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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, March 3, 2011**

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**Chair**

**The Honourable Hedy Fry**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

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•(1105)

[English]

**The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)):** I'm going to call the meeting to order.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), this committee is doing a study on language changes at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Today we have summoned certain witnesses to appear before this committee. These witnesses are David Angell, director general, international organizations, human rights and democracy bureau; Elissa Golberg, director general, stabilization and reconstruction task force secretariat; and Jamieson Weetman, deputy director, west and central Africa relations.

By video conference, as you know, we have the High Commission of Canada to India. We would like to thank the Deputy High Commissioner, Jim Nickel, for being here.

We know that it's some unearthly hour for you back in India, Deputy Commissioner, so we appreciate the time you've taken.

It is my understanding that none of the witnesses have an opening statement.

Am I right, or has this been changed?

**Mr. David Angell (Director General, International Organizations, Human Rights and Democracy Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** No, that's correct, Madam Chairman.

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

We will begin, then, with the question-and-answer period. This is a seven-minute round. As you know, this means that both the questions and the answers will take seven minutes.

I'm going to begin with Ms. Simson for the Liberals.

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

I'd like to thank the witnesses for appearing today.

As you may or may not be aware, DFAIT originally turned down this committee's request to have you appear, which is why the committee was required to use its power of summons.

As the chair pointed out, this committee began a study last fall on ministerial interference in the language being used at DFAIT. The changes requested by the minister's office included the dropping of

the word "humanitarian" from the phrase "international humanitarian law", and the removal or changing of references to gender-based violence, child soldiers, human rights. Those are just a few of the examples.

This issue was first brought to light in an article in *Embassy* magazine that was based on information they received in an e-mail that was drafted by Mr. Weetman, which the rest of you received.

With that, my first question is for you, Mr. Weetman. You in fact did craft the e-mail of May 7?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman (Deputy Director, West and Central Africa Relations, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** That's correct, yes.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Okay.

In that e-mail, you outlined your concerns—which, by the way, I think most committee members here share—that the Minister of Foreign Affairs office...there was a tendency of late, at the time that was done, in 2009, to remove or change language in letters, speeches, and interventions on multilateral meetings.

In the e-mail you stated that "Some of the changes suggested by [the minister's office] are more than simply stylistic changes." You implied, and I quote, that "some changes are not consistent with accepted [Canadian] policy".

Could you give the committee details on the types of changes that were taking place; how that would reflect...where they're not just stylistic changes; and, possibly, whether this practice is still occurring?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Thank you very much for the question, Madam Chair.

I should preface my answer by saying that, first of all, I'm not an expert in any of these subjects here. I'm not an expert on gender equality, on international humanitarian law, or on children in armed conflict. My role in the minister's office was to facilitate dialogue between staff of the minister's office and officials within the department to ensure that the best advice was getting to the minister's office.

In this case...and I think some of the nuance has been lost, in some way, over the last few hearings on this issue. In my e-mail, what I was referring to was suggestions of changes that the minister's office was inquiring about. These weren't directions for changes. This was the start of a conversation. There are very often conversations taking place between the minister's office and officials who are experts on the issues to decide on the most appropriate language to use to accurately and efficiently express Canadian policy.

In this case, a number of requested language changes were coming up on several occasions. Various divisions and bureaux were seeing these kinds of requests and were asking for a bit more information behind this. We decided that in our office, which is the departmental unit, the most efficient way to proceed would be to have a larger meeting with a number of different bureaux so that we could talk through the common requests and we could make sure that we were able to give the minister's office the best advice on the best language that could be used for Canadian policy.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** I understand that; however, it seems to me there was some degree of alarm or concern, because you further state in this e-mail that so far you've largely been "managing" these issues. Managing indicates to me that it could potentially be problematic or that there was some concern on some level. And obviously, the individuals who were included on this e-mail exchange.... You know, when you have the director general of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian ambassador to Norway...you have some senior people who are all seeing the same thing, or you have enough of a concern that you wanted to find out if they were seeing the same thing. Is that correct?

It was fairly senior; this wasn't just a little e-mail to friends.

• (1110)

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Madam Chair, habitually in the departmental unit in the minister's office we dealt with senior officials simply because we didn't have the time to deal with every official in a department. There's a lot of traffic going through the minister's office, and we needed to make sure we were using our time efficiently.

In this case, we felt that if we brought together particularly directors general and directors, this would be the most efficient way to have a conversation about the kinds of language changes that were being suggested to everyone.

Yes, we were handling these on a case-by-case basis before. If it's helpful—

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** But it obviously accelerated, because you felt that there needed to be a coordinated departmental approach to this issue. So it was becoming an issue, based on who I've seen copied in that e-mail. Then there was a call for a meeting, which brings me to my next question.

It's our understanding that there was a meeting on Thursday, November 21, at DFAIT to discuss these issues. In your e-mail you said, "The purpose of this meeting is to ensure we are clear on the issues we are facing and that we have a coordinated departmental view."

Unfortunately, Mr. Weetman, that indicates to me—and I know it's the written word—that there was definitely concern on your part and

on the part of several others in that e-mail exchange that this language change was, quote, an issue. Am I correct?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** We deal with many issues there. We're always trying to coordinate departmental officials and departmental advice. There was indeed a very productive meeting, as indicated in this e-mail.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** How many were at that meeting?

**The Chair:** Ms. Simson, this is your last question, because we have run out of time.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** I just need a number.

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** If I recall—and you have to remember I had thousands of meetings over the two years that I was in the minister's office—there were maybe six or seven individuals at that meeting.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Simson and Mr. Weetman.

I now go to Monsieur Desnoyers, for the Bloc Québécois.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers (Rivière-des-Mille-Îles, BQ):** Thank you, Madam Chair. Welcome to our three witnesses.

My colleague mentioned that there was a great deal of concern regarding all of the changes in terminology being made. You said yourself that you wanted to examine the matter carefully. You brought the major players to the table to talk about the situation and how you could address it. Earlier on, you also said that your objective was to facilitate dialogue between the Minister's office and the other units in the department.

So, here is my first question. The issue of violence against women in the DRC has been raised many times. Several areas where we are now sensing a change at foreign affairs significantly affect women. That is why the committee is concerned with this whole approach.

Foreign affairs speeches dealing with the DRC used to mention violence and impunity. Now, the emphasis is more on prevention, although we know full well what is happening on the ground. After all, Mr. Weetman, you brought people to the table who could confirm that. In reality, however, the talk on the ground is about displaced persons. Wars like these bring with them major acts of violence, especially towards women. The first people to be displaced in a country are very often women and children.

We cannot be afraid of telling it like it is in situations like that. When you look at speeches at the departmental level, you can see that the language has changed. Those terms are not longer in use. A number of NGOs have come here to confirm that trend in your department.

I would like to hear your views on that. Was an action plan put in place as a result of the meetings that you had? What action was taken to improve dialogue between the Minister's office and everyone else, to use your expression?

• (1115)

[*English*]

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chairman, if you'll permit me to, perhaps I can lead in responding as the official responsible for human rights at the ministry.

[*Translation*]

I just want to reassure the committee that no policies or changes to the practices on language use at the department have been imposed. We can refer you to some recent statements. For example, the minister made a statement on February 25, on the issue of impunity. The word “impunity” was not used, but the ideas were clearly expressed.

Let's go back to Canada's role in the issues raised by this committee. For example, in reference to the issue of violence against women, not only has there not been any change in departmental policy, but we remain committed to leading the charge, specifically on the Human Rights Council resolution, on that specific issue. Canada continues to chair the negotiations and plays a key role in that process.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Then why are NGOs telling us the opposite of what you just said? I am referring specifically to the language used in serious conflicts, in Africa or elsewhere, such as in Rwanda or Burundi where women were systematically attacked.

We know that words play an important role in describing these conflicts. Why is no one using those words any more? NGOs have told us that. You are saying the opposite; but Mr. Weetman convened the meeting to look at how they could change the language or wording to propose different approaches at the departmental level in order to facilitate dialogue, if I understand correctly.

**Mr. David Angell:** If I may, Madam Chair, the language has not changed. We have read the proceedings of your meetings, and I know that some NGOs have made lists of the words used. For us, it is important to communicate to specific audiences. The words change according to the audiences. What we want to do is ensure that we are using the clearest language possible for the people listening to us. For example, in a UN context, we use language that matches the conventions.

As regards the meeting that was convened, attendance was entirely consistent with that type of meeting. The officers identified as the addressees are the directors general who head up the various units in the department involved. It was our responsibility to liaise with our colleagues.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Why hold this meeting if you say that there is nothing to change? Mr. Weetman just said that he wanted to look at the situation in order to improve dialogue. My reading of the situation is that, often, when a government is in power, it wants to make changes. In other words, to use different terms to match the policy it wants to establish. You say that the language did not change. Mr. Weetman told us that meetings are held to discuss these matters to see how to facilitate dialogue with everyone at the departmental level.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, there is dialogue on all aspects of Canada's foreign policy. What is important is the key phrase used by one of the committee members—that this is done on a case-by-case basis. The situation that Mr. Weetman was responding to stemmed from the fact that there were two, three or four dialogues underway at the same time. He wanted to bring the players involved together for a discussion. That is all there was to it. Nonetheless, Ms. Golberg is the expert on Canada's work in the field, and she can answer the questions that have been raised.

●(1120)

[*English*]

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

We will move on to Madame Boucher, for the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher (Beauport—Limoilou, CPC):** Good morning, everyone. Thank you for coming to meet with us.

As you know, we are looking into this matter. Members have all questioned to some extent why certain NGOs have appeared before us to say that the language has changed and that things have changed on the ground as a result.

I would like to know if, as a result of those discussions on better terminology, changes were made or not. Did that actually have an impact on what Canada is accomplishing on the ground? In other words, have there been repercussions on Canada's actions internationally because we talk sometimes about gender equality and sometimes about equality between men and women?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg (Director General, Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force Secretariat, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

As regards Canada's operational commitments, we are very active diplomatically. We are very involved at the United Nations and in other international arenas in promoting the protection of civilians and gender equality. We contribute to normative development. As Mr. Angell said, Canada is leading the charge on several UN resolutions and in other international organizations.

On the ground, we continue to provide resources to operational programs set up to protect women's rights for projects focusing on violence against women. Commitments have been made to strengthen the capacity of people working in peacekeeping operations to encourage them and raise their awareness of the importance of gender issues and violence against women. That is what we are doing in the DRC, Afghanistan, and in several countries. So has that changed our work on the ground? I would say that we are very active throughout the world in promoting the protection of women, men and children who find themselves in conflict situations.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, I would like to add something to Ms. Golberg's answer on the terms “gender equality” or “equality between men and women”. According to our analysis, the two expressions mean exactly the same thing. In the United Nations discussions we participate in, they are used interchangeably.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Do I have any time left, Madam Chair?

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Yes, Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Boucher:** Mr. Weetman, why did you feel that it was necessary to send that email and organize a meeting?

[*English*]

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Thank you very much for the question.

I just wanted to ensure that everybody was on the same wavelength as to how to best express Canadian policy as made by the minister.

I think it might be helpful, because we've been talking about this specific issue on the DRC and international and humanitarian law, for example, to explain how this conversation was taking place, because I think some of the process here is being lost.

In regard to what happened in this case, there are various ways in which a letter will come to the minister. It's assigned to the minister's correspondence unit. It's then sent down to the experts—in this case, it would have been the person who was working on the desk for the DRC—to draft a response.

The response comes back up to the minister's correspondence unit. It's discussed with the minister's office. They will look at it. They may have some questions about some of the language. They may have some questions about some of the terminology.

In this case, what they did was send it back. They made some suggestions; for example, could we change “international humanitarian law” to just “international law”? This was sent back to the division. That was how the discussion took place.

The meeting was one way for us to bring all the officials together to make sure that we were all aware that we were dealing with the same questions and to provide our best advice to the minister's office. There were follow-up meetings afterward.

Directly after this meeting that is referred to in the e-mail, I spoke with the minister's office and explained to them how we were looking at these terms. There were follow-up conversations with the minister's office, specifically, for example, on the term “international humanitarian law” which explained what the difference is between referring to “international humanitarian law” and referring to “international law”. It was well taken on board. You will see, for example, in recent press releases, the term “international humanitarian law”.

• (1125)

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Angell.

**Mr. David Angell:** Thank you, Madam Chairman.

If I may just amplify the answer by Mr. Weetman, in the case of the question posed by the minister's office, while in this case the docket was sent to a particular part of the department, in fact there are different parts of the department that had relevant expertise. I was invited as the official responsible for the United Nations, for example, and part of the issue under discussion was what the language might mean in terms of our participation in debates relating to conventions we have signed. The director general for legal affairs was there because of the legal importance of the terms.

So there were different pieces of the department that needed to be brought together to provide the answers that were sought by the

minister's office. In addition to that, this was a discussion, as Mr. Weetman has said, that was playing out across a number of issues. So the minister's office used its convening authority, which is one of its principal functions, to bring all these various strands together to have a conversation in order to provide the responses sought by the minister's office.

**The Chair:** You have a minute. Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Sylvie Boucher:** I will leave a minute for Ms. Grewal.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** We'll go to Ms. Grewal.

**Ms. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is for Mr. Nickel.

Good morning out there, Mr. Nickel. I know that it is quite early in the morning, but certainly all of us appreciate your time. I have a few questions for you.

Is it your experience that DFAIT officials meet often with the minister's staff to discuss policy issues or questions? Can you give us some examples of other issues for which this dialogue took place? And do you consider this to be important and necessary?

**Mr. Jim Nickel (Deputy High Commissioner, High Commission of Canada to India):** Thank you very much.

Yes, in fact, these exchanges between the minister's office and officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade are a regular and normal occurrence. In fact, it's an essential and valuable exchanges that takes place between the minister's office and experts in the department.

In the context we're talking about now—the use of language and terminology—the focus there is to find the best ways to communicate Canadian policy to different audiences. In terms of substance, of course, it is a regular occurrence for the minister's office and the experts in the department to talk about policy issues, so the best advice from the officials can be provided to the minister's office and the officials can understand more clearly the desired directions of the minister's office on policy terms.

You had asked about some other examples of where this sort of exchange takes place. It's essentially a daily occurrence in the department and I suspect in other departments across the federal government. When I was in the minister's office, a policy area that had become quite important for Canada, and where the Minister of Foreign Affairs was actively engaged, was Canada's Arctic policy. In that area, we had experts from across the Department of Foreign Affairs—and in some cases, from other ministries—joining discussions with the minister's office to discuss policy directions in that area. That was an issue area that I think was particularly important during the time when I was in the minister's office.

• (1130)

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

We have gone well over time on this round.

Ms. Mathysen is next, for seven minutes, please.

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

I want to thank you for being here. I recognize that it may be uncomfortable, but I appreciate your willingness to be here, and I hope we can have a candid exchange.

I want to begin on the language shift in terms of “gender equality” to the term “equality between men and women”. We had a representative from FAFIA here. She was quite concerned, because she indicated that it signalled a “shift in the human and financial resources that are earmarked for work on gender equality”.

Now, while I realize that groups like Kairos, the millennium development goals, maternal and child health, Match, and the Canadian Federation of Teachers are funded out of CIDA, I'm very concerned about the fact that their funding has been cut. I discussed the issue with representatives from the CFT. In addition to educational work, they have done a great deal in terms of promoting gender equality when working on the ground and talking about how greater gender equality and respect for women were important in their work.

So when I see that there is a shift in human and financial resources because of this language change, it makes me very concerned. How important is gender equality in the work done by CIDA, DFAIT, or any branch of government? Can you respond to what the representative from FAFIA indicated to the committee?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for the question.

I would maybe back up by saying that in terms of changing the terminology, I read some of the testimony from the previous witnesses on the concern about the shift on the using of terms. In fact, we use the terms interchangeably, and it very much depends on the forum in which we happen to be operating. The United Nations itself recognizes and utilizes the terms interchangeably; equality between men and women and girls and boys and gender equality are terms that the UN itself uses, depending on the circumstances at play.

We could speak for the resources that Foreign Affairs allocates. In terms of our resources, we continue to work actively internationally through our diplomats in the field, as well as through the modest programs that we have available to us.

With respect to the particular area that I work on, for instance, which is crisis-affected states, I can tell you that in the last fiscal year, on issues related to women, peace, and security, for instance, we spent about \$32 million on these kinds of activities, \$5.7 million of which was specifically around issues related to gender-based violence, and another \$1 million that was specifically allocated to follow up on the women, peace, and security agenda. And then we do stuff in the country-specific context. That's just to give you a magnitude of resources. For Foreign Affairs, it's actually quite significant.

In terms of human resource staff, there's staff that exists within David's shop, which he can speak to. In addition to that, I have dedicated officers, for instance, on the women, peace, and security file, in addition to the fact that we are increasingly working—and this is part of Canada's newly adopted action plan on women, peace, and security—towards making sure that more and more of our staff

are trained to be able to engage actively and effectively on issues pertaining to equality between men and women and girls and boys.

**Mr. David Angell:** If I may continue, Madam Chair, in the human rights policy and governance unit, certainly, the deployment of staff—in this case, three extremely able people working on issues relating to gender and to women—has absolutely no bearing on how language is used. As Elissa suggested, the bulk of the funding comes from CIDA.

We're from Foreign Affairs, and can't comment on CIDA's activities, except to note that the term that CIDA has used continually, and has not changed, is “gender equality”. There has been no change in terminology in the framework documents that CIDA has used.

But for Foreign Affairs, the terms are used absolutely interchangeably and have absolutely no bearing at all, Madam Chair, on resource deployment.

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

Mr. Weetman, in the e-mail that we've been discussing, you indicated issues such as “Child Soldiers, International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights, and R2P”. You gave a recent example of “a fairly extensive set of suggested revisions to a standard docket response” on the DRC and said that “the term ‘impunity’ in every instance” had been removed, “(eg Canada urges the Government of the DRC to take concerted measures to do whatever is necessary to put an end to impunity for sexual violence...” is changed to “Canada urges the government of the DRC to take concerted measures to prevent sexual violence”).

Now, we've heard very clearly from witnesses that the impunity piece is absolutely essential in terms of a woman's ability to confront those who have committed sexual violence and to know that they're not going to get away with it. Because women in the DRC, as you know, are most vulnerable.

It's very, very clear that there was a concern here. We know that rape is a weapon used to undermine communities and that it has been used extensively in the DRC. So what is the impact of removing the word “impunity”? Why on earth would that shift take place, since preventing sexual violence is not going to deal with the kinds of atrocities that women experience in the DRC?

• (1135)

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Thank you for the question.

This is certainly one of the issues that officials and the minister's office were thinking very carefully about. I would go back to the point that these were suggested changes and that this was a conversation that was going on between the minister's office and officials on the issue of whether you should change “impunity” to “prevent”. This was one of the issues that was flagged, that “impunity” means accountability for crimes and bringing perpetrators to justice, which is what we discussed at the meeting and what was discussed afterwards with the minister's office.

This is why you will find in documents such as the ones that have been referred to by Mr. Kessel and others that the term that's being used is accountability for sexual violence, for gender-based violence, bringing perpetrators to justice. The suggestion—

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Pardon me. You wrote in the same e-mail to say, "It is often not entirely clear to us why [the minister's office] advisers are making such changes, and whether they have a full grasp of the potential impact on [Canadian] policy in asking for changes to phrases and concepts that have been accepted internationally and used for some time". And we know that is the case: that these are tried-and-true phrases that have been hammered out, with Canada at the forefront.

So why on earth, when you know that these are important phrases, would the minister's office seek to change them? And what did you fear in those changes? You're very clear here that they don't fully grasp the potential impact on Canadian policy.

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Well, I think it's exactly because they were important phrases and important issues that we had the meeting and that we had follow-up meetings with the minister's staff. The other part of not being fully aware of whether the minister's office knew all the implications was me saying that I wasn't fully aware, that I wasn't clear whether or not the minister's staff knew exactly what the implications of various kinds of language were.

The meeting was partly for us in the departmental unit to ensure that we knew what the implications were for language and that we could all work together to find language that best effectively and accurately conveyed Canadian policy, and part of the—

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** But the language was changed—

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Mathysen and Mr. Weetman, but we've gone over time again. I've allowed everyone a fair amount of leeway, because I know that we have brought in witnesses from places where they've had to come a distance, so I want to make sure that you get to finish your thought. But we're going way over on some of these.

I'm going to go to the second round. The second round is five minutes. We'll begin with Ms. Neville, for the Liberals.

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

Let me begin by thanking you very much for coming here. It's not very often that a committee summons members of the bureaucracy or the civil service to come to a meeting, and I appreciate that this is a challenge for you.

I am also finding it very difficult to reconcile some of what we're hearing this morning with the memo of May 7. I'm wondering if you could tell the committee who briefed you prior to your appearance here today, or provided advice, either written or oral advice.

• (1140)

**The Chair:** Mr. Angell.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, we have a parliamentary liaison unit that assists any member of the department who is coming to testify, to explain what the process is. That's the full extent of any briefing that I've experienced, other than discussion amongst ourselves.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** And virtually...that advice came simply on process?

**Mr. David Angell:** There is often, Madam Chair, some role-playing, some anticipation of types of questions, but it was simply the usual preparation for any appearance before a parliamentary committee. Many of us, Madam Chair, don't have much experience in appearing before Parliament, so we have a unit that assists officials when they are called upon to perform that function.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** Could you provide us with the names of those individuals, please, either now or in writing? I would appreciate it very much.

**Mr. David Angell:** Certainly, Madam Chairman.

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

My colleague was speaking about the submission from the Feminist Alliance for International Action and, as I say, I'm having a hard time reconciling some of what you're saying here today. They provided a very comprehensive brief and did extensive analysis. I've looked at the graph—I'd be happy to provide it to you if you haven't seen it already—on the use of the phrase "gender equality", the use of the word "gender", excluding the use of the word "gender" and the phrase "gender equality", and the total uses of the word "gender", including it as part of the phrase "gender equality". Canada, in each of those categories, referenced gender, gender equality, or whatever, once, and in one instance, twice.

They did extensive research here, and when you take a look at what the other countries have done, you'll see that there is significant use of the words "gender equality" or "gender" in whatever form. I'm looking at an example to give you. In Belgium, it was a total of 95 times; in the Netherlands, a total of 123 times, and in Sweden, 51 times.

How is it compatible, these different uses of language between Canada and other countries? Because quite clearly, based on their analysis, we're out of step with what other countries are doing.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for the question.

I reviewed the FAFIA testimony and I thought it was a bit like comparing apples and oranges insofar as what we should be focusing on is the content of the action plan. She was specifically referring to Canada's national action plan on women. She was—

**Hon. Anita Neville:** She was. I'm sorry. I should have told you that.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** —comparing it and contrasting it to that of other countries. Canada is one of the latest countries to come out officially with a national action plan. In fact, we've gone further than most of the other international partners. We are the first country that has in fact integrated indicators into our national action plan.



What I focus on more, and what we focused on more, including in our discussions with civil society in the drafting of the national action plan—and we engaged more than 500 stakeholders in its development—are the actions in the action plan. Again, if you look at the terms used in some of the documents of our other close allies, you'll see that in many of the circumstances we're saying exactly the same thing, except that instead of using the term “gender equality”, in some instances we utilize the term “equality between men and women, girls and boys”.

Page 3 of our action plan explains what we're getting at with respect to equality within the context of the national action plan. I think that might be helpful in order to contextualize what we it was that we were seeking to get at. I hope it would address the committee's concerns.

**The Chair:** Will you be tabling that information with us, Ms. Golberg?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** We'd be pleased to. It's certainly available on the website in both English and French.

**The Chair:** It's in both languages.

**Hon. Anita Neville:** If I might comment, the action plan is a very fine document, and I commend you, Ms. Golberg, on the work that has been done, but as we all know, language matters. I appreciate your comments, but in the context of this memo and in the context of what we are hearing from community groups—and I appreciate that you are doing the best you can do with what you have to do it with—I do submit that language matters, and it's unfortunate that we cannot use the language that's used more universally in other countries.

• (1145)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will now go on to Ms. Grewal for the Conservatives.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be sharing my time with Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

My question is for Mr. Angell.

Mr. Angell, can you give us some examples of how Canada is defending and promoting the rights of women at the United Nations, particularly where the rights of women are under attack, especially in places like Iran or Afghanistan?

**Mr. David Angell:** Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

My colleague, Elissa, may want to amplify my remarks, as she has particular knowledge of Afghanistan.

But with regard to Canada's activities at the United Nations, we remain in the forefront of countries engaged on human rights. We're not currently a member of the Human Rights Council; we've just come off the council recently, but even as an observer we are exceptionally active.

With regard to Iran for example, Madam Chairman, for the eighth year now we've led a very high-profile resolution in the UN General Assembly on the human rights situation in Iran, a resolution that we believe is very helpful in sending a strong signal of encouragement to human rights defenders in Iran. In addition, we are very supportive of a resolution currently before the Human Rights Council to establish a special mechanism with regard to Iran. Our

minister has been extremely vocal in expressing concerns with regard to the human rights situation in Iran.

A number of statements have been made; in fact, a very high number of statements have been made, including some very recently. So on the issue of Iran, Madam Chairman, we're at the forefront of the international community in expressing concern with regard to the human rights situation.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** With respect to the situation in Afghanistan, I can speak in particular to some of the things that Foreign Affairs is doing. More broadly, of course, the Government of Canada has been a strong and consistent advocate with respect to the rights and needs of women in Afghanistan. Our embassy in Kabul, as well as the work that's done by our civilian colleagues and our military colleagues in Kandahar, has been advancing and promoting the rights and needs of women.

We've done things like deploying legislative drafting assistance, for instance, around laws that might affect women. We've funded programs related to family law training and women's rights training. We deployed a gender and police adviser into the Ministry of the Interior in Afghanistan. We've done a range of activities in Afghanistan to advance the rights and well-being of women.

**The Chair:** We'll go to Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon (Miramichi, CPC):** Thank you.

I want to thank you for being here with us today. I know that you have done a lot of work in this area and I appreciate all the work you have done. I'm also glad to hear Ms. Golberg say that Canada has gone further than the other countries have and that we are strong in many areas. I appreciate that work as well, because I know that our government wants to be strong in all areas.

Discussing terminology is one thing, but we want to speak about concrete actions to advance the rights of women. Perhaps I'll ask Ms. Golberg if she can tell us about the action plan announced by Minister Cannon last fall for the implementation of this resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security, and what does this mean in concrete terms?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Thank you very much for the question, Madam Chair. It's a subject that's near and dear to my heart. I'm always happy to talk about the national action plan, since it was a labour of love. The national action plan is Canada's response to the variety of resolutions developed by the Security Council over the last decade.

Resolution 1325 was the first resolution by the Security Council that established for the first time the importance of recognizing the need to take into account equality between men and women and girls and boys in situations of armed conflict. It makes sure that the international community pays attention to these issues. It makes sure that the United Nations system takes due account of these issues: that peacekeeping operations integrate a gender perspective; that we make sure that women have access to peace processes; that women's rights are advocated; that we address issues related to justice; and that perpetrators of violence and sexual violence against women are held to account. There has been a series of follow-on resolutions over the last 10 years that have further strengthened the original framework set up by resolution 1325.

Our national action plan has been drafted to try to respond to the framework the United Nations has set out by bringing it into the Canadian context. It aims to make sure that we enhance our overall effectiveness and accountability on issues related to peace operations, peace building, and mediation—our programming interventions—in, for instance, development contexts or post-crisis contexts. It essentially emphasizes three things: participation of women and girls in peace processes and conflict management; the protection and promotion of their rights; and equal access to humanitarian and development assistance.

The action plan does this in a number of ways. It advocates for Canadian officials to promote norms and standards. It talks about our role in terms of advocacy. Training and analysis are sub-components of the action plan. It lays out a series of actions we're going to have to take to improve the training we provide to staff across the government who are deployed in these contexts. It also talks about specific program and policy activities we're going to do. If anything, it's a very ambitious plan.

And this is something I have said to other committees that I've had to testify before recently: this is not one of those instances in which the government came out with a plan and could already tick off all of the things. This is a plan that is going to make us stretch quite significantly. We're not yet in a position to implement everything we've put in the plan. It's going to take a lot of hard work.

• (1150)

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

Perhaps we could make our answers a little more concise. We went well over time on that round.

We'll go to Madame Demers, for the Bloc Québécois.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers (Laval, BQ):** Thank you Madam Chair. I thank the witnesses for coming.

Mr. Weetman, how long have you been with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade?

[English]

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** I've been with the department now for about eight years.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Eight years.

How many times, before May 7, 2009, have you had to send an email to your peers and to your colleagues to express your concern regarding the terminology used to refer to human rights, child soldiers and international humanitarian law?

[English]

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** I don't recall. I know that there were a few e-mails exchanged on this subject. There were also conversations in person. There were meetings.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Prior to May 7, 2009, you never had to call on your colleagues to specifically discuss a rather impressive number of suggested terminology changes?

[English]

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, if I might just—

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** I am speaking to Mr. Weetman.

[English]

**The Chair:** Excuse me. Before you answer, do I say your name as Mr. Angell or Mr. Angel?

**Mr. David Angell:** It's like Angel, Madam Chairman, which is very difficult to live up to.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, just by way of—

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Excuse me, Mr. Angell, but I am addressing Mr. Weetman. My question is for him. If you would, Mr. Weetman.

[English]

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** If I remember the question, it was about how many time before May 7, 2009, I had requested meetings with officials to discuss these issues. I don't believe there were any occasions, because, as the e-mail makes fairly clear, we were dealing with these on a case-by-case basis.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** All right.

Mr. Angell, you say there is no difference between the terms “equality between men and women” and “gender equality”, whereas Ms. Gwyn Kutz and Mr. Weetman seem to believe the opposite. In fact, in the email he sent you, he says: “Gwyn Kutz and I discussed the use of the term “gender equality” with representatives of MINA who informed us that the preferred term was rather “equality between men and women”, which is in fact weaker than the terminology used internationally (as well as being more awkward and less-user friendly).”

If I understand correctly, some of you feel that there is no difference and others feel that there is.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, I cannot speak for Ms. Kutz, but the discussion that Mr. Weetman mentioned confirms, following my analysis regarding the United Nations and legal advice from my colleagues, that there is no difference between the terms. But Madam...

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** All right.

Mr. Angell, Mr. Weetman and Ms. Golberg, as well as sending us the names of the people who briefed you for this morning's appearance, I would also like you to table all of the documents used during the course of that briefing, concerning both the questions that you might be asked and the suggested answers.

• (1155)

[English]

**The Chair:** Please send the documents you were asked for to the clerk.

**Mr. David Angell:** We will certainly be very pleased to do that, Madam Chairman.

But just by way of explanation, Mr. Weetman is a rotational foreign service officer. As with all of us, we change assignments every year or two or three. It's only as a member of the minister's office, during a very small portion of Mr. Weetman's career, that he would have had occasion to convene meetings of this type or really to be part of any discussion of this type, because as you see from the distribution line in the memo that several members have referred to, it's generally directors general who get convened for these types of discussion.

Mr. Weetman is a brilliant officer and he'll be a DG soon, but he isn't yet, and in the course of his career, he would not normally have participated in these discussions. So I don't think Mr. Weetman has the information, aside from that brief window when he was in the minister's office, to respond to the committee's question on that.

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds, Ms. Demers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** That will not be enough time. Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I would like to remind everyone and Mr. Nickel that if Mr. Nickel wishes to intervene at any point to answer a question that he feels he has some answers to, he could just indicate this by putting up his hand, and I will notice that he wishes to speak.

Thank you.

The next question goes to Ms. Mathysen, for five minutes.

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

Mr. Weetman, I want to come back to the infamous memo. It says, "Some of the changes suggested by [the minister's office] are more than simply stylistic changes". For example, the change from impunity for sexual violence to prevention of sexual violence "changes the focus from *justice* for victims of sexual violence to *prevention*".

You go on to say that you discussed the term "gender equality" with the minister's office "to be informed that the current 'lexicon' is instead 'equality of men and women', which actually takes something away from the internationally used terminology (as well as being more cumbersome and awkward)".

I'm wondering...in the course of these discussions, did you advise the minister's office about the problems with these changes? If so, did the minister's office give you reasons for going ahead anyway?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Of course we discussed these issues and discussed what might be the impact of these changes in language, and we had follow-up discussions with the minister's office to explain what the difference would be, for example, between saying "impunity" and "prevention", and these were very productive discussions. The goal was to find language that appropriately and accurately communicated the policy of the Government of Canada.

These discussions happen all the time. They're ongoing. As you will have seen from other documents that were tabled by Mr. Kessel, language such as "international humanitarian law" is currently used. Language referring to accountability and bringing perpetrators of violence to justice is used.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** We've heard concerns expressed, though, by Amnesty International and Mr. Alex Neve, by the Canadian coalition for the rights of the child, and by Professor Errol Mendes, who is a professor of international law at the University of Ottawa. And their concerns, I think, are consistent with the concerns we've heard expressed in the NGO community and among members here.

Yet there's this insistence by the Government of Canada to water down our approach, our international approach. It seems to have concerned you at the time. Are you no longer concerned about this?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Madam Chair, my sole concern was to ensure that our language accurately and efficiently expressed the policy of the Government of Canada, which is decided by the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ultimately, for example, in this letter, it's the minister's signature going on the letter, and it's up to the minister to determine what language he would like to use to express his policy.

The departmental officials were providing advice on what we thought would be the most accurate language to communicate the policy in terms of the audience we were communicating it to, and there were ongoing discussions.

• (1200)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, but it still seems to me that this policy is out of step with the rest of the world, and that worries me very much. In terms of all of the testimony we've heard, we're out of sync with other countries, like, for goodness' sake, the Philippines, Chile, Sweden.... Is it not a concern that Canada could be so much out of that international sphere that is concerned about the child soldier and concerned about women and sexual violence?

**The Chair:** Ms. Mathysen, Mr. Angell would like to answer this. Do you wish him to?

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Is there time, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** Yes, you have a minute.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Yes, well, certainly.

**Mr. David Angell:** I will respond very quickly, because the rest may have comments.

I would just make the point, Madam Chairman, that as recently as Monday, the minister said at the Human Rights Council on this issue of impunity, for example, that Canada was among the first to call for the referral of the situation in Libya to the prosecutor of the ICC to help ensure that those responsible for ordering and carrying out these atrocities are held accountable, so it's actually against impunity, Madam Chairman, and it was a statement by the minister on Monday of this week.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Because he missed the boat on Egypt.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Madam Chair, if I could—

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

You have 30 seconds, Ms. Golberg.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Thank you.

Just to add to what Mr. Angell is saying, I will say that Canada is at the forefront of issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the promotion and protection of women's issues in situations of armed conflict, and dealing with issues pertaining to children in armed conflict. We're recognized as such by all of our allies. We're recognized as such by the United Nations and by other international organizations.

It's our effect on the ground that demonstrates this is the case: the kinds of policies we pursue, the kinds of programs we're investing in, and the kinds of specific advocacy we do on a case-by-case basis in response to certain circumstances.

David has pointed—

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

Now we're going to go to Mr. Tweed, for the Conservatives.

**Mr. Merv Tweed (Brandon—Souris, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to our guests for being here today.

Obviously I'm a relatively new member to the committee. I've sat in on a few of the committee hearings, but this is the first one in this regard.

I feel that it's an interesting comment the opposition makes, that would challenge a person in your level of responsibility for not raising these issues, because I think that's exactly what I've seen you do. In the comments and in the e-mails you've sent, you raised an issue within the department to get a resolution. That, to me, is what your job is, and then it is to take that forward and implement it as you're directed to. It would seem to me you should be thanked for raising this issue and making everyone aware of it.

Because words are very sensitive, as Ms. Neville has said. I often think of the new world of texting and e-mails. If you don't hear the emotion, sometimes you take a whole different interpretation of the word. We have to be cautious about that, because it does reflect how the world views us and how we view ourselves internally.

I read the e-mail that you wrote, Mr. Weetman, and it talks about the changes in the terms from “gender equality” to “equality between men and women”, and suggests that it takes away from the internationally used terminology.

Yet when I read Mr. Kessel's view, when he appeared before this committee, there is a difference. Can you explain that difference for the committee members?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** Certainly.

As I think I pointed out at the beginning, I'm not an expert on gender equality or on a number of the issues raised there.

That is essentially me editorializing. That is, in effect, me showing that I wasn't aware of all the issues.

That's exactly why we had the discussion afterwards—not only to make sure that senior officials, such as David and Elissa, were aware that these were common language suggestions that were being made, but also to inform myself and people in my office, such as Mr. Nickel, on how this language reflected and conveyed Canadian policy.

We have heard from Mr. Kessel that the terms are used interchangeably at the UN and other fora. He's the expert on international law and on this terminology, and I respect his understanding there.

•(1205)

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Thank you.

Further, you've mentioned that the terms are interchangeable in many uses, and you've verified that they are used by the United Nations, both terminologies. Does DFAIT continue to use “gender equality” in the policy documents?

**Mr. David Angell:** Yes, we do continue to use the term “gender equality”. In fact, as Elissa points out, it's on our website.

So yes, it certainly is actively in use, sir.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** And in interventions it's used that way?

**Mr. David Angell:** Yes, it's used at the United Nations and elsewhere, including in the resolutions for which Canada has the lead in managing the negotiations.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** So in terms of the definitions, as you see it, or as you utilize the words, if I were to use “gender equality” in one phrase and then “equality between men and women”, people reading that document would have no question as to the differences, or—

**Mr. David Angell:** The audience at the United Nations would view the terms as entirely interchangeable.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** The UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, or IASC, in its gender handbook on humanitarian action and gender guidelines for gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian settings, defines gender equality as equality between men and women, and refers to the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys, and men of rights.

Again, that's understood in the terminology when it's used internationally?

**Mr. David Angell:** Yes, that is the case.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** That's good.

**The Chair:** You have a few seconds.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** That's fine, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** You're fine? Okay. Thank you.

We go to another round now, a five-minute round.

Ms. Simson for the Liberals.

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

I'd like to address something that one of my colleagues across the way, Mr. Tweed, had to say about thanking you.

Of course we absolutely do thank you. I think the misunderstanding is that the committee had exactly—precisely—the same concerns you voiced in this e-mail: language concerns.

We were assured by Mr. Kessel in his previous testimony that they weren't even taking place, so you have to understand that I positively do thank you, Mr. Weetman, because there are changes taking place and they are alarming. There were almost two dozen senior officials from various departments in on this e-mail.

I'd like to go back to the meeting on May 24. Your e-mail exchange says that there was a "positive" response, a need for this meeting, and you say there were six or seven people. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a "coordinated departmental" plan—a plan.

Could you elaborate on what the plan was? Were there any documented minutes of the meeting? Was anything put into writing as to what the planned approach on these arbitrary changes was going to be?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** If I recall from the meeting.... As I said, we had hundreds of meetings over the two years that I was there.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Is there a record? It says that a "coordinated" plan was going to be developed. Was it just sitting around having coffee or was it in writing—yes or no?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** There was no plan developed after this. There were discussions on the best way to convey our advice to the minister's office. There may have been a few follow-up e-mails, and there were certainly conversations between officials and the minister's office afterwards to discuss some of this language, but there was no document created that was a plan, no.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** So you didn't develop an overall plan, even though it said that Mr. Nickel had the same concerns that it was being seen on a broader base and that there was definitely a need for this meeting?

So nothing was formalized?

**Mr. Jamieson Weetman:** That's correct. Nothing was formalized. We thought it would be a useful meeting, and there were meetings afterwards. It helped facilitate the conversations between officials and staff from the minister's office.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Okay. With regard to the e-mails you referred to, I'd like copies of the subsequent e-mails. Could you submit those to the committee?

• (1210)

**The Chair:** Ms. Simson, I just want to say, you referred to Mr. Nickel, and Mr. Nickel is there. Did you wish him to respond to your reference?

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** I would like copies of the e-mail exchange after.

**The Chair:** The clerk would require those copies for all of the members of the committee to look at.

Would you please send them?

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Mr. Nickel, I do apologize. Did you have the same concerns Mr. Weetman had with respect to the changes that were being made?

**Mr. Jim Nickel:** The purpose of the meeting on the 21st, as Mr. Weetman has described, was to ensure that we had a clear understanding between the minister's office and departmental officials on appropriate language or the most effective language to communicate Canada's policy in these issue areas. So the goal of the meeting, again, was to ensure that we were effectively and accurately communicating Canadian policy in various fora, whether in ministerial correspondence or statements in international fora, for example.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** Would that have been just with respect to language? The reason I'm saying this is that this isn't interchangeable. With respect to the DRC file, "impunity for sexual violence" was changed to how the Government of Canada "urges" the DRC "to take concerted measures to prevent sexual violence". That's watered it down.

The other thing about this particular letter is that references to gender-based violence are removed. In the DRC, it has been reported in the media, rape is actually a weapon of war, so removing any references to gender-based violence isn't a language thing—it's a watering-down of Canadian policy. The concern seems to be not just with these so-called interchangeable words, but with the actual content that is not consistent with Canadian foreign policy.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, on the issue of the DRC, again, the argument that we're making is that there has been no change in policy and there has been no change in words. With regard to DRC, for example, the minister issued a press statement only on February 25 in which the minister states very clearly, "Canada encourages the Government of the DRC to pursue its efforts to ensure that individuals who commit major violations of international humanitarian law and human rights are held accountable for their actions".

On December 16, our ambassador to the United Nations, in a speech that was approved by the minister's office, made exactly the same statement with regard to the use of sexual violence:

Canada welcomes the jurisprudence of international courts and tribunals that confirms that rape and sexual violence can be war crimes and crimes against humanity. Individuals responsible for these crimes must be brought to justice.

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

We have gone well over time on this one.

I now go to Mr. Boughen, for the Conservatives.

**Mr. Ray Boughen (Palliser, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I add my voice of welcome to those of my colleagues and thank you folks and Mr. Nickel for being with us.

I'd like to come back to the language question. Anyone on the panel may answer this.

Is it always the case that, no matter what the audience, we describe foreign policy issues in the same way? For example, in your experience, would the minister use exactly the same language in a letter to a constituent that he would use in a speech to the United Nations? Or is there leeway to describe the same issue in different ways? In other words, through the magic of language, does it change depending on the venue or where it's being produced?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Certainly from my own experience what I can say is that we've seen that how you respond to.... As I said to Ms. Mathysen, depending on the fora you're in, that determines how you decide to articulate a given point.

So we'll say certain things in certain ways at a forum like the United Nations that we might not articulate in the same way in a letter to a constituent or a letter that comes into the minister's office. That's simply because sometimes we use terminology that's very technical. Technical terminology doesn't always get the ideas across to people in a way that it would if we unpack it. For instance, that's why sometimes we use "equality between men and women, girls and boys", because if we use other terminology, individuals might not understand exactly what we meant.

So the terminology we choose to employ depends very much on the forum in which we happen to be participating.

• (1215)

**Mr. Ray Boughen:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Is that it? You have about three minutes left.

Madame Boucher, would you like to...?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like to ask one question, Madam Chair.

We have talked a lot about terminology and the changes in terms. There are a lot of people trying to catch everyone out on this issue.

What was the reaction of your colleagues at the Department of Foreign Affairs on the suggested changes to the terminology?

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, our position is that there is no change in this regard.

The reaction to the meeting called by Mr. Weetman was that it was a normal meeting. As Mr. Weetman has stated, the meeting was part of a discussion that was ongoing. It is our job to provide advice on the implications of various options. That is the context within which the meeting took place. It was a perfectly normal meeting.

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** You said earlier that there had been some changes and that you had often had meetings about some of them. We need to adapt. Canada is at the forefront of many things.

On February 25, the Hon. Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that Canada encouraged the conviction of high-ranking officers of the Congolese Armed Forces. We are talking about human rights and international humanitarian rights. So the terminology has not changed all that much.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, according to our analysis, the terminology has not changed and there is no policy suggesting that the sentences should have changed.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** That being said, if there are differences...

[English]

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. We are out of time on this one.

I will go to Monsieur Desnoyers for the Bloc Québécois.

[Translation]

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Madam Chair, first of all, I would just like to be clear about one thing.

Mr. Angell, although Mr. Weetman has been in this position for only a few years, I hope that the fact that he dared to chair a meeting like this one will not be held against him. You said that he may one

day be a director and that you hoped that this would not weigh against him. You said that in an arrogant fashion.

You say that there has been no change in the approach to the various regions because different words are being used. However, since the Conservatives have been in power, we have noticed that ministers no longer use words such as "violence against women", "gender-based violence", nor do they use the words "gender", "equality" and "gender equality" in their speeches.

Has the government really changed the directives or changed the labelling to reflect its conservative policies, which are more to the right? Have there been any directives issued in that regard further to discussions that you have had with the minister?

Mr. Weetman said earlier that these meetings were designed to improve the dialogue with the minister. I imagine that the minister had some things to say on the matter.

• (1220)

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, I apologize if I was arrogant when responding. That certainly was not my intent. French is not my mother tongue and it is possible that I may have said something without meaning to.

Madam Chair, as for the directives, no directives were issued to change the language used.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Why do we no longer find these words in the speeches? We no longer find expressions such as gender, equality, violence against women, gender-based violence in the minister's speeches. Something is happening somewhere along the line. There must be a directive somewhere that states that speeches are no longer to contain these words.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** I do not know what information you are looking at. I know that Minister Oda and Minister Kent used those words in prepared speeches that were given a few months ago at the United Nations and before the organization...

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** I am referring to Lawrence Cannon, David Emerson, Maxime Bernier. I am referring to those individuals.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Several ministers deal with these issues. It would depend on the forum where these ministers were presenting.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** You prepare the speeches that these people give.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** I know that...

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** The speeches come from the department, from the Department of Foreign Affairs. Right?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** You are quite right, and the speeches that we prepare...

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Why do we no longer hear these words in the speeches?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** In my opinion, the speeches prepared by my team for the minister and his counterparts still include those terms. As I said, Minister Oda and Minister Kent used those words a few months ago.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Would it be possible to obtain the speeches that you prepared and that include these words?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** They are on the Internet and we would be delighted to send them to you.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Is it possible to get them?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Ms. Golberg, you referred to an action plan for the department. Did this action plan involve significant changes to the language used in various locations where the department is involved? Earlier, I referred to the Congo, Burundi and Rwanda.

I think that you will agree with me if I were to say that words are important when they are meaningful, when they really mean something, and are not just empty words.

Would you agree with me on that?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** The action plan really tries to guide the definition of Canada's policy and strategic orientation on issues pertaining to women and security. It is really based on three things...

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** Would you agree that the word "impunity" is a meaningful word when it is used? By using the word, we are saying that we are going to ensure that someone will pay for something that has been done; we are not saying that we are going to prevent sexual violence.

Do you think that there is a difference between these two expressions?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** I think that both expressions are important and we use them in our speeches. This is important because we are trying to prevent activities of that kind and because Canada also wants to ensure that people who rape women are prosecuted. So continuity is very important.

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** But why do you no longer use these words?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** In my opinion, these words are used at the United Nations and in the speeches. As Mr. Angell said, Minister Cannon used...

**Mr. Luc Desnoyers:** And in your plan...

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I would encourage witnesses to please keep their comments short. Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen.

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

The Auditor General was very critical of DFAIT and the application of gender-based analysis when designing government policy. Did the department perform gender-based analysis on the change from "gender equality" to "equality between men and women"? If so, is there documentation that we can see on that GBA?

• (1225)

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chair, we've argued that there is no change, with respect. We do have three excellent analysts in the human rights policy and governance division who routinely do provide policy guidance to ensure that Canada is in fulfillment of its convention obligations. We also have individuals at our permanent mission in New York who also have expertise in this area. So the

issue of analyzing the implications of Canadian actions with regard to our delivery on our commitments happens as a matter of course.

Whether there was analysis on this occasion, I don't know. I wasn't responsible for human rights at the time, Madam Chairman, but as a matter of ongoing practice, we do look very closely at ensuring that we follow up on our commitments and conventions with regard to women and gender.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** But GBA is an absolute requirement. Departments are required to do GBA, so it's not a matter of someone externally looking at changes in language or the impact of language. It's a matter of the department looking specifically within itself at the policies that it's putting forward.

I'm wondering. Is there any documentation that exists to show that GBA was performed when the department was designing the policy in regard to the change from "gender equality" to "equality between men and women"?

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chairman, again, we're arguing that there was no change in policy. We do have three individuals in the human rights division. We have individuals in the legal bureau and individuals in New York who do the gender-based analysis.

**The Chair:** But I think she asked, and as chair, I would ask you the same, will you table any gender-based analysis documents that were done there?

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chairman, I'll have to ascertain whether any such documentation exists. I've never seen it. I don't know whether there was discussion or an analysis on paper. I wasn't responsible for human rights at the time, Madam.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Madam Chair, I would suggest that this is a problem, because departments are required to do GBA. I think we may be at the centre of some of the problems here.

The UN Security Council resolution set out clear responses in using or involving children in armed conflict. When Mr. Kessel was here he said the term "child soldier" was colloquial, yet I think for many people it has a real connotation.

When I think of children involved in armed conflict, I think about those poor victims who get caught up in a battle or who are marginalized from their community or who are orphaned. "Child soldier" connotes something very specific to me, that is, a child grabbed and forced to do things that no human being should be asked to do, a child being forced or compelled, because he or she is a child, to do quite horrible things.

That brings me to the case of Omar Khadr. The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children advocated for Mr. Khadr. They were very clear that, because he was 15 years old, he was a child soldier. Yet when it comes to Mr. Khadr, the Government of Canada took a very hardened position. They insisted that he was not a child soldier. I'm wondering if the change in terms of "child soldier" now being "children involved in armed conflict" had anything to do with the Khadr case. Does that change not minimize or downplay Canada's obligations to Mr. Khadr in regard to his childhood at the time that he was captured?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I don't in fact think that any of us, unfortunately, are in a position to be able to respond to that question from a substantive perspective.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is Mr. Nickel able to do that?

**Mr. Jim Nickel:** No, I'm afraid not. I think that question would best be answered by Mr. Kessel, the department's legal adviser.

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

I'll now go to Madame Boucher from the Conservatives.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I am going to give my time to Mr. Tweed because I asked my question previously. So I will let Mr. Tweed have the floor.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Certainly.

Mr. Tweed, go ahead.

• (1230)

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Thanks again, Madam Chair.

When I think back, in history we change terminology for many reasons. Sometimes the words of the past are not the words that are acceptable today. We change them for various reasons, be it for political reasons.... I think it was an interesting question that was asked about how we speak to our constituents, how we speak to other members of Parliament, and how we speak to the bureaucracies within. I know for myself that when I'm listening to details on a bill it tends to go right by you, because what you're really interested in is what it actually means, and not necessarily all the words that surround it.

To go back first to the question where I left off, has the change or the use of different words been raised with anyone from the international world? Does somebody say "we don't understand what you're saying when you bring that phrase forward" or is it well known and accepted?

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chairman, as the official responsible for the United Nations, I can say that to my knowledge, no, there has been no such approach made. There's no such suggestion of lack of understanding by our partners.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** I suspect that other members of the United Nations interchange phrases and words that probably don't raise a question in our minds either, in the sense that when we hear them, we understand what the discussion is about.

**Mr. David Angell:** Madam Chairman, that is correct.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** It would suggest to me that you have not been given any instruction to change policy. Is that correct?

**Mr. David Angell:** That is correct.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** After your discussion on using or inserting this terminology, was there any further discussion about sticking with just this one phrase or, in appropriate sentences or at appropriate times, using both or either?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** I think we should probably be clear that you're speaking specifically with respect to gender equality.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Just to the phrase, yes.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** Yes.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** That seems to be what this whole meeting is about.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** There were other terms that were referenced, so with respect to that specifically, that's true.

I should say in terms of a point of process that if requests are made, if they do signal that there might be a change afoot, and if the bureaucracy would like to flag for the minister's office that they might in fact lead to a change, there is a process for handling that. As Jamieson said, that's where the dialogue takes place. That's where we go with a back-and-forth discussion with ministers' offices to say that if we did approach it in that way, "here are the potential ramifications of it". If there are concerns, those are raised through the office of the deputy minister.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Can you briefly discuss the policy regarding gender equality, international humanitarian law, and child soldiers, and whether there are any changes that you've been given direction on, any policy changes in that area?

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** I haven't seen any specific policy. Again, as Jamieson noted, we deal with these on a case-by-case basis. For instance, in the context of a speech that we're writing for the UN Security Council, we have particular phrases that are in there.

If there's a question that comes from the minister's office, which has happened in the past, there is then a process of going back and forth, wherein the officials explain why we have decided to use that particular terminology, what the context is, and what the implications are of using that terminology. If the minister's office comes back and says that they would instead prefer to use different terminology and they explain the reasons for that, we figure out whether or not it makes sense for that particular context. If there's still a concern at the end of the day on the part of the bureaucracy, we go through the office of the deputy minister to raise it with the minister directly.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** That sounds very familiar to any MP's office. I suspect that after a letter is written they obviously reread it to make sure that the words are appropriate and mean what they're trying to say, as opposed to being interpreted differently.

Ms. Neville complimented you on your action plan. I think she spoke glowingly about it. I know I'm not going to give you a lot of time, but can you briefly give me the real highlights of it?

**The Chair:** I don't think so, Mr. Tweed. We have two more seconds in your time, and Ms. Golberg will be sending that to the committee anyway. Thank you.



We've come to the end of the witness participation, and because we have some work to do in terms of business, we will go in camera for that.

We want to thank Mr. Nickel for being here.

I gather that it's about 11 p.m. for you now. Thank you.

And I would like to thank—

**An hon. member:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Ms. O'Neill-Gordon, but we have not actually finished in this area.

I would like to thank the witnesses, Mr. Weetman, Mr. Angell, and Ms. Golberg, for coming.

As the chair, I wanted to ask one quick question.

Ms. Golberg, on your action plan, you kept referencing 10 years. Was this an old action plan that was written 10 years ago or is this a new action plan that you are talking about?

• (1235)

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** This action plan was formally launched by the Minister of Foreign Affairs this past October 2010.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We look forward to seeing it.

**Ms. Elissa Golberg:** It would be my pleasure.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I made a mistake. We are not going to go in camera for our business. We are going to do it in public, so we can begin right away. Because we did not get to do this work last time, we must go very quickly.

Thank you very much.

We're dealing with a motion from Monday, February 14, by the Honourable Anita Neville. This motion reads:

That the Committee recommend that the government conduct a gender audit of all federal funding of sport, including Sport Canada funding programs, funding of infrastructure projects by Infrastructure Canada, as well as contributions to international athletic competitions hosted in Canada, to ensure that funding is being distributed on an equitable basis;

That the conclusions of this audit be made publicly available and tabled in the House of Commons; and

That this motion be reported to the House.

[*Translation*]

That the committee recommend...

[*English*]

Do you wish me to read it in French? Do you wish me to move on...? Then we will begin to discuss the motion.

We'll go to Ms. Zarac.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac (LaSalle—Émard, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair.

First of all, Mrs. Neville wanted me to apologize to the committee because she had to leave. She would have liked to be here, but she had to leave for an emergency. She had to be back in her riding. She extends her apologies to the committee and she asked me to present the motion.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Ms. Zarac.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** This audit we're asking for should be simple, because the government has already acknowledged that it's an exercise that's being done already. For us, it's of great interest.

Actually, in response to the letter from the Minister of Finance for a proposal, our Liberal women's caucus sent him a letter asking him to ensure that the next budget would ensure this. It's very simple. It's just to be sure

[*Translation*]

...that the analysis be gender-based and representative in order to be totally fair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Tweed.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before I start, is the motion in order?

**The Chair:** Absolutely.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** I think what is being requested is honourable. I would suggest that currently Sport Canada is providing much of this information online, if not all of it. It is available to the public. I can cite a couple of examples. There is the Sport Canada support for Canada's candidature for the women's soccer cup in 2015.

When I hear the word “audit”, from a business point of view I interpret that to mean a whole lot of additional work for a department, and I guess that in some cases I would suggest that it is unnecessary work when I can find most of the information or all of the information I would be looking for. It does cost a lot of money, and I think until we get to a point where we aren't satisfied with the answers we're receiving...

I'm not sure, but I would suggest that we should start with department officials and department people. Perhaps even the minister would be prepared to appear. Again, I just question whether the word “audit” is the right word and wonder whether we could look at some other sort of terminology. Because again, if you want answers reasonably quickly, I suspect that an audit's going to take a long period of time and you may not get....depending on what's happening in the political world right now.

We may be able to come to some better terminology. I would suggest that whether you call it a “gender audit” or a “gender study”....but it would include the department to bring forward all that information, and again, perhaps have the minister come in. I'm not sure how this committee works, but I know that most ministers generally come forward when they're requested to do so—in a timely fashion—to make their report. So—

• (1240)

**The Chair:** Mr. Tweed, the discussion about who will come to be witnesses for the study is only going to be applicable if the study is accepted. Once the study is accepted, then the usual officials, etc., etc., and witnesses....

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Right. I understand that, but what I'm suggesting is that before you move into moving this motion and actually making the demands, you would want to hear from the departmental officials and you would want to hear from the minister. And perhaps the word "audit" can be changed to "gathering of information," because I believe that most of it is accessible right now. It's just a matter of how we formulate it and present it to the committee itself.

**The Chair:** We will see what the mover thinks of that.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** If we look at it in French, it says exactly what you're asking, so I think it's just a problem of translation, because it's nothing complicated. Effectively, what you've said is that the work is supposedly being done. As for what we're asking for, in French it says "vérification". I would be willing to change the word "audit" to conform more with the French version, which says a study, an analysis, of all federal funding of sport.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** I'm not sure what that word would translate to in English, but that is certainly one of the things that I think would be appropriate. Again—

**The Chair:** Mr. Tweed, I'm sorry. This is not a debate.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** We would change it also—

**The Chair:** I have other people on the list.

Ms. Zarac and Mr. Tweed, this is not a debate.

Ms. Zarac spoke, and now we have Ms. Simson.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** That's fine. I was going to suggest the word "analysis" as well.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Is there any further discussion on this?

Mr. Boughen.

**Mr. Ray Boughen:** Madam Chair, I don't know what the purpose of the motion is? What are we trying to find out here? As Mr. Tweed said, if it's just basic information, punch in your computer, and you'll have it on your screen in about two seconds. If you want to know how many young people in athletics are male or how many are female, you just ask Google. He'll tell you right away.

**The Chair:** Ms. Zarac.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** He also said there is lots of information and it's a compilation of that information that we're asking for. Because there is a lot of it, as Mr. Tweed said.

**The Chair:** Madame Demers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair, it is not just the information that we want. We want an assessment of the gender-based study done on the awarding of funding and infrastructure. This is what we want, not just information. The information is already available on the Internet. However, the information on the Internet does not indicate whether or not a gender-based analysis was done on the impact that these various donations and subsidies to both athletes and infrastructure projects had on women, men and children.

So we are not just auditing everything that was given to Sport Canada or to infrastructure projects. Rather, we are trying to check

whether or not a gender-based analysis was done. That is the purpose behind Ms. Neville's motion. She would like to have a gender-based analysis and not simply a general analysis.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Tweed.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I guess that's the brunt of my argument. Before you undertake a study, would it not be better for the committee to hear from the staff and the minister and then formulate what they want out of the study or review you're prepared to undertake?

I'm not arguing with the fact that the motion is sound and doable; I'm just asking whether we are doing it in reverse order. If you have the minister and the department staff here you can ask those questions. If you're not satisfied, then you can move forward to a study, a review, or an audit. I suspect they're sitting in their offices right now. They won't be listening to this debate because it's in camera, which surprises me as well.

● (1245)

**The Chair:** It's not in camera, Mr. Tweed.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I can't believe that committee business would be. If they are listening right now they're probably collecting that information, hoping for a chance to appear before the committee to present that—

**The Chair:** Sometimes committee business is conducted in camera at the wish of the committee itself.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** I understand that, but motions generally are not.

**The Chair:** Actually, sometimes the committee wishes a motion to be in camera.

Madame Boucher?

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** No, Ms. Demers.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Demers again?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I did not speak, I was out of the room.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Demers spoke.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Really, I do not understand where you want to go with this. I searched for information on all of the athletes who have obtained grants and so on. I can tell you that a lot of women received them; more than 50% went to women, in fact. That information, and more, is on the Internet.

In other committees, we have invited ministers as well as officials. It was very lively, particularly at the Standing Committee on Official Languages. It was a good thing to do. The minister is prepared to appear. We have invited ministers, and this one is prepared to meet with us. I spoke to Mr. Lunn and he is prepared to come in order to explain what they do and how Sport Canada works.

We have very little time remaining, particularly since we also have the issue of social media which is important to us, at least to my riding. We're always putting those matters off. As far as I'm concerned, it is important that we study social media as they affect women. We're always postponing matters that are important for the people in the street in my riding. Ms. Demers has also met with girls who were asking questions about social media. I do not want to drop the issue.

The minister and the officials from Sport Canada are prepared to explain how they operate. We also have a great deal of information. I certainly will not be supporting the motion as it is drafted.

[English]

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

Madame Demers.

[Translation]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** Madam Chair, I think that there is some confusion here. The motion is not asking the committee to undertake a study. The motion is recommending that the government audit federal funding. We're talking about the government, not the committee.

As I see it, every time that representatives from Status of Women Canada and other departments have testified before us, they tell us that they do a gender-based analysis before submitting projects to the Department of Finance. If the gender-based analysis is done, they should not have any problems providing us with the information, particularly since all departments have rules stating that gender-based analyses are to be done.

As we have been so often told, if that is not the case, the people from Status of Women Canada will be pleased to help them conduct their gender-based analyses, because that is their role.

[English]

**The Chair:** Madame Zarac.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** First of all, I would like to answer Madame Boucher.

[Translation]

She is saying that women's causes are not the priority, but that social media...

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** Social media are important. Sorry to have to tell you that.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Women's causes are as well.

Today, in the newspapers, we read that Professor Kathleen Lahey...

[English]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** • (1250)

from Queen's University said concerning women's causes, which is that we haven't come such a long way after all and that even then we might be backsliding. So I think it's very important.

I just want to repeat what Ms. Demers said. It's not complicated. As Mr. Tweed said, the information is there. We just want to bring all the information together, make an analysis, and make sure that it's equitable for women. The information there shouldn't be complicated.

May I ask for the vote, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** Excuse me. There is apparently a problem with translation.

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** Sorry—and I was talking fast.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Can you say that again?

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** With more feeling?

**The Chair:** We need to have English translation.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** I call for the vote, Madam Chair.

[English]

Do you understand? No...?

**The Chair:** So as the mover you are calling for the vote?

**Mrs. Lise Zarac:** I'll say it in English: I'm calling for the vote.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry. If the mover of the motion calls for a vote, it means there is no more debate.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** No, it doesn't.

**The Chair:** She can't stop debate...?

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** She can't stop debate.

**The Chair:** We've done this at other committees. Anyway....

Ms. Simson, go ahead.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Well, I—

**The Chair:** Mr. Tweed, your name is on the list, and I'll come to you when your name arrives.

**Mrs. Michelle Simson:** I share the concern of some of the comments that this motion is a recommendation to the government to do something as simple as conduct a gender-based analysis. It's a recommendation just to ensure that funding is equitable. I would really argue about the number that was thrown out by my colleague, Ms. Boucher, that 50%, I really and truly would, because we've had several cases where that just isn't the case.

So all we're looking for from the Status of Women is to conduct a gender-based analysis. If the government were to follow that recommendation, then we would probably hear three cheers from a lot of the female athletes in this country.

**The Chair:** Mr. Tweed.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** Thank you again, Madam Chair.

I would suggest that if you want to know if there's been an audit done, the first thing I would do is bring in the minister and his departmental officials, and ask them directly, and if you're not satisfied with what they can do.

It's interesting. If you're surmising that all of this work hasn't been done, what if we do a review and it shows that they got 60% of the funding? Are you prepared to make adjustments backwards in that situation? I'm not saying that it's happening; I'm just saying it's going to create a divide at some point in time. I have a lot of male athletes who, if a pendulum swings the other way...maybe they're going to come back before this committee and ask you to reallocate the funding accordingly.

That's the only reason why I'm arguing that it should be the minister and the department, and then you make your decision, and you can refine your questions and you can refine exactly what you want. It's a very general statement. For everybody that says we do one, obviously there are some who don't believe that it happens, and who better to ask than the minister of the department? Who better than his officials?

Has that ever taken place? Has the committee ever written a letter to the minister and asked him that question directly? Has anybody ever raised it in question period? I mean, those are our opportunities to do it. I just worry that the good work of any committee is sometimes consumed in these kinds of fact-finding missions when I can just go on the Internet and get the same examples of what has been spent. So it—

**The Chair:** Thank you. I just want to answer your question.

It has been asked in this committee of the Minister of Justice, for example, who said he didn't know, and none of his officials could answer that question either. So it has been asked.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** I appreciate that—

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** —but I think if you're talking about sport in general, let's ask the minister directly. Let's bring him in here and ask him directly. Obviously, again, he has staff who are listening to this conversation. They're probably scrambling right now to put those numbers together.

All I'm suggesting is that, before you approve a motion that's going to create work for many, to collect and put this together, we ask them directly, and if we're not satisfied... Again, I'm only looking at the experiences I've had in other committees. Having the minister appear before you is usually the best opportunity to ask the most direct questions.

• (1255)

**The Chair:** I think we will see how the committee feels about this process when they vote.

Thank you.

Ms. Mathysen.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I'll be very quick.

Basically, I'm supporting what Madame Demers said. The departments across government are supposed to do this analysis anyway. We've been assured over and over again—well, except for today with DFAIT—that it is in fact done. So it doesn't really create work; it's simply a compilation of what has been done.

As Madame Boucher said, we had intended to look at social media, and that study has been delayed and delayed. I would think that bringing in the minister for sport would further delay that. I would suggest that simply a compilation for this committee shouldn't be a big problem, and it shouldn't create such consternation.

**The Chair:** Ms. O'Neill-Gordon.

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to reiterate what my colleagues have said and remind you that to conduct an audit, or to come back on any of this, costs a lot of work, and it also costs a lot of money. It may not be necessary. We've seen that those answers... We've seen the list on the computer, on the web. We have it all there. What other information are we going to get such that there would really be a need for us to cause a cost for all of this?

Sometimes, ladies and gentlemen, we have to use a bit of common sense and go forward and do our work in a common-sense way. If we can bring in a minister to speak to us and bring us this information, that wouldn't be as costly. I think that's the step we should take first before venturing into something that's going to be costly to everyone.

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I would like to go back to the issue of the minister's appearance.

I sit on other committees. We've always done this and it works very well. I do not understand why this would not work here.

Madam Chair, there is a technical problem with the translation

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Could we have order, please?

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** We need translation.

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher, you were speaking.

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** We need translation.

**The Chair:** Are you still having problems with translation?

**Mr. Merv Tweed:** I'm getting translation now.

Tilly?

**The Chair:** Is everyone receiving translation? Or just some people?

**Mrs. Tilly O'Neill-Gordon:** I was getting it before now.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Nicole Demers:** It is working on this side.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** I would like to ascertain whether this is a general problem with translation or whether maybe some of the jacks aren't working well. That's all I'm trying to do.

Is everyone receiving English and French translation?

So that group is, but you're not...? Could it be the jacks? I had this problem at a committee the other day. The jack was pushed completely in but very little was coming out of it. I would ask you to pull out the jack and push it back in to see if that makes a difference.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I will wait two seconds so that you can hear the translation of what I am saying.

[English]

**Mr. Ray Boughen:** I can hear you speaking, but you're speaking English.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** All right. Do you think we should try again?

**An hon. member:** Sure.

**The Chair:** Madame Boucher, would you like to start?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sylvie Boucher:** I was saying that this works very well in other committees. Here, we have had many problems in the past in

getting ministers to appear. Now we have a minister who is prepared to discuss this with us, but we do not want to hear him. I have a bit of difficulty with that, particularly since the minister...

● (1300)

[English]

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

You're not getting translation...? Can we suspend for a few seconds while we get this technical glitch sorted out?

Or no, it is now one o'clock, and the meeting is over, so we will have to take the continuation of this motion to the next meeting. That is actually going to be a week from today because we are not having a meeting on Tuesday in honour of International Women's Day, etc. We will return to this issue on Thursday.

May I have a motion to adjourn?

Madame Boucher so moves.

The meeting is adjourned.

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