United Nations supporting the new action plan on maternal and child health as well as the new plans scaling up nutrition. I have also consulted the African Partnership Forum, because, as you know, the situation on maternal and child health is most critical in Africa. I'm happy to report that many African governments, such as those in Mali and Tanzania, are making important investments and developing new partnerships to advance this important issue.

As we approach the G8 summit in June and the United Nations MDG summit in September, G8 members have taken stock and acknowledged that much remains to be done. With solidarity on this issue, Canada knows that the G8 can make a tangible difference in the lives of millions of mothers and children. As has been pointed out, “A society has little chance to thrive if it fails to keep its mothers healthy and its babies alive”.

Thank you.

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

Now we will begin a question-and-answer period. It begins with seven minutes. Those seven minutes include questions and answers. We will go in order, beginning with Ms. Neville for the Liberals.

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

Let me begin by saying thank you for coming today, Ministers. We appreciate your being here, but I must confess that I don't know where to begin. I've just read the motion passed by the committee inviting you here; it was to ask you to present a plan on maternal and child health strategy that you intend to present at the G8, and we certainly did not get that.

I'm going to speak quickly because I have some comments to make, but I really would like your responses. We know that there were briefing notes prepared for CIDA in January that were disregarded by the minister. We know that three months after the briefing it was confirmed that Canada's contribution to the G8 on maternal health and child health would not include funding for safe abortion.

My question is, what happened during this time? Did anyone at the cabinet stand up for women's rights and women's health? There seems to be a paucity of advocating for women's health.

Minister Oda, did you make the decision not to fund abortion? If you did not, who made that decision?

On my other question, the G8 is Canada's signature initiative. As you reference yourself in the brief, there will be no additional funding given to that. Can you tell us how this plan will happen with no additional funding and where the funding will come from if there won't be any additional funding?

For my other comment, I note that you referenced the African Union. I was at a breakfast yesterday sponsored by the nurses where the African Union made the point quite specifically that what they need in Africa is a full range of reproductive health, including access to abortion when and where it is legal.

I'm sorry to throw all of this at you, but my time is limited, and I'm astounded by the lack of response to the motion as it was originally passed.

• (1550)

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Thank you very much for the question. I am surprised that you are not clear in your understanding of what we've laid out as our G8 initiative.

We have said that our initiative is about saving the lives of mothers and children. We have identified that MDGs 4 and 5 are not progressing as quickly as possible to meet the goals of 2015. I find it

shocking that, in the past, the health of mothers and reducing their mortality have been supported least of all, particularly by Canada. Canada has done some very good work, but when you look worldwide, this area is something that has not received the kind of support that it should have.

I want to make one correction. I did not say there would be no additional funding. What I said and what was also agreed to by all of the G8 ministers, by the UN family, and by the Secretary-General of the UN, was that we do not need new mechanisms, new funds, or new structures. What we have to do is make sure that we surge our support behind maternal and child health, so that we will progress faster towards reaching the goal in 2015. We did not say that there is no additional funding.

What this government will not do, and which has been done by previous governments, is to announce a fancy name for a fund while having no intention to fulfill pledges. We're saying—and we've been told this by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and all the agencies involved—that there is a multiplicity of funds and mechanisms that are all very good and all very effective. We don't need a new mechanism.

We have mechanisms that are effective. What we have to do is increase our support for them. Canada will be increasing its support and will be doing its part as part of the G8 initiative.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Minister, I asked about the decision-making process.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** You asked me about a plan. I said that our plan is based on saving the lives of mothers and children. We've also indicated that we will look to the most effective evidence-based actions that can be taken.

When we have a number of experts, including the Secretary-General, saying that we know what the tools are, many of the causes of death of mothers and children are preventable, and these are easily administered, what we have to do is bring them together at the country level and work in a coordinated way so that we increase the access to health care workers and to health facilities. We know, and we've learned over the years, that the best way we can provide these services is at the local community level, at the district level.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Could you answer my question about the decision-making process, please?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Of course. When we looked at the information provided by the department, which gives us a lot of information and data, historical as well as current, reported on past studies that have been made... When we put out the parameters of “most effective”, “having the greatest impact”, and “ensuring that our aid dollars are going to make a difference and really save lives”, then we outlined the parameters, as we said, the principles to which our G8 counterparts have all agreed, and the suggested lines of action that could be taken.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** With respect, Minister, you haven't answered the questions I asked. Did you make the decision not to fund abortions and the full range of reproductive rights? If you didn't make it, how was the decision made?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** As all decisions in our government, they're made by our government as a whole.

•(1555)

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you very much.

We heard Minister Ambrose speak about the importance of respecting international obligations. One of the international obligations—and I remember quite vividly the Prime Minister signing on to it—is CEDAW.

CEDAW provides the strongest legal protection for women's sexual and reproductive health, and I quote, "...to ensure" that women and men have equal "access to health care services", including "family planning" services, and "to decide...on the number and spacing of their children" and to have the information necessary to enable women "to exercise these rights".

My question to you is about whether Canada has now abandoned the CEDAW commitment or how you reconcile it with the commitment made. I do remember when the Prime Minister pledged to honour CEDAW.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** I also want to make sure it's very clear, as was indicated when the president of CIDA appeared, that there was no change to the current practices and policies of CIDA, the agency. What we have identified is a G8 initiative, something that Canada couldn't put forward as an individual initiative. We continue to support CIDA. We continue to support the equality of men and women. We do it in a way that will be effective.

I must tell you that I'm pleased you've given me the opportunity... When you see what the obstacles are to women in many of the cultures and many of the countries, they face traditional obstacles, cultural and ethnic obstacles, etc. This is a challenge that will take a long time, but Canada has worked very hard in the past and will continue to work, so we will continue our support.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** What I'm hearing you say is you're—

**The Chair:** Ms. Neville, you have gone one minute over, so I'm going to move next to Madame Deschamps from the Bloc.

[*Translation*]

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

Welcome, ministers. It is a privilege to have the two of you with us today. We have very little time, and many questions to ask. My comments will tie in what Ms. Neville was saying earlier.

Given the fact that we do not have any numbers or an action plan... You know that when we lack knowledge and are not aware of the facts, doubts can arise.

Minister Oda, you said that the decision to not finance abortion abroad was made by the government. There are 308 Members of Parliament, and perhaps we would have liked to be consulted on this issue. After all, we are a cross-section of our constituencies, and citizens who are Quebec and Canada's citizens, after all.

First of all, I would like to know whether CIDA consulted civil society regarding the strategy you have announced. If so, which organizations were consulted?

In addition, Madam Minister, in your speech you said that, according to the World Health Organization, more than 5,000 women die annually worldwide. That is terrible.

**A voice:** It was 500,000.

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** And apparently 13% of those women die as a result of unsafe abortions. We cannot forsake these women. After all, morally and socially, we have a... As a woman and a Canadian citizen, I feel obligated to support these women. Are we to leave them by the roadside to die while we take care of others whose problems are not related to abortions performed by backroom charlatans?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Thank you, Madam.

[*English*]

Let me first of all answer the question. As was indicated clearly at committees, publicly, and also within the House of Commons, CIDA has never financed abortion and does not finance abortion.

What we have done and have indicated as a G8 family is that family planning is part of contributing to the health of mothers. What family planning does is enable a woman to space her children and also have more control over the number of children she would have in her family. I just want to make sure that's clear.

I also want to make sure that...the definition used by the world agencies internationally, the multilateral organizations, was based on the Cairo program of action. If you look at paragraph 8.25... I will read it: "In no case should abortion be promoted as a method of family planning". It then goes on to say: "Prevention of unwanted pregnancies must always be given the highest priority...".

That is the action plan we are following. That's the action plan that the UNFPA has based their definition on, as have other United Nations agencies. So we are in step with the definition of family planning. Family planning, as you would see...I hope it was provided to you with a summary of our G8 development ministers' meetings and it is in the list of possible actions that could be taken.

We have consulted. In my opening presentation, I've indicated the organizations that have been consulted. I know that the department has also extended the consultations as well. Not only that, I've met with my G8 counterparts by travelling internationally to their countries, as well as consulting with them at the Halifax development ministers' meeting.

I also consulted with the experts we have in Canada. We invited all the major children's hospitals in Canada to send representations and to give us advice, and so many of them came forward with extensive experience in developing countries to give us advice. These are scientists, academics, and doctors who are actually working and giving advice to the World Health Organization. We should be proud that so many of them are Canadians.

So we have consulted, and if you would like a fuller list, I can ask the department to provide that to you—a full list of not only those I've consulted with, but also the consultations we've had as an agency.

•(1600)

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** I have one last question to ask, Madam Chair. Do I have time for it?

[English]

**The Chair:** You have one and a half minutes.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** You said at the beginning that maternal health is one of the goals currently lagging the furthest behind. Since you have made maternal health your priority on the eve of the G8, will you reduce your funding of other initiatives in order to be able to inject the necessary financing—financing that is not yet known? What mechanisms will you establish to help you select the countries that will receive priority consideration? And how will you choose from among the projects submitted to you?

[English]

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Again, thank you for the question. Maybe I can explain that when—

**The Chair:** You have a minute to do so.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** I will do the fullest I can to answer the question.

When you host a G8 initiative, it's the prerogative of the host to announce the focus of the G8 and to encourage support. The actual commitment by the host country will be made by the leaders at the leaders' summit in June. We've outlined the principles and we've outlined possible actions, and I know that all of my counterparts, the G8 ministers, are now home in their countries also putting together what they will come forward with in June for their leaders to announce as support.

As far as financing goes, we will not need to take money away from other programs. As you know, our government has been increasing its international aid by 8% every year. That 8% remains in the base of CIDA and our international assistance; then we build 8% on top of that. That brings us to \$500 million for international assistance, the largest amount ever in the history of Canada. We have 8% this year, our G8 year, that is brand new money, and out of that money we're confident that we can do our part to support a G8 initiative.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now I can go to Ms. Wong, for the Conservatives.

**Mrs. Alice Wong (Richmond, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you, Minister Oda and Minister Ambrose.

This is a question for Minister Oda.

First of all, I'd like to congratulate you for the good work of CIDA under your leadership on behalf of Canada abroad. I just came back from the Philippines and visiting the World Vision resettlement camp in Antipolo. We donated a good chunk of money to help those who suffered in the typhoon, and I am glad to tell you that everybody there thanked Canada for all the great work CIDA has done. They are now staying in temporary camps, but they will be moving to a permanent resettlement area that all the foreign aid partners worked together to build and will be used very soon.

There is now clean water, and I'm very happy to tell you that although some of the children were not in very good health at first, on the spot our ambassador there has done a great job. He's now working with World Vision to put together a proposal to make sure the children and women will get the best health care they can. I would like to congratulate you on that.

Our government is committed to helping those who are in need all over the world, and clearly our government is also committed to assisting women and children. Our G8 initiative is on that very subject.

Can you comment on the track record this government has in meeting commitments, particularly in Africa, and doubling our aid? The opposition continually claims that we are abandoning Africa. Is there any merit in their accusations?

•(1605)

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Thank you very much for the question.

We are not abandoning Africa, as you've said that others are saying. In fact, rather than rhetoric, our facts and our actions will speak louder.

Certainly, as the minister, I noted that many times countries and governments will go to conferences, will make large announcements, make pledges, etc., and not fulfill those commitments and pledges. That is why accountability is so important when you're doing development work. If you don't fulfill your commitments, it means the countries or the recipients have no way of having any predictability, and that's why in Halifax the G8 ministers decided that we would ask the OECD to do some work for us to ensure that we can increase the predictability of our aid support to all developing countries.

Regarding Africa specifically, I've said this, and I will say it again, because I'm very proud of it. It has been noted by our partners, it has been noted internationally, and it has been noted by NGOs and even in a recently released report that Canada has met its commitment to double its aid to Africa, which was part of the Gleneagles G8 commitment. We did that one year ahead of the deadline and we maintain that doubling aid level.

In fact, we are meeting our commitment for the African education program and the African health systems program. And as far as our ongoing commitment to Africa is concerned, I want to point out that 67% of our food aid went to Africa, 60% of our agricultural support is going to Africa, and 45% of our multilateral support is being directed to Africa. One of the criteria upon which we base the provision of support is need, and it is unfortunate that there is such a great need in Africa.

I want to point out to you that 24% of the global burden of disease is in developing countries, but only 3% of the world's health workers are in those countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, they need three times the number of health workers they have currently. They need over one million new health workers.



So when we talk about providing access to qualified, trained health workers in their communities, the need is immense. That's why it's important that we, as G8 ministers, provide a comprehensive approach so that we have trained health workers who are properly equipped and properly resourced and in facilities that are closer to the most vulnerable, those women living in the most remote and the least accessible areas. When you look at the numbers of children under five who are dying and at maternal mortality, you'll see this is prevalent. The majority of cases are in Africa.

Our G8 commitment means that a lot of our support will go to Africa. We have not abandoned Africa. In fact, this government has increased its commitment to Africa. But we're making our commitment meaningful and we're going to make sure that it's going to make a difference in the lives of those mothers and children.

• (1610)

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** Thank you very much, Minister.

Our witnesses in our other panels have already told us exactly what you have identified: the need for trained medical staff who will make themselves available to these people who need our help.

We know that the actual details and logistics of Canada's contribution to our G8 initiative will be announced at the G8 meeting; however, much of the debate on this issue has been sidetracked by the opposition's political tactics. Can you tell this committee how, in your opinion, addressing the little details, which are generally left out in favour of the big sensational issues, will save lives?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Well, as Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, said in discussions when he was in Canada, what the mothers and children in developing countries need is less rhetoric and more action. In the House today, I indicated that in a study that has come out the CEO of the organization said it would be a shame if such a worthwhile initiative were to be "sidetracked" by divisive debate and discussion.

There is so much that we can do. There is so much that is effective. We know what the tools are. They're simple. We just have to make sure that we can bring the package together.

This is why we've asked the World Health Organization to provide us with guidance on what a good, qualified health worker in a local community should be trained for and should be equipped with, and what nutrition, what vitamins, and what immunization should be in that package. This is what we mean by a comprehensive approach. We have agreement by all the G8 ministers that this is the best way to go, because the experts are telling us this is the best way to go.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We now have Ms. Mathysen from the NDP.

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

Thank you, Ministers, for being here and for bringing your staff.

I would like to begin with Ms. Biggs, the president of CIDA. I want to know from you in terms of working with partners on the ground if you could tell us and reference any other G8 partners you are aware of that may have a similar view to that of our government

when it comes to reproductive health, specifically those that are tagging the kinds of things they will fund. For example, are any others you're aware of saying that they won't fund abortion?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** I can answer that, if I may. Ms. Biggs will give you the information that I can provide to you as well, because it was a study that I personally did by checking into, I guess, our partner agencies and countries' policies. We all share the international definitions that we all work by. As we've indicated, in Canada's G8 package, we've picked a focus on actions that will be cost effective, that will have high impact, etc.

As indicated also by the Prime Minister, countries, because they built up expertise.... A couple of European countries have done very good work on water and sanitation, an important contributing factor in the good health of mothers and children, and they want to continue that work. As you know, one of the most prevalent causes of children's death is diarrhea. We need good clean water there. The other thing—

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** That's fine. Thank you, Minister. I appreciate that.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** To answer your question—

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** No, you haven't answered my question. I'd like to go back to Ms. Biggs.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** To answer your question, my answer is that everybody—

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** But you haven't answered my question.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** —abides by the same definition—

**The Chair:** Order, please.

**Ms. Margaret Biggs (President, Canadian International Development Agency):** It's not my role to advise the committee on the advice that we give to ministers. I can confirm that the information is widely available and that, as the minister made very clear, background information is always supplied to the government and to ministers, and the government makes its own choices in that regard.

• (1615)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you.

To both ministers, do you believe in a woman's right to choose in regard to reproductive health?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** As you know, the Prime Minister... I answered this question in the House today. The Prime Minister made this government's position very clear this week when he said, and I quote, "...I will oppose any attempt to create a new abortion law". I think we cannot be any clearer than that. The Prime Minister made these comments this week, and the government has reiterated this position several times.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you.

I do hope he's told Mr. Bruinooge that.

I want to get back to the issue of family planning. You keep talking about family planning and the importance of that. Of course, it's very important to provide women with the opportunity to space their children, but you haven't addressed things like rape. There are places where rape is a weapon used against women. What do you say to the young woman who is 12 or 14 years old who needs the support of a clinic that will provide her with an abortion? Do you say, no, sorry, go away...?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** First of all, let me be clear. We're very concerned about rape being used as a weapon of war. We support the United Nations position that rape is considered a war crime and I think, for me, it's disastrous that such things would occur.

We do support providing services and support of those who become victims of such atrocious crimes. In fact, CIDA funds a sexual violence project in the Congo, on which we're working with three UN agencies. We've helped over 36,000 victims with health care services in post-exposure—I'm not a doctor like Dr. Bennett, who I saw earlier—prophylaxis, fistula repair, and they were treated for sexually transmitted infections. In addition to that, we provide them with psychosocial care, because in many cases they're rejected by their families and their partners. We try to help them reintegrate into life. This is a traumatic, very...and I don't use the right words, but I am very alarmed at such atrocities. We do what we can for those who are victims.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** So are we all, but what if they don't want to bear the child they're carrying because of the level of atrocity? Are they among the 70,000 women who die because of unsafe abortion?

Finally, I'd like to pick up on something you said: it's going to be a very long time before we make progress in regard to women's reproductive health. Yes, it is going to take a long time. What kind of statement, though, is Canada making by changing the terms of our international commitment to family planning and support for women that includes abortion?

**Hon. Bev Oda:** As I said very clearly—and I can be no clearer than this—we are not changing our approach, the actions we take, the organizations, the activities we support, and the projects we support. We are not changing that at CIDA.

What we have decided as one initiative.... When you become privileged to host a G8 international summit, it is an opportunity for you to show leadership, and what we have done is that we have said we want to ensure that our G8 initiative is used for value, and the value is saving the lives of mothers and children.

We have not changed our policy, our approach, our programs, our guidelines, etc., at CIDA at all. So, please, I would like you to be accurate. We have not changed anything at CIDA.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Then could you explain—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Mathysen. That's it. You've gone over seven minutes. I know time goes fast when you're having fun, obviously.

The second round is a five-minute round and we're going to go to Ms. Simson for the Liberals.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson (Scarborough Southwest, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to thank both ministers for their appearance here today.

I would like to pick up on the story that was in Monday's *Globe and Mail* and revealed that CIDA prepared a brief for Minister Oda regarding the measures that are absolutely necessary to meet the MDG maternal health goals that everyone admits we're lagging on. This brief included, and I quote, "safe abortion services (when abortion is legal)", under the heading, "How Can We Make It Happen?"

This question is for Ms. Biggs. Does CIDA continue to stand behind that report?

•(1620)

**Ms. Margaret Biggs:** Thank you for the question.

The document that was quoted in the newspaper is actually referring to an appendix in a document that was released under access to information. It was not advice that we provided to the minister. It was quoting—

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** No, not advice—a brief. There's a difference between a brief and advice.

**Ms. Margaret Biggs:** Yes, that's correct. It was a background brief. It contained factual information. It included an appendix that you're referring to there. That refers to the global consensus on maternal and child health.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** But this brief said it would be necessary for safe abortion services when abortion's legal...that's going to be necessary to help us reach the goal. Is that included in the brief and does CIDA stand behind that brief?

**Ms. Margaret Biggs:** That was an appendix that was a piece of background information; it was not written by CIDA officials. I can show you; it was included as a piece of background information. Those are the words of the global consensus on maternal and child health.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Thank you.

I have a question for Ms. Ambrose. When you did your opening statement, which was quite good, about how all women deserve equality and how your government is out there working for women's rights, human rights. With respect to "all women deserve equality", is that men versus women or equality for all women?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** I'm not exactly sure...do you want me to define what equality is?

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** No—

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** I would assume that all of us in this room believe in equality between men and women.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** And between women around the world, equality for women around the world, not just as a comparative to men.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** Yes, I believe that women all over the world should have the same universal rights. That is why I used an example of when our government stood up for a Saudi woman who had received lashings for being in a car with people she wasn't related to—

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** So you stand up for all women to have—

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** Those are universal rights I believe in and I think all of us should.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Right. So in other words, you don't believe that access to safe abortion or to reproductive health is a right for all women.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** I understand that you want to use this debate on abortion to complicate the great initiative that Minister Oda is working on, but the maternal health and newborn initiative is about saving the lives of women and children.

We have documentation and advice from leading aid agencies from around the world that have advised Minister Oda and our government that we have an historic opportunity to work with our G8 partners. We have consensus with our G8 partners to move forward with initiatives that can save the lives of millions of women and children. That's what our government intends to do. Canadians support this kind of initiative. Frankly, it is a laudable, honourable, noble goal that I think all of us as Canadians, and especially women, can get behind.

As Minister Oda has indicated, this is an area in the millennium development goals that we are falling behind on, so she has shown leadership, as has the Prime Minister, to focus on this and make sure that we do our part.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Fair enough. I apologize, but I only have —

**The Chair:** You have 45 seconds left.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** If Canada offers something to its women that it is unwilling to offer outside Canada, do you not see that as an affront to women's rights globally, yes or no? I only have 45 seconds. I apologize.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** I think it is paternalistic for us to suggest that we should impose our views on other countries and that is not what this is about. This is about choosing an initiative that we believe will make a difference in the lives of women and children.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** What if those countries are asking for this? You're opposing—

• (1625)

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** As I said, I believe we have chosen a very honourable, laudable goal of saving the lives of millions of women and children, which is supported by international aid agencies and care agencies all over the world. I think it's an initiative that Canadians feel very strongly about. All of us as women can work toward this goal.

Again, this has been identified by the world care agencies and aid agencies as an area that we need to address. So this is why the Prime

Minister and Minister Oda have shown leadership in this area. We have an historic opportunity to get behind this and not have a distracting debate about abortion in Canada.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** But, Minister, the package you want to deliver for the G8 is picking and choosing—

**Mr. Paul Calandra (Oak Ridges—Markham, CPC):** On a point of order, Madam Chair, I believe we had 45 seconds about two minutes ago. I'm wondering if we might—

**The Chair:** Almost everyone had gone over. Ms. Oda has answered all the questions one minute above everyone, so we've had everyone else getting eight minutes in their seven minutes. I'm going to use my prerogative as the chair to allow this to be answered by the minister.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** I think what has impacted me the most about this is hearing what people like Sharon Marshall from World Vision have said. She has said to us that this debate is distracting. We've heard other care agencies say that this debate we're having here in Canada is distracting and that this is an historic opportunity to help women and children and to save the lives of women and children.

As Minister Oda has said, presidents of organizations like World Vision, UNICEF, Results Canada, CARE Canada, Plan Canada, and Save the Children have said that it's time to focus on the hope and opportunity that this G8 offers us instead of having this distracting debate.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Now I'll go to Ms. McLeod for the Conservatives.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod (Kamloops—Thompson—Cariboo, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would also like to thank—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** You have seven minutes, so enjoy them....

**The Chair:** You are not the chair.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Sorry? I was just speaking to my colleague, Madam Chair. I don't believe that I was addressing the chair.

**The Chair:** It was said loudly enough for the chair to hear. I made my ruling.

Ms. McLeod, please go ahead.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** [Inaudible—Editor]...in this instance, I wasn't addressing the chair so—

**The Chair:** The chair is being fair to everyone. You may come and look at how everyone—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** The chair...[Inaudible—Editor].

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra, you're going to be taking time from Ms. McLeod.

Please, Ms. McLeod, go ahead.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Oh, I already knew that, Madam Chair, believe me.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you, Minister Oda and Minister Ambrose. I really appreciate you both coming here today.

What I would like to do is pick up on some of Minister Ambrose's opening comments. As she might be aware, tonight we're having a meeting regarding Status of Women funding decisions.

Unfortunately, the opposition has really shut down any kind of balance to the conversation that we're going to have tonight and has refused.... They're focusing all the witnesses on some people who of course unfortunately were very regretful about not getting their grants and they indeed turned off allowing any people who were successful in terms of getting grants to sort of talk tonight.

I think what I would really like, because we're not going to have another opportunity, and to pick up on your earlier conversation.... Can you talk about the support the Government is Canada is providing to women through Status of Women Canada?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** Sure. Thank you for the question.

Let me say that the Status of Women department has done great work in working with women's groups across the country to promote the equality of women, to address women's full participation in political life, in social life, and in our democratic life.

Under our government, we have now increased the funding for Status of Women to the highest it has ever been in the history of Canada. It has become so successful that we have too many people applying for funding under this program, which is great news. It's fantastic news.

But what it does mean is that there are some groups that don't receive funding, unfortunately. But we continue to work with these groups. I've yet to see any group that did not receive funding that isn't doing good work. There is great work being done all across this country.

But we wanted to also, at this time, from what I understand, fund groups that have never been funded before, so 40% of this last round of funding went to groups that have never received any funding in the past. I think that's important also.

Another goal of the funding for the Status of Women community groups—

**The Chair:** Excuse me, please. I think I'm going to have to interject here.

I was very clear when we began this meeting today as to what the meeting was about. It was very clearly with regard to maternal and child health. There is a meeting that begins at six o'clock, after the vote, a special meeting called to discuss funding. We are moving away from the reason for this particular meeting to discussing issues that are not meant to be discussed in this meeting.

There is time, Ms. McLeod, for you to ask those questions in the special meeting that was set up specifically for dealing with funding issues. I would like to you stick to.... As a point of order, please, I would like you to stick to the topic at hand, which is maternal and child health....

•(1630)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Madam Chair, I am of course very disappointed with your comments. I know that traditionally within this group when we've had ministers arrive, and especially in response to their opening statements, we've allowed a great deal of latitude in terms of where the discussion goes. That is the tradition. I think we're deviating from what has been our tradition.

**The Chair:** Indeed, Ms. McLeod. You are absolutely right, but we do that when we ask the minister to come in and speak to her department as a whole and in general.

There is a specific meeting, which this committee agreed to, that is going to be held for two hours as a special meeting to deal with funding.

This particular meeting is one of four meetings that the committee agreed to do to speak to the issue of maternal and child health. So we are having a specific meeting right now, not a generic meeting.

I allowed the minister to make a statement that did not address what the meeting was about, which is maternal and child health. The minister made a 10-minute statement and did not address it. But I will not allow this meeting to continue to be railroaded by other issues. It's clear what this meeting is about.

I took the time to read the motion and to speak to the mandate of this meeting. Would you please stick to the topic at hand?

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I will do a bit of a shift, Minister Ambrose. I want to head toward the important role in the rebuilding of Afghanistan, which includes helping women and children. We rarely hear of the work being done and the impact it's having, especially for women and children.

I know you've been there. Perhaps you could tie this in, especially in the area of children and moving forward with the health of children.

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** Thank you for that.

Minister Oda was in Afghanistan just this week, and I was there a few weeks ago. I think it's something that all of us, as elected women in this country, should be aware of: the kind of progress that's being made in Afghanistan thanks to our civilians and our troops on the ground. I think it's uplifting for Canadians to find out that we have made so much progress.

In terms of democratic participation, it's amazing that in a country where women weren't able to vote and where women weren't able to run for office we now have them as members of Parliament in Afghanistan sitting in their legislature. I think that as women we should all be very aware of that and very proud of the role Canada has played.

In particular, when it comes to education, Canada has done a great deal of great work, through CIDA in particular. We know that our troops on the ground are providing security so civilians and officials like the people at CIDA can do the good work, and because of their good work, we now have almost two million little girls going to school.

I think this is a legacy and a testament to the great bravery of our men and women in uniform, but also to the great work that our officials are doing on the ground. I think it's really important for this committee to think about that, and to make sure that every one of us, as elected officials representing Canada, get a chance to speak about this.

I know that when Minister Oda and I have speaking engagements we always try to make people aware of the great social, economic, and political progress that's being made by women in Afghanistan.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. McLeod, I think you weren't around when the minister did not answer anything to do with maternal and child health.

Because the ministers are about to leave and we do not have another round, I would have everyone know, obviously, that we have two people left in this round. I would ask the ministers if they could please stay to accommodate that round so that everyone gets an opportunity to question them.

The two questioners to come are Ms. Demers and Ms. Mathysen, from the Bloc Québécois and the NDP, so if the ministers would please accommodate them, for reasons of fairness, we would be glad to keep you for a few minutes.

We have two five-minute rounds, so that should take 10 minutes, if everyone tries to stay within the time. At the most, it will take 12 minutes.

But I would like to suggest, Ms. McLeod, that a letter was written according to the decisions of this committee on May 6 specifically asking the Minister for Status of Women to appear before this committee at a special meeting between the hours of 6 and 8 to present on funding.

If the minister couldn't come to this meeting on funding, we would have changed the special meeting, because that meeting was being held specifically to deal with the minister and specifically to deal with the issue of funding. We only knew this on the 20th, which was in the middle of a break week, and there was no ability to call this committee together to change the date of the meeting. So here we are, with witnesses, at a meeting from 6 to 8, and the minister will not be here to answer questions on funding.

I wanted to give you the information so that everyone would be aware of the facts that we do have a meeting on funding and that is where the minister would be asked questions, but she's not going to be here.

Yes, Mr. Calandra.

• (1635)

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** You just intimated you had some indication last week with respect to our meeting between 6 and 8. I'm going to check; perhaps my office didn't receive any update from you with respect to any problems that you might have been having last week.

I notice that the witnesses who are being brought forward seem to be reflective of one certain agenda, not a broader agenda, as the motion actually clearly stated—

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** *Point d'ordre, madame la présidente—*

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra, it's out of order. I'm sorry, we're not discussing this.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** With all due respect, you brought—

**The Chair:** We have two other members—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** On a point of order, Madam Chair—

**The Chair:** Yes, Mr. Calandra.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** On a point of order, you brought that up a minute ago. If it's under order while you're talking about it, then it's on the floor, so clearly, just because you don't like the direction I'm going in, you've decided to make it out of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra, I have no opinion one way or the other about your order—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** So what we have here, Madam Chair, is that you've decided you'll be deciding—

**The Chair:** —and whether I like or dislike it.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** I'm on my point of order, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra, the chair is responding, and then you can speak when I finish.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Perhaps you can let me finish my point of order.

**The Chair:** I was speaking to Ms. McLeod about the tone of questioning and the questions out of order on what this meeting is meant to be about, which is maternal and child health. I was explaining to Ms. McLeod specifically that Minister Ambrose had been asked to come to the funding meeting, and that therefore it is unfortunate that the minister would not be here to answer at the funding meeting later on today.

Would you like to say something now, Mr. Calandra?

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** I would. I just want to just summarize, if I could, on my point of order. If I got this correctly, we've decided, or you've—

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** A point of order, Madam Chair.

We asked the Minister to stay an extra five minutes so that we could ask her two questions.

Could Mr. Calandra resolve his issues after the ministers leave, out of respect for them and their schedules?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Absolutely right and—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Anyway, continuing with my point of order—

**The Chair:** I have agreed with Madame Demers' point to get back to the business of the meeting.

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Well, I have another point of order, then.

**The Chair:** Now, then, you are keeping the ministers—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** Well, with all due respect to the ministers, I just want to make sure because, going forward, we have a long night tonight. So am I correct, then, in assuming that we will not be following the standard procedures? You've decided to forego the clock in any way, shape, or form, so how are we to know how this meeting is supposed to progress tonight? We're uncertain of the timings because you go from five minutes to seven minutes.

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra—

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** We're uncertain about a lot of things, so perhaps between meetings you might actually give us a better sense of how you intend to run the meeting.

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra, there's a vote. If you would remember, when we discussed this issue, we said that if there was a vote between meetings—and there is a vote now—that we would come back after the vote. I don't know when the vote will end. That's why I don't have a timeline for you. It depends on the vote and how many votes there are. I do not make those decisions, Mr. Calandra. The whips do. Now, would you please—

Madame Demers?

**Hon. Rona Ambrose:** Madam Chair, both of us have meetings to go to before we go to the vote, so I would just like to thank you for having us here and thank the members for their questions. I hope we can all work together in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration. We were happy to be here to answer your questions and we look forward to working with you in the future.

**Hon. Bev Oda:** Thank you, also, Madam Chair, for your interest in this. As I say, I think we can all come together in understanding that Canada can do a great deal to help mothers and children.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll have a short recess.

● (1635)

(Pause)

● (1640)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Before we move into business, I would like to apologize to Madame Demers and Ms. Mathysen that they were not allowed to have the questions they were going to ask. I had asked the ministers to stay and answer, on a point of fairness, and that did not happen, so I'm afraid we're going to have to move on now to this part of the meeting.

We have two motions, one by Madam Neville and one by Ms. Boucher. The first notice of motion from the Honourable Anita Neville, of Thursday, May 20, 2010, reads: "That Committee request a report from the Minister of Industry, outlining—

Order, please.

I am in the middle of reading a motion, Ms. Boucher.

Madam Neville's motion reads:

That Committee request a report from the Minister of Industry outlining: (a) departmental policies and targets concerning the recruitment and appointment of under-represented groups, specifically women, to the Canada Excellence Research Chairs (CERC); (b) whether the negotiated agreement reached in

2006 on gender representation in the awarding of Canada Research Chairs was considered during the creation of CERC; and (c) the mandate and findings of the department's internal investigation of the 2010 CERC selection process, as referred to by the Minister of Industry on Wednesday, May 19, 2010 in the Toronto Star; and that this report be received by the Committee by Wednesday, June 9, 2010.

Do you wish me to read this motion in French?

Or shall we just continue?

Madam Neville, would you speak to your motion?

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think the motion is self-explanatory. I think I was not alone; I think there were many probably around this table and certainly in my community...because I heard fairly quickly about the fact that among the 19 research chairs not one was a woman.

I understand that there are processes; I've received some information, but not enough. I would like the committee to support this request that we ask for a report from the minister, who himself expressed concern about this issue, and that he provide this report to the committee for our information and perhaps for further discussion.

● (1645)

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on this motion? It seems pretty straightforward. Is there any discussion?

No further discussion? I will call the vote on the motion.

Yes, Ms. McLeod.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I do understand that the decisions regarding these chairmanships are made by the universities, so I'm not sure you will be getting your answer through this motion. I'm not sure this will dig to the bottom of the problem.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** May I respond, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes. Respond, Ms. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I'm not sure that it will either, but I'd like to begin the process of trying to get to it. I do know that they are made by the universities. but I don't know whether there are guidelines that are followed, whether there are criteria that are established, and whether there are options. I'd like to get a full picture of what in fact does or does not happen. I am aware that the decisions are made by the universities.

**The Chair:** Ms. Wong.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** I am just wondering whether the Ministry of Industry is really able to give us the answer. Maybe it's CERC that we should ask, instead of asking the government to report to us on something on which they didn't make the decision.

I came from an academic background and I know that CERC has their own rules. And, of course, it's also my concern if gender is an issue; however, I don't think this is the right approach, and I don't know what we are going to do with the report. We are going to ask for a report that will stay sitting there and then we are not taking anything....

Mind you, we have a very tight schedule, and we already have a lot of studies that have not been finished yet. This will bring another thing to the table that would take up time, and if it stays just sitting there, then I don't see why we should be doing this.

**The Chair:** Yes, Ms. Neville...?

Actually, Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Chair.

It seems to me that Ms. Neville, in saying that the report be received by the committee, is allowing the committee to make the determination in regard to what we should do with this report.

It also seems to me that this government in many ways has bent over to congratulate itself about the progress that women are making and has taken all kinds of credit for more women in academic institutions. If they're willing to take the credit for more undergraduates, I think they also have to be concerned about the fact that these women are not making the kind of progress that we would like to see.

So I'm very supportive of this. I think it's important and timely, in keeping with what we're finding out in terms of CERC.

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

Is there any further discussion?

Ms. Neville, will you close...?

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Very briefly, Madam Chair. I don't know what the problem is in asking the minister for a report. He, too, expressed concern about it. His department is the department that provides the funding and oversees the grants. Perhaps in looking into it, he may find something he was unaware of, but I think asking for further information about inequities as this relates to opportunities for women should be something that everybody would support.

What we do with the report depends on what the report says. If the report says nothing, then I don't know.... But I'd like to know why this happened. It was startling. It was dramatic. In my community, it created an instant response. So I don't understand what the problem is in asking for a report, and I'm not suggesting we do a study until we know what the report has to say.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Neville. I will call the question now.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** A recorded vote, Madam Chair....

**The Chair:** Certainly, a recorded vote, please. Those in favour of the motion? Those opposed?

Well, we have a tie vote, so the chair will have to vote to break the tie.

I will vote in favour of the motion. It is totally appropriate for a Status of Women committee that is examining the progress of women within government, within various institutions, and in

Canada in general, to ask for a report of any department's internal investigation of the 2010 CERC selection process with regard to gender representation. So the motion has passed.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 6; nays 5)

**The Chair:** We have another motion now, from Madame Boucher. The motion reads:

● (1650)

That the Committee undertake a study to examine work that is being done in Afghanistan to improve living conditions of all women and children in that country, focusing on Canada's role in that work, and report on it to Parliament; That the study, which has the support of the Minister for Status of Women, the Minister of National Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of International Cooperation, include inviting witnesses from the departments and groups involved in that work to appear before the Committee; and That the study take into consideration the historical situation for women in Afghanistan under the Taliban; the work being done by Canada in Afghanistan, the complementary work being done by NGOs and others in Afghanistan and the successes and setbacks as well as the lessons learned.

The motion is clear.

Madame Boucher, would you like to speak to your motion?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoulu, CPC):** The Honourable Rona Ambrose, who is the new Minister for Status of Women, has been to Afghanistan. She thinks it is important to report to the committee on her experience and to call on the services of the Department of Defence and Foreign Affairs. We need to look at what has been happening since Canada began helping Afghan women in their country, to consider successes and failures alike, and to learn from all that has taken place. I think that it is important to look into everything that has happened since Canada committed to helping Afghanistan. Our involvement began before the current government took office. It is important to take note of all the work that has been done in the field by NGOs, as well as by departments and the military. Ms. Ambrose and I have talked a lot, and we have come to the conclusion that it would benefit everyone here to understand the progress made by Afghan women.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any discussion?

Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Chair, given the tightness of our schedule, I don't see how we can possibly begin something like that. We have a great deal to do in the next four weeks. I'm at a loss to understand how we could fit in anything else.

Perhaps it's something for much later in the fall, and if so, since Canada is scheduled to leave Afghanistan in February 2011, how relevant will it be? I would like to hear the response in regard to relevance. Again, I don't see how we could possibly fit it in at this point.

● (1655)

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

Ms. Brown.

**Ms. Lois Brown (Newmarket—Aurora, CPC):** Madam Chair, I would just reiterate something that Minister Ambrose spoke about earlier, about it being a legacy for Canada. I think it is one of the things that we have done very well in Afghanistan, having spoken to many members of our armed forces.

I had the good fortune of participating in the parliamentary program for MPs at Wainwright last summer. Many of the trainers who were there working with our reserve forces were individuals who had done two, three, or four tours of duty in Afghanistan. There were comments from them constantly about the tremendous work we have done in providing services for women and girls.

I think it is absolutely relevant that we look at something like this given that this is the opportunity for us to focus on a legacy that all of us have been participants in, because it was a former administration that put our troops into Afghanistan as part of a NATO-led force. I think each one of us has a stake in ensuring that the work we have done there has merit and has legacy for each one of us.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Simson.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Thank you, Chair.

I'm looking at our schedule.

Ms. Boucher, when were you thinking we could find the time or find it before the end of the year?

To Ms. Mathyssen's point, there is a relevance issue, because on the last motion, Ms. Wong made a point of saying that we didn't have time to even request a report, and it wasn't even a study. I'm just curious as to how we would fit it in.

**The Chair:** Ms. Boucher, would you please answer?

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I believe that Canada has played a leading role in Afghanistan. I feel that progress has been made. A year or two ago, we had the opportunity to meet Afghan women who were members of Parliament. They had worked long and hard to get to where they were. Our Canadian reality is drastically different. Those women have made great strides.

Monumental efforts have been made by Canadians, especially by NGOs and individuals, and I think it is extremely important, as Ms. Brown was saying, to view these efforts as a very valuable legacy Canada is leaving in Afghanistan. It is important to see the underlying process that has enabled us to help these women become who they are today.

[*English*]

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

Madame Demers.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair, this week, we will begin a study on First Nations women, and I think it is appropriate to do so. A committee will soon travel to Afghanistan to see how things work over there and how it is going in general.

I am saddened by some things that have taken place. If you remember, Madam Chair, last year, we received representatives of the Afghan government who testified before the committee. A few of those women then went to Geneva. One of my colleagues, who was with me at the committee meeting I mentioned, was also there in Geneva. One of the women sat next to her and admitted that what she had told us in committee was not true, that the situation was not as she had described it, and that they had to tell us these things because they were ordered to do so. At that time, the government was saying that it would like to remain in Afghanistan until 2011. I would really like to know what is going on over there. However, if it's what we want, should we not go there ourselves?

We know that the Department of Foreign Affairs has done away with the section in charge of status of women, the section in charge of gender equity. Since the Department has abolished this section, I was wondering how credible its information on the work done for women is. As for National Defence and International Cooperation, I do not know what more we could learn from them. I would really like us to conduct a study, a proper study though, and go and see with our own eyes how women are living, how girls are going to school. We know that girls are not going to school because they get killed if they do, and schools are being destroyed as soon as they are built.

Madam Chair, I think that it makes no sense to conduct a study if we cannot travel to Afghanistan and if we base the study on the word of the representatives of departments and organizations involved. As we have seen today, organization representatives cannot be forthright with the members of the committee because they are obligated to follow the instructions of their departments. Therefore, it is completely pointless to question them.

● (1700)

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Simson.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** No, I already spoke.

**The Chair:** You've already asked your question. That's fine.

Madam Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a number of comments, Madam Chair. I was going to make the point made by my colleague, Madame Demers. Is it the intent of the mover that this committee should have the opportunity to go to Afghanistan? Because that's the only way we'll get a full and comprehensive picture.

As I see it, the motion is not really calling for a study; it's a report. I'm not quite sure how to put it, but I would like the invitation list to include more than departments and groups that are involved in that work. A number of other people have been over to Afghanistan; I'm thinking of Sally Armstrong and other commentators who have been part of the discussion and the dialogue. Many Canadians have been there. I do want to raise the issue that if we're going to do a study, it has to be an appropriate study, and not a report.



I am also very concerned about the timelines. While I will support this motion, I will not support it bumping some of the other things we have identified as high priority. I think this is further down the way, and I will do it on that condition.

Madam Chair, I also have some problem.... I know that others were consulted by the minister, but I have problems with the work of this committee being directed by the executive branch of government. The committee is the master of its own agenda, so to approve or not approve this.... I guess we are to some extent, but studies, reports, whatever, are not initiated by ministers, even in this new era of ministerial cooperation that we hear about at committees.

I want to put on the record that we should not be directed by ministers in terms of the work of this committee. The ministers in government should be responding to the work of the committees, and I don't see that happening.

I think all of us have had the opportunity, both in Ottawa and in our own communities, to meet with Afghan women. We know the challenges. We know the importance of them having opportunities and we know the many struggles they're having. But I don't want this to be simply a report or a show-and-tell. If we're going to do it, we must prioritize it around the other work we're going to do, and it should be a meaningful study that includes representatives that all committee members would like. But a simple show-and-tell or an infomercial is not the agenda at play here.

**The Chair:** That is duly noted, Madam Neville. Your point about the committee being master of its own decision-making and agenda is well taken.

Ms. Wong.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** First of all, I would like to make the comment that when I said there is no time, I meant that if the previous report, which was just passed by you casting your vote, is going to generate a lot of other work, then I wouldn't see it as that appropriate. That is my concern about time.

Also, on the remark that this was directed by the minister, that is totally wrong. I think that what Sylvie just said is with the understanding that the minister herself has gone and the other ministers have gone, and they have given us a report today, all right? We probably understand that we have done a lot in Afghanistan.

I've talked to a lot of women from that community as well, and I think this is the right thing to do. As for talking about the fact that in 2011 our troops are scheduled to leave.... However, the study right now is very timely because of all the work we've put in, and to evaluate exactly what has been done and what value we have brought to girls and women there, I think it is very timely. We'll figure out the challenge of time as we discuss this, but the principle is whether this is worth a study. I think that is, first of all, very important. Then we'll decide the details. So we have to agree on whether we're going to do it and how we're going to do it. We're going to discuss it.

If the opposition doesn't want to study the situation of women and girls, they can vote against it, but for details, and about the how-to, those should come after we have voted yes.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Ms. Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Of course, our schedules are very busy. There is no time limit, but I think that we should conduct this study. We were just saying that we are looking ahead to 2011, and I think that we need to conduct a more in-depth study. I agree with Ms. Neville on that score. We could conduct it in September, but we have to consider all the elements involved. You talked about the government, but Canada has been in Afghanistan since before the Conservatives took office. Our involvement began while the Liberals were still in power.

It would be useful for us to become familiar with all the work that has been done since Canada's NGOs have been present in Afghanistan. In fact, we have talked about NGOs and other organizations. I feel that this study could very well be done here. We just have to find out how Afghan women are doing and to become familiar with all of Canada's contributions, past and present.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Simson.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Thank you, Chair.

To Ms. Wong's point again, you did indicate that you didn't feel that our schedule had the time right now. Based on what I'm hearing about a comprehensive study, this in fact will generate a lot of work, a lot of good work, which I can certainly support, but I would want this committee to travel to Afghanistan. I don't want to sit and listen and write a report or see this committee write a report about a legacy. Whose legacy? Whose agenda? I do have a serious concern.

I share the concern of my colleague, Ms. Neville, that obviously, in listening to the minister's testimony today, this is actually being directed by the minister. I have a cause for concern on that.

But if it is going to be a substantive and meaningful study that would involve us being able to travel...while it maybe doesn't get top priority, it's certainly something that I could support.

**The Chair:** I have Ms. Neville, Ms. Demers, Ms. Mathysen, and Madame Deschamps, and then I have to get this committee to vote on something to do with the budget and our trip on aboriginal women, which must happen today, so I'm going to add no new names. We're going to just call the vote after that, so would everyone please be as concise as possible?

Ms. Neville.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm just going to reiterate my points. I have no problem with supporting this. I do not want it to bump the other business we have. We've identified a number of issues, so I think we have to be sensitive as to when we fit it into the schedule. I want to ensure that this is a study, not a report, and I want to put that on the record.

I also want to put on the record, Madam Chair, that there were direct requests from the minister, not only to you but also to our leader and to our critic on foreign affairs, for this study to happen, so when you talk about ministerial direction, it was certainly there. That is not how I see committees operating. Those are the ones I know of; perhaps there were others.

I will support it, or we will support it, but it's on those conditions that I do so.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Madame Demers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, I think that before we undertake any study, we have to commit to working honestly and to working together. We have to make that commitment now. Even today, a person said that she drafted the motion together with the Minister because it is important for the Minister. So, it would appear that the Minister is the one behind the motion. Someone else said that it is not the Minister that's behind it. The Minister asked our caucus to undertake this study. So, the action is being spearheaded by the Minister.

We should at least stop lying to one another if we want to do decent, honest work that will yield results. This needs to stop, Madam Chair. I am saying this now. Mrs. Boucher should consider herself lucky if I vote for this motion. As long as Mr. Calandra keeps acting in this way, I will not vote for any motions moved by Mrs. Boucher. He always behaves in a disruptive manner. He disturbs the committee's work constantly, and that seems to be the only thing that he is intent on doing. I refuse to accept this type of behaviour, Madam Chair. I will tell my whip about his actions, and I will ensure that other whips are told as well. It is just not right.

We have never worked like this before. We have never felt this kind of tension in the committee before. We have always cooperated with our colleagues, but now, we can no longer do our work. We dread coming to meetings because they are unpleasant. Since Mr. Calandra has been with us, things have gotten worse.

Madam Chair, I have said what I had to say. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Mathysen.

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

I would like to reiterate that if we undertake this, we must go to Afghanistan, but we cannot undertake it until all the other outstanding work is complete. We have a great many things in process and I would like to see them finished. I would also like to underscore that I would like all parties to have the freedom to choose from a wide range of witnesses to come to this committee and provide their expertise.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Madame Deschamps.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** I could go on and on about the issue brought up by the people on this side. Clearly, members of the government, or anyone going to Afghanistan, are entrusted to the

care of the military. They are shown a few projects, a few achievements, and the rest of the time, they remain on the base. This study might bring to light a different version of the facts.

I have been working for three months with people who have collaborated on projects in Afghanistan, and what we are hearing from them is not all fine and dandy. The situation is nowhere near as rosy as people claim it is. Those people have worked on projects funded by CIDA, and they had the will to change things. However, we do not know what the results of the government's actions are. There seem to be no results at all. Eighteen schools have been built, but they remain empty because nobody is attending them. Young girls are scared. We are building schools, but we are not helping the government get established. Currently, the key issue that must be dealt with is that of governance.

I find this to be a very complex issue. Considering the way Mrs. Boucher's motion is drafted, it is safe to assume that she was probably instructed by somebody within the government.

May I finish?

[English]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Madame Boucher, on a point of order.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Yes, I have a point of order.

[Translation]

First of all, I was not instructed. I have been a member of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women for three years. I have always tried to be upfront with you—that's what I'm like, in general. I was not instructed by anyone. Canada has been present in Afghanistan for years, and that presence did not begin under my government, but under the Liberal rule. The only thing that I wanted to emphasize is all that Canada has accomplished so far. I am fully capable of making my own decisions.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Deschamps.

[Translation]

**Ms. Johanne Deschamps:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

To wrap up my questions and comments, I would like to know, given the complexity of this motion, if we could refer it to the committee that actually has a mandate to deal with any Afghan issues. There is in fact a special committee on Afghanistan.

• (1715)

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher, we are not having a debate across the floor. This is a committee. I have said that I would entertain no further discussion after Madame Deschamps. I will call the question on this ow.

Before I do that, I want to let everyone know that we're completely booked up. In the week of May 31, we're travelling on violence against aboriginal women. The week of June 7, we're traveling on violence against women. On June 14 and June 16, we'll study the draft report on maternal and child health. We've completed our study on it. On June 21, we will have a study on the draft report of women in non-traditional occupations, which we have not yet accepted, whereas we did a great deal of work on that. Then the House rises. We are planning to finish our trip of travel on violence against women very early in the summer, as this committee had decided before.

That's to let everyone know that this is the status of work for this committee. The work has been decided up until the House rises.

Then, we have had a study—this is now a year and a half old for this committee—on the effects of new technologies on women and girls; a study on media coverage of women and women's issues; a study on international models of early childhood education; women and Canada's foreign policy, including the impact of changes in language in the Department of Foreign Affairs; shared parenting custody and access; and lost Canadians.

We have a ranking of future business that had already been done by this committee, so I understand that the issue for everyone is going to be when this is going to happen. We've now heard from everyone. Based on that information, I will now call the vote.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** What will we do about the amendments?

[English]

**The Chair:** Is there an official amendment from someone?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** We have all put forward amendments to be made to the motion.

[English]

**The Chair:** Ms. Neville, would you like to put in an amendment?

She didn't suggest she had an amendment.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** I'm going to assume that implicit in the discussion today is that all committee members will agree that the witness list will go beyond officials and groups on the ground and could include others who have an interest. Other than Sally Armstrong, I don't have anybody else in mind.

**The Chair:** And we've heard from Ms. Mathysen that we should travel to Afghanistan, so that is also....

Do you want those to be formal amendments or—

**An hon. member:** Friendly?

**The Chair:** Well, I don't know if Ms. Boucher will accept friendly amendments.

Will you accept a friendly amendment with regard to broadening the number of witnesses?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** With respect to the witness list, will all the members of all the parties have the right to propose...

[English]

**The Chair:** That is how it has always been done, Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I just wanted to make sure because in every committee, strange things sometimes happen. Regardless, I have no objection.

[English]

**The Chair:** May I add this as a point of information? It has never been a problem in this committee. Everyone has been asked to give us lists. When we have a long list, we ask everyone to pick their top five so that we always ensure there will be a clear sense of things done. That's with regard to broadening the list.

With regard to travel, how do you feel about that, Ms. Boucher?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I was speaking to...

[English]

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** [Inaudible—Editor]...don't have to travel, because if they say no to travel, then you've just lost the ability to study—

**The Chair:** Mr. Calandra, do you wish to speak to an issue?

**Mr. Paul Calandra:** No, no—

**The Chair:** Because I was speaking to Madame Boucher.

Ms. Boucher, with regard to your... There was a friendly amendment suggested by Ms. Mathysen that we travel to Afghanistan.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I am open to this idea, but our safety has to be ensured, as Ms. Deschamps was saying. We have to be absolutely certain that all precautions are taken to ensure the committee's safety if it travels. That is of utmost importance. If we propose an amendment, we have to ensure that it includes provisions on safety because, as we know, this is a dangerous region.

• (1720)

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher, when committees travel, whether they travel in Canada or abroad, the foreign affairs department is responsible to Parliament; it is not just responsible to the government. It's an institution of Parliament and it will ensure that all who travel under a parliamentary banner are safe. Departments serve Parliament, not merely the government. That, you should know.

So, then, you have accepted that as an amendment, and I'm going to call the vote here quickly. We have the question, with two additions, one that the witnesses

Yes, Ms. Wong? I have said that I would not discuss this any further.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** I have just one question.

**The Chair:** Be brief, please, Ms. Wong.

**Mrs. Alice Wong:** What if, for whatever reason, the travel does not happen? Does that mean we cancel and scrap the whole study?

**The Chair:** Ms. Wong, I will explain. We have two friendly amendments. They were accepted by the mover of the motion. I will now, therefore, propose the amended motion for this committee to vote on, one way or the other.

So the amended motion says that we expand the list made by Ms. Boucher here on the people we would invite. So under the second paragraph, we expand that list. Then we also talk about travel. We say that “the study take into consideration the historical situation for women in Afghanistan under the Taliban; the work being done...”, etc., and there we will add “and travel to that country”.

Those are the two amendments to the motion, accepted by the mover, and now I will ask that this committee vote on the motion. Those in favour? Those opposed?

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

**The Chair:** The motion passes. Thank you.

I would like to move on, then, to some of the work we have to do here. I'll have a quick recess with the clerk.

I want the committee to know a couple of things. We have cancelled part of our trip. We were supposed to leave on May 30 to go to Resolute Bay. We cannot get anyone to meet with us in Resolute Bay. Because the community is that small, most people are very concerned that it will be noticed that they came to meet with us.

In order to change from Resolute Bay to Rankin Inlet, we would have had to go back to the committee, which we could not have done, because last week was a week off. So what we can do is add Rankin Inlet when we do further travel. We'd add it to the committee and we would just go to Rankin Inlet in that leg of the travel. So the travel will start on May 31, instead of May 30. We will fly out on the Monday and then we go to the other places, without Resolute Bay involved.

The next thing we have to talk about is for you to okay our bringing some witnesses when we go to Labrador. It's a very long, thin province, and it has a lot of people living in very remote areas who have to come down. I just need you to okay \$38,000 for the travel of certain witnesses who have to come down to meet us in Labrador. Do I have an okay on that?

**Hon. Anita Neville:** You have people coming from Winnipeg on this—

**The Chair:** No, no. I don't know why that was given to you. The computer, to look at how it generates witnesses, apparently needs to

have towns thrown in. It is not relevant. We just need people. For the number of witnesses who are coming down to Labrador, we will need \$38,000 to bring them in.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I'm just quite stunned by the cost of witnesses in Labrador. That's one community only at \$38,000...?

**The Chair:** It is very expensive when you travel in that part of the world. That's a problem. This is for witnesses to come to meet with us when we're in Labrador. This is for a lot of other witnesses we'll be meeting, too, as we travel on that leg.

• (1725)

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** So it's all our...? Phew. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

So do I get an okay on this? Actually, witnesses cost a great deal if we bring them in.

**Mrs. Cathy McLeod:** I was thinking it was for that one location, so thank you for the clarification.

**The Chair:** So that's it. Do I get an okay on this? I haven't had a vote. Does everyone agree to that travel cost?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Finally, I think that's all we need to do today, so if anyone wants to entertain a motion to adjourn.... Yes? Thank you. We have a motion to adjourn.

We will be back after the vote to this very same room. There will be dinner served here, at the meeting. It is unfortunate, as I mentioned earlier on, that we will not have the minister who was key to this coming to this funding meeting; we only found out about three days ago that the minister cannot come. We got that on the weekend. It was very difficult for us to change this, given—

Excuse me. Order. There is a tendency when the chair is speaking for people to carry on conversations. I would appreciate it if we could at least pay attention during this part of the meeting.

Thank you very much, Madame Boucher. Okay.

Tonight we are going to be meeting only with witnesses. We will not have the benefit of the minister's ability to explain some of her funding cuts; it would have been a good opportunity for her to do so.

We will now adjourn. We'll see you back here after the vote.

The meeting is adjourned.







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