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**Chair**

**Ms. Marie-Claude Morin**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, February 12, 2013

•(1105)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Ms. Marie-Claude Morin (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, NDP)):** Good morning, and welcome to the 58<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee is resuming its study of sexual harassment in the federal workplace.

This morning we will hear from two witnesses. First we will hear from Shanna Wilson, from the Defence Women's Advisory Organization. She is a petty officer, 1<sup>st</sup> class and the national military co-chair. We will also speak by videoconference with Karen Davis, who is appearing today as an individual. Ms. Davis is a defence scientist in research and analysis at the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute.

Welcome. Thank you for being here today.

We will start with Ms. Wilson and then continue with Ms. Davis. You each have 10 minutes for your presentation. We will then move on to the question and answer period.

Ms. Wilson, you have the floor.

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson (National Military Co-Chair, Defence Women's Advisory Organization):** Good morning, everyone. I'm Petty Officer 1st Class Shanna Wilson, and I'm an analyst at the personnel coordination centre at Maritime Forces Pacific. As a national defence advisory group military co-chair, I'm here today representing the Defence Women's Advisory Organization, or DWAO. Thank you for inviting me to this event.

Defence advisory groups, including DWAO, are the consultative mechanism of choice for the Department of National Defence, DND, and the Canadian Forces, CF, to meet its obligations under the Employment Equity Act. Advisory groups provide advice to senior leadership on systemic issues for the purpose of removing employment barriers and under-representation for these groups. The four groups, as identified in the act, include women, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and aboriginal people.

I'm here to explain the role of DWAO as it relates to sexual harassment in the federal workplace.

The DWAO mission is to identify and seek resolution of any systemic issues that may be adversely affecting the full contribution women can make towards a strong, effective, and representative DND/CF. Together with the local regional advisory groups and women within the DND/CF, DWAO provides advice and insight to

the leadership on issues of national scope surrounding the successful employment of women.

The CF and DND were named as employers under the act in 1996, and the federal public service became subject to the act in the same year. The CF became an employer under the Employment Equity Act in December 2002, following an application study and approval of the Canadian Forces' employment equity regulations. Among the criteria established by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, compliance with the act was determined to include identifying and eliminating employment barriers.

The Employment Equity Act also stipulates the requirement to undertake policies and programs to correct under-representation and provide for reasonable accommodation of differences. DWAO plays a consultative role in the elaboration of these policies and programs. In this role, DWAO may confirm that the steps proposed will help solve the under-representation and assist in the decision as to what type of accommodations would be considered reasonable.

The Employment Equity Act defines representatives as "those persons who have been designated by federal employees to act as their representatives". Accordingly, advisory groups were established to act as joint employee and CF member representatives for the purpose of raising systemic employment issues within DND and CF, and consulting on means of resolving them.

I've been elected by the membership of the DWAO as their national military representative. Defence advisory groups, or DAGs, are comprised of military and civilian representatives at both the regional and national levels. As co-chairs, we play a role by helping to establish the defence advisory groups for DND/CF establishments across Canada.

The eight national co-chairs from the four advisory groups make up the co-chairs council. As the base or foundation of the employment equity governance structure, the advisory groups, including DWAO, provide the information necessary to guide resolution of systemic issues to the level one human resources business manager, employment equity officers, and the corporate employment equity staff, Director Diversity and Well-Being and Director Human Rights and Diversity.

The role of the defence advisory group is to provide advice and insight to the leadership of DND and the CF on issues relevant to its members and to the effective implementation of employment equity.

Specifically, advisory groups shall provide advice on the development of policies, procedures, and mechanisms related to recruitment, retention, and training. We provide advice on employment equity initiatives, action plans, and outreach initiatives. We identify systemic employment barriers and recommend solutions.

As such, the advisory groups address issues at a systemic issue level vice the individual level. Individual issues remain the responsibility of the members' chain of command, but advisory groups may be consulted to provide advice or recommendations to individual members and to the chain of command. To create a critical mass, it is recommended that advisory groups be organized by formation, base, or unit.

National advisory group co-chairs provide leadership and oversight of the national executive committee, their respective advisory group officers and in support of the advisory groups. Related to today's discussions, the national co-chairs attend regular meetings with DND/CF leadership, to include the Defence Diversity Council, diversity and employment equity in defence working group, advisory group national meetings, national advisory groups co-chairs council, and we maintain effective communication with advisory groups membership, DND/CF leadership, and chain of command. Finally, we collaborate and work with the various levels of headquarters to resolve systemic issues.

- (1110)

Although as a normal practice the civilian national co-chairs may deal with civilian issues, and the military national co-chairs deal with military ones, there is open communication and consultation, as many issues will affect both military and civilian members.

There is of course the possibility that in the case of harassment the respondent and the complainant may be civilian, military, or both. This can complicate matters in the reporting aspect as there are two ways to address the underlying issues. Civilian matters may be referred to the applicable DND Director Diversity and Well-Being desk officer with copies to the Director Human Rights and Diversity. Military matters may similarly be referred to the applicable CF Director Human Rights and Diversity desk officer, with copies to the Director Diversity and Well-Being.

Information surrounding such issues can be communicated through different routes to include the union, the respective chain of command, human resources civilian, and chief military personnel. This information is captured in a single joint database. As such, the Director Human Rights and Diversity desk officer and Director Diversity and Well-Being do not receive harassment complaints directly, but can get involved where issues that give rise to the complaint need to be addressed.

Issues that cannot be resolved at the regional level can be raised to the national co-chair who will raise it at the corporate level, and here it is determined if the issue is systemic. If the issue is not determined to be systemic, the advisory group is informed, but we are given the option to either accept the decision or not. The advisory group can raise the issue to either a diversity and employment equity in defence working group, the Defence Diversity Council, or with their employment equity champion, when the decision could be revisited or considered closed.

At the national level, the DWAO enjoys the support of senior management through the acceptance of a volunteer champion. The champion is a DND employee or CF member who holds a very senior position, normally level one or higher.

If the issue is considered a systemic barrier, the issue is redirected to the responsible organization and a new policy process service is developed. As the military national co-chairs are members of the Director Human Rights and Diversity CF employment working group, and the civilian national co-chairs are members of the Director Diversity and Well-Being DND employment equity working group, we are given the opportunity to participate in working out a resolution.

The advisory group would be informed and invited to review the draft policy. At the national level, issues that may have a policy impact are analyzed in cooperation with the Director Human Rights and Diversity and Director Diversity and Well-Being staff, and the diversity and employment equity in defence working group.

The responsible organization would then be accountable for the creation of a new policy, or the amendment of an existing policy, to resolve the identified issue. In either case, the advisory groups will be consulted in the development process until an acceptable resolution is devised.

In his appearance before the Standing Committee on the Status of Women on November 22, 2012, Mr. Karol Wenek, director general, military personnel, identified four data sources used to derive systemic information on sexual harassment in the Canadian Forces. This includes a tracking system for internally filed harassment complaints, the alternative dispute resolution database, statistics on human rights complaints filed externally with the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and the periodic survey of its military members.

DWAO is an additional channel to identify systemic issues, including those that pertain to sexual harassment in the federal workplace. As a consultative mechanism, DWAO is aligned with the December 2000 revision of the DND/CF policy on harassment prevention and resolution, which shifted the emphasis to prevention and early resolution through alternate dispute resolution. For example, DWAO may be called upon to participate in a review of the existing DND/CF policy and regulations. This could include policy related to victim support activities, the impact of policy on the likelihood of incident reporting to include under-reporting of harassment incidents, and the implication of such items on recruitment and retention.

- (1115)

On the foundation for employment equity goals, DWAO plays a role in assuring women that they can have an equitable career in the DND/CF without fear of harassment, and that effective processes and policies are in place.

In conclusion, DWAO provides advice to leadership to ensure that women are counted as full and valued members of DND and the CF. This includes identifying trends, systemic issues, and challenges facing women in the DND/CF, and identifying priorities in the areas of recruitment, retention, and the quality of life as they impact women in the DND/CF.

This concludes my opening statement. Thank you for your attention.

[Translation]

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

Ms. Davis, you now have the floor for 10 minutes.

[English]

**LCol Karen Davis (Defence Scientist, Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, As an Individual):** Good morning. My name is Karen Davis, and I am a defence scientist with Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, an organization that belongs to Defence Research and Development Canada and conducts research for the Chief of Military Personnel.

I have been conducting social science research in the Canadian Forces for 20 years, initially as a military personnel selection officer, and in the most recent 12 years, as a defence scientist with DRDC.

My current assignment is as a defence scientist with the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, a unit of the Canadian Defence Academy in Kingston. The Canadian Forces Leadership Institute conducts research, and develops concepts in support of professional development in the Canadian Forces.

My short presentation today draws on my experience over the past 20 years with conducting social science research on gender-related experiences in the Canadian Forces. As I draw on this experience, the interpretation and views I present are my responsibility and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Department of National Defence.

Throughout the 1990s, women were much more likely to leave the Canadian Forces than were their male counterparts. The research I conducted in 1993 and 1994 placed a particular focus on the experiences of women from across various military occupations and environments, who had left the Canadian Forces after serving more than 10 but less than 20 years. At the time this was significant because CF members were eligible to receive a military pension upon completion of 20 years of service, and the attrition rate of women was higher than that of men during these years between 10 and 20 years.

The research concluded that those women who left were very likely to have experienced significant harassment and eventually chose to leave the military because they had exhausted all efforts to effectively negotiate the complaint process and escape the harassment.

In 1997 the Chief of the Land Staff, who is the commander of the army, asked the Canadian Forces personnel applied research unit to investigate why women were leaving the combat arms at a rate much higher than their male counterparts. Our research at the time confirmed that, for the most part, women were not valued in the

combat arms environment and their experience was frequently characterized by discrimination, gender-related harassment and sexual harassment. In addition, the experiences of these women were often minimized and dismissed by leadership.

The experience of women in the combat arms in the 1990s very clearly demonstrated the overwhelming importance of effective leadership. It did not matter whether women were a "one of" or in relatively large groups in a combat arms unit, the quality of their experience was largely dependent upon leadership.

It is important to note that these findings cannot be generalized to the experience of women serving across the Canadian Forces today. Many are choosing to stay and complete full and successful careers in a range of environments and roles. Today, most women in the CF experience a fair and equitable environment and enjoy professional and social support from CF leaders and their team members, regardless of gender, often in isolated and demanding operational environments. Also, the attrition rates of women and men from the Canadian Forces in the last decade are much more similar than they were prior to 2000.

As noted by Mr. Karol Wenek in November, there are indications that women have become less likely to experience harassment in the military since 1992. Harassment survey data collected in the CF in 1992 and 1998 indicate that while women remained much more likely than their male counterparts to report experience of sexual harassment, the reported rate of sexual harassment among service-women dropped from 26.2% in 1992 to 14% in 1998.

As Mr. Wenek also noted, two data points do not constitute a trend, so the results of the 2012 harassment survey will be very important in assessing the frequency of harassment in the Canadian Forces today.

In our 2001 analysis of harassment surveys across TTCP nations, Nicki Holden and I suggested that anonymous surveys of perceived experience of harassment were the best available method for determining the extent to which women experience harassment in the military.

• (1120)

Although women may choose not to submit a harassment complaint, or when they do submit a complaint the complaint may be unfounded through the complaint process, the perception of harassment for them is real, and they believe they've been harassed and this is an important indicator of the quality of their experience in the military.

In some of those areas in which women have the lowest representation in the military, such as in the combat arms and on board ships, they are very likely to be in situations where they're the only woman or one of very few women in a deployed operational environment. It is possible that the vulnerability of these small numbers of women is heightened by the socially gendered and geographic isolation of their employment, as well as the scarcity, if not complete absence, of female leaders in that environment.

However, many women within such situations in the Canadian Forces have experienced positive support from male subordinates, peers, and leaders, and there are a greater number of women in leadership positions in operational domains than was the case in the 1990s.

Between 2003 and 2007, the Canadian Forces Leadership Institute developed a series of leadership doctrinal manuals. Within this doctrine, the foundation for effective leadership is a values-based model that is heavily influenced by military ethos, that is, those values, principles, and priorities that reflect both military principles and Canadian values. Although the CF leadership model does not specifically address harassment, it does place emphasis on values-based domains that contribute to mission success, that is, external adaptability, internal integration, and member commitment and well-being. This doctrine and the values reflected within it guide the development of military leaders today.

I am currently conducting research regarding the deployment experiences of women and men in the Canadian Forces. Although the data collection and analysis is not complete, I have conducted over 50 in-depth interviews. The data is based upon qualitative interviews and are not statistically representative of the CF. However, experience of harassment and sexual harassment is not a prevalent theme across these interviews, but in those cases in which there are perceptions of harassment in recent years, some military women have become frustrated in finding a resolution. If the problem is within their chain of command, the challenge is exacerbated. In other cases, situations have been resolved quickly by leadership.

For most, a harassment complaint is a last resort. In all cases, it is clear that leadership has a significant influence on the way in which harassment is addressed in the working environment.

In closing, there is every reason to believe that women are less likely to experience harassment and sexual harassment today than was the case more than a decade ago. Negative attitudes toward women in the military still exist but are less prevalent. More women are in senior leadership positions, and leaders, whether male or female, are more likely to accept responsibility for establishing a climate of respect for women and men in the workplace.

Regardless of the number of incidents that do occur, the challenge remains in ensuring effective implementation of Canadian Forces policy by all leaders across the organization.

Thank you.

• (1125)

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Ms. Davis. That was very interesting.

We will now move on to the question and answer period.

Ms. James, you have the floor for seven minutes.

[English]

**Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Welcome to both our guests, Petty Officer Wilson and Ms. Davis.

I'm going to start with some questions for you, Ms. Wilson. In listening to your opening statement, and I have your notes here as well, you indicated that the role of the particular advisory group is to provide advice and insight to the leadership of DND and the Canadian Forces. Can you explain how? They're related, DND and the Canadian Forces, but they're really two separate entities. They have different functions and roles in some aspects. I'm wondering how the advisory group deals with the different situations that may occur from the two different areas.

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Right. I have a counterpart. The counterpart is very similar to my role, but is held by a civilian, and that's the same across all the defence advisory groups. When something comes up and it's related to an issue within the military, it is the military national co-chair who handles that issue. It's the same thing with the civilian national co-chair.

What we do together as a team...there's a lot of cross-pollination in any discussion that comes up. Quite often, if there is an issue that is related to the civilian side of the house, we'll talk about it. We'll consult each other so that there's an awareness on the military side as well, to see whether or not that issue spans both sides, or if it's particular to the CF—the nature of what we do is unique—or if it's something specific to the civilian side.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** When you say it's unique, is it because one may be more male dominated than the other? I'm wondering if you could speak more to where the two roles, the national co-chair and yourself, may have the same type of policy advice and things would affect both areas, as well as where there would be a distinct difference.

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Okay. The first one with regard to a distinct area that would be unique to the CF would be work-life balance. You won't see some of the rotations that are required for members in the military in the civilian sector. That would be something specific to the CF. The concerns brought up about a work-life balance may spill over into the civilian side, but they would again be unique to the CF.

Something that would cross both and be comparable in both would be the percentage of leaders at senior management, some of those C-suite positions. You would get that gender imbalance and you would see that in the CF. It's changing, but you still see it. Similarly, you would see that in the public service, so that would be something you would see across both.

• (1130)

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Thank you.

In your definitions of the particular role, I see “shall provide advice” multiple times. How often is that advice actually taken into consideration? How often do you think that it actually affects the policy?

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** The advice is repeated several times because that really is the essence of DWAO. It's to provide that third party, ear-to-the-ground information up to the leadership. In all the cases I've been asked to provide advice on, the advice has been taken, but my experience has been limited to the time that I've had in the seat, of course, and that started in August of last year.

Most of what has been brought up has been related to issues outside of harassment, issues related to kit, uniforms, and that sort of thing, but what has been brought up has been listened to, and we're starting to see action on it.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** In your opening remarks you also talked about the goal being to address "systemic issues that may be adversely affecting the full contribution that women can make towards a strong, effective..." and so on.

How do you determine something is systemic? What would be examples of that?

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** The alternative to a systemic issue would be an individual issue, meaning a problem an individual has that's dealt with by their chain of command. It's systemic when we start to notice a trend or a pattern. It is something that is typically built into the system, as opposed to the relationship that exists between one or two people.

Quite often the feedback we get as we start to see a trend or start to identify this problem is that it is the result of the structure of a policy or program or service, and it cannot be dealt with at the regional level. It is brought up to the national co-chair. Then the discussion begins to see whether or not that issue is bigger than an individual issue.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** Is sexual harassment, or even harassment in general, always considered systemic, or are there cases where you'd consider it not to be systemic?

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** It depends.

If an incident led to a member filing a harassment complaint, either harassment unrelated to sexual harassment or sexual harassment, and it was a single incident, it would be dealt with as an individual case. If we started to see patterns of it emerging, we would look at it as a systemic issue. That's why the statement is made with regard to harassment being something that is dealt with by the individual's chain of command.

We can always be brought in, though, at any time to give advice as it relates to its being a larger issue, so to speak.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** With regard to personnel or a member of DND or the Canadian Forces undergoing a complaint related to sexual harassment, do you get involved directly with that specific complaint? Is there any type of support from you or from these advisory groups, or is it more on the larger scale, being on the outside and looking in?

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** If somebody were to submit a harassment complaint, either sexual or otherwise, there isn't an automatic intervention or participation by DWAO. We can be brought in if, let's say, the chain of command notices that there's a culture that is promoting that type of behaviour. We could then be brought in as a sort of advisory group, but there's no process that kicks in and automatically involves DWAO or any of the advisory groups.

**Ms. Roxanne James:** I have one minute.

I'm going to go back to the questions I had about providing advice.

As an advisory group, where do you get your information from, your knowledge, to be able to represent a larger body and provide

that advice, that insight? Do you get training for that specifically? Is it because you've consulted with various members of the department? What enables you to give the advice that you feel is necessary?

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Typically, anybody who moves into the national role has started within the regional role, so there's a sort of stepping stone process. Many of the national co-chairs, so me.... My civilian counterpart has been in the role for quite a long time, so I have a mentorship, so to speak, from her.

There is employment equity and diversity training embedded within the CF for every single member, some of what we call career courses, basic training, all the leadership courses.

There's also training available through the public service. Typically, somebody who is involved in a role, like me, has an innate interest in that, and we're in the process of developing a training manual to formalize that process.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

I will now give the floor to a representative of the official opposition.

Mrs. Hassainia, you have seven minutes.

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia (Verchères—Les Patriotes, NDP):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Davis and Ms. Wilson for being here and for their invaluable testimonies.

My first question is for Ms. Wilson. The advice you give and the studies you have done, do they often result in policies that are implemented? Do you have figures and statistics on that?

• (1135)

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** No, we don't track statistics or numbers. That would be an external party. I think Mr. Karol Wenek is an example of that.

Was there a second part?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** Do your advice and studies often lead to concrete, applied policies?

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** We don't actually do any formalized studies. Our role is one of guidance and advice. Actual studies, as they relate to identifying those statistics, are done by a party external to DWAO.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** Thank you.

We know that a mandated cyclical review of the Canadian Forces Employment Equity Regulations was done in 2011-2012. Did your organization take part in that review and can you tell us what the results of the review were?

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** DWAO did not participate in that directly. I haven't. Individuals may have, in representing their role outside of DWAO, as a person of the CF. We didn't play a role. That would have been done, I'm assuming, by a research council outside of DWAO.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** If I am not mistaken, women make up about 10% of high ranking officers in the regular force, and the vast majority of those women are at National Defence headquarters in Ottawa. How do you explain this? Why are the majority of women in Ottawa? Can you give us the exact numbers in terms of the number of women in the armed forces, specifically the number who have high ranking positions in Canada?

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** I think the reason you're seeing more senior people here at NDHQ is that the roles or the positions here at NDHQ are more senior ones, so by default those individuals would be more senior individuals, as opposed to positions on the ship, which would be more operational tradesmen.

Regarding the statistics as they relate to the CF, if you're just looking for a statistic overall, for women, for the regular force, I believe it's approximately 15%, and for the reserves it's a little bit higher. Of course, depending on which element you look at, which trade, those can change. But I would advise that the actual statistics be taken from the organization that collected that information.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** In general, have you noticed or heard about effects of cutbacks within the Department of National Defence or in the armed forces? I am talking about the effects of these cutbacks with respect to the services that are offered to women in the offices dealing with the status of women or gender studies.

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Have I noticed the impact of those studies? I've certainly noticed the impact of...as we grow and evolve as an organization, we become more gender aware...the changes to policy in relation to those items.

I joined in 1998, so I would caution that my experience starts there and a lot was already in place. But there was a time when, similar to some of the rules anywhere, women who were pregnant had a different policy from what there is now that governed their ability to work. I would say that I joined at a point when most of those things had changed. There are not a lot of concrete barriers that exist any longer, so I'm enjoying a lot of the outcome of those changes as we speak.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** Thank you.

It is our understanding that the Canadian Forces is doing exit interviews and that these interviews should be analyzed to determine the factors that lead women to leave the Canadian Forces. This could be used to make recommendations on corrective action aimed at encouraging women to complete their tour of duty. What role does your organization play in analyzing these exit interviews?

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** I think any exit interview should be reviewed. Keeping our people is a tough go. We're an employer for whom, certainly, our people are our main resource. If there are patterns specific to women, I think they should certainly be looked at.

We haven't been asked, I haven't been asked yet, to review any of that information, but if there was something systemic that they thought DWAO could provide advice on, absolutely I could see us being pulled in to do so.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** Thank you, Ms. Wilson.

I now have some questions for Ms. Davis.

Good morning and welcome, Ms. Davis.

The documentation frequently shows that one of the problems for women in the Canadian Forces is the warrior culture.

Could you please explain to us what that is exactly, if the individuals who are primarily responsible are aware of this problem, and what measures could put a stop to this culture, which tends to belittle women and other minorities?

[English]

**LCol Karen Davis:** The warrior culture generally refers to those values that were assumed to be essential to operational effectiveness, especially in the combat arms domain: assumptions that women and men are different; men are strong, women are weak; women are protected, men protect women; women are emotionally unstable, men are more stable for fighting in war; that sort of thing. Up until 1989 when the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal said that women would be integrated into all environments and roles, the warrior culture and the values associated with an all-male environment were held as essential to combat effectiveness. We've learned since then that the all-male domain is not essential, but there are still strong values related to that, I would say, especially in the land combat arms.

• (1140)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** Do you personally find that Canadian Forces officials are taking sufficient measures to halt this phenomenon, which is harmful to women and other minorities? Do you have any recommendations in this regard?

[English]

**LCol Karen Davis:** I'm sorry, what was the question again?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Sana Hassainia:** Do you find that the Canadian Forces are doing enough to resolve this problem? Do you have any recommendations to make in this respect?



[English]

**LCol Karen Davis:** I think there's a lot of work that's starting to be done by civilian academics, especially related to this. I think the combat arms environment, in particular, is still very masculine dominated and is still guided by those warrior values. Women are quite welcome in that environment if they can adjust and integrate within the environment, but we're also learning that women are essential to combat teams for various reasons, many of which have come up in Afghanistan. I think that as leadership starts to learn more about the value of a mixed gender team and that having women on the team adds value, it's not just about assimilating women into that culture.... As leaders develop and start to better understand the value of greater gender diversity, that will start to change.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** I am going to have to interrupt you there. Thank you, Ms. Davis.

We are now going to move on to a representative from the government side.

Ms. Ambler, you have seven minutes.

[English]

**Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you to both witnesses for joining us today and for your interesting presentations.

Petty Officer Wilson, you mentioned respect for diversity and that it's very important. I just wanted to ask you why you think that's the case, especially as it relates to preventing harassment.

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** I think that respect for diversity is probably one of the foundations, sort of cornerstone constructs, that need to drive equality in the workplace. We all know there are probably organizations that will say on paper that employment equity is important, but until that respect for diversity and understanding that it's important actually become part of the culture, it's just a lot of exactly that: stuff on paper. I think it's incredibly important that we have a culture that respects that, to drive toward the compliant organization under employment equity.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Thank you.

Both of you mentioned culture change. I think we've heard from a number of our witnesses that things have changed over time. Your experiences have been since 1998, and I think, Ms. Davis, your experiences date back to when you joined the forces in 1978, I believe.

Ms. Davis, you spoke about the culture change. Can you tell us why the numbers are decreasing? We did hear from Mr. Karol Wenek that the incidences of sexual harassment are decreasing. We've also heard that of all the complaints in the Canadian Forces, 8% of all the harassment complaints are of a sexual nature. Actually, I don't know if it's 8% or 3.7%. It's in the single digits, in other words. Can you tell me why, in your experience over the years.... Has the culture change contributed to the decrease? I guess that is my question.

**LCol Karen Davis:** Are you asking me that question?

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Yes.

**LCol Karen Davis:** I think as more and more women are serving in the military, and especially moving into leadership roles, that can definitely have an impact on the culture.

In terms of whether the incidence of sexual harassment has actually gone down, I would reserve my opinion on that until I see the results of the 2012 survey, because I really do believe, having conducted interviews with close to 100 women who have served in the Canadian Forces, that a formal complaint is very much a last resort. The anonymous survey process is our best chance at getting a realistic measure of perceptions of harassment, but women perceiving that they've been harassed, again whether they're founded or not, is another question.

Overall, probably.... There are indications. For one thing, I think our leadership doctrine and our leadership training has developed considerably. Throughout the 1990s there were many investigations and boards that looked at the Canadian Forces very closely. In 1997 the Minister of National Defence at the time issued a report on the leadership and management of the Canadian Forces. That resulted in significant change in the way we developed military leaders. We shifted very much to a values-based model with an emphasis on Canadian values, representing what Canadian citizens wanted to see in their military.

•(1145)

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Is one of those values zero tolerance for harassment, sexual harassment in particular?

**LCol Karen Davis:** Certainly, although we did learn through experience that using the zero tolerance approach created a negative effect in the operational environment. We ended up with leaders who couldn't lead because they were so afraid of being accused of sexual harassment. We've come a long way in training leaders and developing leaders in terms of the difference between disciplining, motivating, and training a team versus harassment.

A balanced approach, I think, is what's been adopted through the new policy, the dispute resolution process, and that sort of thing.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** That's interesting. There aren't very many witnesses who would disagree that zero tolerance may not be the best way to go. You're right that this is a very human issue and sometimes what one person thinks of as harassment is a typical day in the life of someone else. That does make it difficult.

You're saying that your leadership training courses help leaders in the Canadian Forces to distinguish and to use common sense and judgment.

**LCol Karen Davis:** And make values-based judgments on what is the right thing to do in an operational environment.

That's not to say that clear cases of harassment would be tolerated. I'm not saying that at all. It's just allowing an environment where teams learn to work and grow together without fear of being accused of harassment.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Thank you.

In 2009, I see that you wrote a book called, *Cultural Intelligence: A Summary for Canadian Forces Leaders*. Obviously, you're of the opinion that leadership really is the key to solving this problem. Without having read your book—I apologize—would you say that's the premise, that it's really all about leadership and setting the right example?

**LCol Karen Davis:** I believe that definitely yes, in an organization such as the Canadian Forces, the chain of command is critical to operational effectiveness, and therefore, leadership within the chain of command is also critical to ensuring that justice takes place when it's required. Yes, I think that leadership is extremely important. Good policy is important as well, but if you don't have good leadership implementing the policy, things can still go wrong.

**Mrs. Stella Ambler:** Would you say that the new mixed gender leadership teams... Would you say that the warrior culture still exists, but that when you add women into the mix of leadership, the possibility of harassment and sexual harassment decreases?

**The Chair:** Very quickly.

**LCol Karen Davis:** Yes, I would say that leaders are more sensitive to the fact that allowing harassment to occur on their teams undermines operational effectiveness. Has that completely happened in all areas? I don't think we're completely there yet, but I think leadership does understand that more than they did a decade ago, for example.

• (1150)

[Translation]

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

Ms. St-Denis, you have seven minutes.

**Ms. Lise St-Denis (Saint-Maurice—Champlain, Lib.):** Thank you.

Madam Chair, I apologize. I was absent from the previous meetings. I was not present for all your discussions, but I find the topic very interesting, and I have a few questions.

My first question is for Ms. Davis.

A little earlier, you spoke about the warrior culture. You said that women were welcome as long as they could adapt. My question is about the culture. What do you mean when you say that the women must adapt? Does that mean that they must adopt the same attitude as the men so that the men will accept having them there? I would like you to expand a little on this. What do you mean when you say that a woman in the field must adapt?

[English]

**LCol Karen Davis:** When a woman joins an occupation like combat arms in particular—sort of the last domain that women are integrating into—what I'm saying is that there are certain things that are considered very important in combat arms, such as physical strength, being able to withstand various types of adversity, and that sort of thing. When women come into that environment, there is a certain culture that supports that kind of toughness, that warrior resilience.

If women come into such an environment and start complaining, about people swearing in their presence, for example, and those sorts

of things, they will soon lose credibility. So women learn to accept the way the environment is, in certain ways, in order to be accepted by their peers and become an integrated part of the unit.

One of the things that have been noticed by many over the years is that when a woman joins a traditional all-male environment, she believes she's been accepted when she's become one of the guys. Women aren't given opportunities to change the values in those environments or the way they operate, but they are accepted, as long as they can perform effectively within the environment.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Thank you.

My second question is for Ms. Wilson.

We are saying that women are accepted by men if they adopt a certain attitude. How do women behave toward women in that environment? Is there a lot of competition between them? If not, do they protect each other? Do they form separate groups? Do they try to completely integrate with the men?

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** I think, as Ms. Davis said, it depends. When you get into an environment such as combat arms, which is a very masculine-type environment, I think that sense of needing to integrate is probably stronger than in, say, a logistics-based environment, where that stress and that need to be very masculine is reduced.

My experience from the private sector to the military has been very, very similar to that of other women. I think it depends on the nature of the individuals you have there. I think it also depends on the leadership to manage those personalities.

Even within my time within the forces, if I were to do something very physically competitive, I'd probably be surrounded by other women who were also apt to be very competitive, for example, with some of the base teams. You'll see that just based on the interests of that group.

I've also been in environments where it's very female heavy and very supportive as well, in particular for those who seem to have already gone through the military, let's say 10 years prior. There's a mentorship role that quite often gets adapted.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** Let's talk about complaints. I don't know which one of you can answer this question.

What do women do in cases of intimidation and sexual harassment? Do you have the impression that they complain easily? If not, are they afraid of reprisals because of that? Are they afraid of losing job opportunities? What is their attitude toward filing a complaint?

This morning in the House, I heard a member say that 200 complaints were waiting to be resolved. Do all women who have a problem speak up? Or do they dare to at all?

•(1155)

[English]

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** I'll answer very quickly, and then I'll leave Ms. Davis some time as well.

I think that we have to be careful in taking what is.... Women are wired a bit differently and we do like to communicate. We do like to talk about things and issues; whereas men are a little different along those lines. If I've had an experience where women have had an issue, what they felt to be a challenge, their way of dealing with it is to communicate. I think we have to be careful to kind of dissociate a reluctance to complain about harassment but talking about it to sort of just the way that women do business.

In my experience again, I don't see the reluctance to complain about harassment. I feel there is a sense of support, and we're working out the kinks in the system as it relates to bringing those things forward. But I'm also aware that even outside the CF or wherever, when it comes to something like a topic of sexual harassment, it's a touchy one and it's a tough one. There are women that find that process to be difficult.

[Translation]

**Ms. Lise St-Denis:** I have one last question.

Are the complaints resolved quickly? Is this process similar to the complaints process for any other area or does the process take much longer?

[English]

**LCol Karen Davis:** I don't know if I'm the best person to answer that question. I think it just depends on the situation, on whether it's a formal complaint. Petty Officer Wilson may want to comment on that.

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Sexual harassment is treated under the umbrella of harassment. There isn't a separate process.

However, when that element of sexual harassment comes into play, it certainly depends on the nature of the complaint. If it's a comment, that will be treated much quicker and in a different way than, say, if there was actually a physical element to it, and involved further parties, such as the military police. It completely depends on the severity and the nature, and even to the extent of who is involved, how quickly the complaint would be addressed.

[Translation]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Given that we started a little late, we have only three minutes left.

Ms. Bateman, you have three minutes.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman (Winnipeg South Centre, CPC):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

Thank you both so very much for being here. It's very, very encouraging to hear you, Petty Officer Wilson. You started your career in 1998 and you note the changes. Ms. Davis, correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe the most recent study that you've cited was in 1998, but also ones in 1992 and 1989. It's just so remarkable that your whole experience, Ms. Wilson, has occurred since that time. It's

wonderful to hear that both of you are saying that the world is improving.

I'm particularly interested in the structure that you sit on. You're elected to serve your colleagues on this board. Is that the case?

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** That's correct.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** I'm particularly impressed that the leadership makes this kind of facility possible, because you're right: the 51% of us who are women need to talk about things, and to have that mechanism formalized is wonderful to see. I want to hear about the structure of that and when it was formed.

I also want to hear from Ms. Davis in terms of.... I'm equally impressed that the military clearly funds.... I just need clarification that it is the Canadian military that funds your work as a defence scientist. You are with Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis, and you work in a leadership institute that supports the work of our military. Is that correct?

**LCol Karen Davis:** Yes.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** I'm so impressed.

Petty Officer Wilson, you would be able to access information that Ms. Davis prepares, or studies that she has.

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** And this is just one more resource for you to do your job.

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** Absolutely, and one more resource for me to educate myself on the concerns that I might not know about, but should be aware about as well.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Excellent. Given the time constraints, could you take just a brief period of time to explain to us how this works?

This is a beautiful mechanism on paper. Give us an example of how it works, so that it can make a difference.

•(1200)

**PO 1 Shanna Wilson:** I'll share my experience.

It started in 1997. That's when they were approved.

As I moved up in the ranks and found myself liaising with other more senior women, I found out about DWAO.

Now it's interesting, because the unit in which I currently work is about 50-50 male and female, including those more senior ranks within the small section I'm in. Every single one of the women in there, with the exception of one, has at some point been a regional co-chair. They move around. Some have done so in the recruit school and that sort of thing.

We're starting to see, as this awareness grows, that not only is the awareness becoming stronger and successful in its intent, but it's also spreading the awareness about the group and what the group is involved in. I've heard on several occasions, "Talk to DWAO about it". It is this entity that people know as a third party. You don't have to go through your chain of command. If there is a feeling that it is a man and he is not going to quite get it, there is this external group that's sort of ear to the ground, so to speak, that supports women.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** I'll have to stop you there, Ms. Bateman. I'm sorry.

**Ms. Joyce Bateman:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Ms. Wilson, Ms. Davis, thank you for agreeing to appear before the committee. It was very interesting.

I will now suspend the meeting for a few moments. We are going to continue in camera to deal with committee business.

[*Proceedings continue in camera.*]

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