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# **Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development**

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, March 19, 2013**

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**Chair**

**Mr. Scott Reid**



## Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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•(1310)

[Translation]

**The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)):** Order please.

This is the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. This is our 72nd meeting and the date is March 19, 2013.

[English]

We are looking into human rights in Honduras.

Today we have several witnesses from the Canadian International Development Agency. Specifically, at the table are Lise Filiatrault, who is the regional director general for the Americas in the geographic programs branch; and Kate Stefanuk, the deputy director for Honduras in the geographic programs branch.

I'm going to mention to members of the subcommittee that given the fact that through no fault of any member of this committee we are starting late—issues of room access—we are going to, if necessary, see the clock very generously in order to allow every member to have time to ask questions. I'll also have to be quite strict on the time I allow you for your questions, however, so I am just warning you of that.

That being said, I'm going to invite our witnesses to begin their testimony. I am sure you already know the drill in terms of how much time you have for opening statements. I invite you to begin, please.

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault (Regional Director General, Americas, Geographic Programs Branch, Canadian International Development Agency):** Good afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I will start in French and then go to English in the middle of this statement.

[Translation]

I am pleased to appear before you today, following the testimony of Mr. Neil Reeder and Mr. Jeffrey Marder of the DFAIT at the February 7 subcommittee meeting.

First, I will provide an overview of the development context in Honduras and of CIDA's programming in the country. I will also specifically address the questions you raised with Mr. Reeder regarding CIDA's contribution to improving human rights in Honduras.

Mr. Reeder provided you with an overview of the country context in Honduras, highlighting insecurity, and the challenges posed by weak institutions, corruption and transnational crime. The country is one of the poorest in the hemisphere, with high inequality, unemployment, and poor health and education services. The economy is still suffering the effects of the 2008-2009 global downturn, and Honduras' fiscal situation is undeniably weak in structural terms.

Honduras is a key partner in Canada's engagement in the Americas. We view this engagement as the best approach to work with Honduras to address its challenges.

Honduras is one of 20 Countries of Focus for CIDA. CIDA supports mainly two priorities: food security and securing the future of children and youth, through health and education support.

Food security is a significant concern, with close to 1.5 million facing hunger and 35% of the population living on less than \$2 a day. Regularly occurring seasonal droughts and floods aggravate this precarious reality, deepen malnutrition and make Honduras dependent on food imports.

Health conditions among Hondurans remain below regional averages, and improvements in health indicators have slowed down in recent years. Malnutrition and stunting among children under five years of age, and maternal and child health remain significant challenges.

Honduras' literacy rates are below most other countries in Latin America, with one out of six over the age of 15 being illiterate. There are challenges in the quality of instruction as well as coverage.

Provision of basic health and education services is being strained by youth demographics, also known as the youth bulge, whereby close to 54% of the population of 8 million is under the age of 15.

The program in Honduras targets poor and vulnerable populations, mainly in rural areas. Our investments, in food security and health and education for youth and children in particular, are fully aligned with the government of Honduras' National Development Plan and focus on poverty reduction.

We consider that food security, nutrition, health, basic education and increased revenues and economic opportunities, form a mutually reinforcing approach to improving citizen well-being. In the longer term, this also helps build up an educated middle class that demands accountability, rule of law and human rights protection.

Food security investments improve sustainable agricultural practices, so farmers can move from subsistence farming practices to diversifying their crops and selling surplus produce at local or export markets, thereby increasing incomes. We have trained 4,000 small producers in sustainable agricultural production and water management. Our investments also provided improved corn and bean seeds to 1,200 farmers that increased productivity by 25%.

Access to nutritious food, with a more diversified diet, especially for women and children under five, is an important factor in the healthy mental and physical development of children, and the well-being of families.

● (1315)

Our support also includes school feeding for children of the rural poor, which not only keep children in school but also increases their learning outcomes. Through our support to the World Food Program, school meals were provided to 156,000 girls and 162,000 boys at the primary level.

Improving child and maternal health through reducing preventable diseases as well as the delivery of basic health services, will allow Hondurans living in poverty to more fully engage as productive members of society and the labour force. Our program has increased community surveillance of two preventable diseases (Chagas and Leishmaniasis) and treatment of Leishmaniasis reached almost 73% of targeted women, men and children. Early pregnancy health care has been provided to 30,000 adolescents and young adults, through our municipal services for adolescent health (MUNSALUD) project. In addition, our Health Community Networks project (REDES) has helped reduce malnutrition rates for children under five by 2% in two regions where malnutrition is significant, through improving municipal health programs. Investments which improve nutrition at an early age nourish intellectual capacity of the young, improving their chance to break the cycle of poverty.

[English]

Our investments in basic education are strengthening an important foundation that will allow children to pursue secondary and post-secondary education, giving them economic alternatives to dangerous activities, such as joining gangs. CIDA is supporting the national education program, which provides much-needed institutional support to improve the capacity of the Government of Honduras to manage and deliver quality basic education at national and district levels. For example, our investments helped increase the number of children graduating from grade 6, from 91% to 98%. Through improving teaching techniques, the availability of school material, and ensuring an increase in the number of school days, we have helped increase school attendance from 2 million to 2.16 million children. The quality of education is important to attract and keep children in school, who are therefore unavailable for recruitment by criminals and gangs. Education also instills good work habits, respect for knowledge, and analytical and social skills, all of which improve human development.

This committee specifically asked what Canada is doing to target youth to keep them away from criminal activities. I was in Honduras last month, and I can tell you that our food security and our health and education programming is making a difference, thereby contributing to child protection by giving children a good start in

life and providing them with opportunities and alternatives to crime and violence. For example, we visited a poor urban neighbourhood in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, one of the 40 sites of our MUNSALUD, our municipal health project, which works with the United Nations agencies to improve the health and protection of adolescents and children. We heard directly from these young people on how the program taught them about health, about civic values, self-respect, and the empowerment of working for the good of their communities.

Other programming in CIDA complements the Honduras program and provides human rights support. Under our CIDA inter-American regional program, a number of regional initiatives specifically address human rights that benefit Honduras. We have a project that strengthens the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. This project increases the commission's capacity to process petitions related to human rights violations received from individuals and organizations in member states and to increase knowledge of the inter-American human rights system. It works with the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights to develop human rights training programs. Petitioners and trainees from Honduras have benefited from this support.

● (1320)

Another key inter-American program initiative strengthens the capacity and governance of labour ministries and business and labour organizations. It is currently being implemented by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Under this program, Honduras has been able to incorporate international standards on occupational safety and health. Four workshops were held in Honduras for leaders and members of the main workers' organizations to strengthen their capacity. Through these workshops, 163 participants were trained.

CIDA's inter-American regional program trains justice sector personnel, mainly from government, but also from NGOs and other organizations, and provides technical assistance to address reforms in countries. Trainees from Honduras have participated in training programs on criminal procedure reform and in internships with Canadian justice sector institutions such as our Public Prosecution Service.

The inter-American regional program supports the Organization of American States, and Honduras is eligible to access programs under our OAS cooperation plan. This includes the strengthening of human rights mechanisms and addressing gender issues in human rights.

Other parts of CIDA also have programming that directly supports human rights. For example, we have seen positive results generated by initiatives through our partnerships with Canadians branch. The Justice Education Society of British Columbia is working with Honduran law enforcement and justice institutions to reduce impunity and improve human rights by providing important tools such as crime scene kits, and it is training 386 justice professionals, including judges, prosecutors, and crime scene technicians.

A project being implemented by a Canadian partner, Horizons of Friendship, is generating results by strengthening civil society's capacity to deliver gender training, establish regional networks for action, and increase citizen participation in dialogues on issues such as poverty reduction and violence against women.

Finally, CIDA supports key multilateral institutions including the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme to provide institutional support and promote improved governance in Honduras.

The dialogue Canada conducts around key issues with the Government of Honduras is another contribution to improving human rights and reducing poverty. CIDA's program director, based in Honduras, often represents Canada on the group of donors known as the G-16. In August 2012, the Government of Honduras and the G-16 drew up a joint declaration to promote common objectives around five priorities, of which human rights was one.

My presentation to you today has highlighted our indirect and direct contributions to improving human rights in that country. We will continue to closely monitor the country context and adopt strategies to reduce risk and maximize the impact of our development programs.

I thank you very much for your interest in CIDA's work in Honduras.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Ms. Stefanuk, you're making a presentation as well? You're just here for support?

In that case, we go now to our questions. Looking at the clock, I see we have time for six-minute rounds, but I will be watching closely. Members who give long, garrulous introductions can expect they will not be able to complete them before I cut them off.

With that warning in mind, Mr. Sweet, you can go first.

**Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Brevity will be my key, then.

Thank you very much, Madam Filiatrault, for your testimony.

You mentioned that 8 million, 54% of the population, are under the age of 15. I think it would be good for the committee to hear... You mentioned the strain on basic health and education, but what other dynamics are there of having a population of over 50% under 15, or what other challenges will that factor have on Honduras in the near future, as well as in the extended future?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** As I said, as the youth population is so important, it's important to keep up with offering them appropriate services. Education is one, and we've talked about that.

Obviously those youth will also have to have economic opportunities in order to contribute to society, and that's another challenge in terms of having a young population. Part of our programming addresses that by equipping youth to be able to participate in society by having access to good-quality education.

• (1325)

**Mr. David Sweet:** They're going to need jobs very soon. With 54% of them being under 15, many of them will have to become entrepreneurs themselves in order to create the employment they're going to need in the future. But of course it's a country, too, that will hopefully see many opportunities to grow its private sector as well.

Our last witness, Esther Major, had some very chilling facts that she told us about the judiciary, about the police, and about the human rights violations that are happening with impunity in Honduras.

You mentioned the work you're doing with some of your programming with legal institutions, as well as the B.C. government. I take it that's extended to some of the G-16 partnerships as well.

How long has that work been going on, and do the partners feel that measurable progress is being made?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I mentioned a number of various initiatives that we implement under different programs, under different parts of the agency. Depending on the initiative, the length of the start and end date is different. You referred, in particular, to the justice initiative, the Justice Education Society of British Columbia. That program started in 2009, and it's going to be completed during the course of this year.

I mentioned some of the results that were accomplished in terms of training so far. Other initiatives would have a different lifespan. On each of the initiatives we have, we monitor and measure results. In the case of our program in Honduras, we annually look at our results and we monitor the program. We look at progress made in terms of our contributions. Of course, we're not the only player, so obviously the Government of Honduras itself has its programs, and we collaborate on those. There are a number of other donors who are also active and working in those areas. Progress made is a factor of a combination of various investments.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Since you mentioned the Government of Honduras and the fact that this B.C. program has been going on since 2009.... I can't imagine how tough the work is on the ground. I certainly don't want to sound in the least way negative of the efforts that are being made, not only by CIDA but by the G-16. But I can well imagine, too, if I lived on the ground and a program had been going since 2009 and still there was this level of impunity, which was mentioned by our last witness, with human rights lawyers and those in the media, etc., it would seem...well, frustrating is probably too light of a word in this case.

Is there serious conversation happening among the G-16 partners about the issues on the ground, and is there realistic participation by the Government of Honduras? Is there a good partnership there, or are you having challenges as well with the Government of Honduras?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** The G-16 is one of the vehicles through which.... The G-16 operates both at the ambassador level and at the more technical, donor level. As you can imagine, there are an array of issues and challenges that we can discuss, so that's one of the mechanisms used to allow the actors on the ground to coordinate their approaches, and also to interact and dialogue with the government.

Throughout our specific initiatives we also have mechanisms to have exchanges with the government—in our case, for example, in education, with the ministry of education and with the ministry of health—to address the issues that are related to the implementation of the initiative, the challenges, and to address them in the best possible way.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Have you had reports from your people on the ground...? One of the things our last witness mentioned was these private security companies that are trying to act like police, and they're guilty of some of these human rights abuses. Have your people been reporting back those kinds of incidents, where these people who are hired are actually causing some of these abuses?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** In the course of the implementation of our activities, we are of course in constant contact with the partners who are implementing the initiatives on the ground. We exchange information with them to make sure the security situation does not impede our activities.

It's more from that perspective that we maintain a good dialogue with all our partners, as we monitor the implementation of our own programs to make sure the security situation doesn't put them at risk, or doesn't prevent us from achieving our objectives. That's the nature of the dialogue we have on the question of security in Honduras.

• (1330)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Marston, please.

**Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly appreciate our two witnesses today. Very few people have the view on the ground that you would have, and it's important to us. I want to commend you for the work you do. Listening to your report, it's pretty obvious that there's extensive work being done, and it's important work.

As a member of the official opposition, we often find ourselves in a little bit of an awkward position, because having said this, we've also had concerns brought to us. I have a couple of notes here.

I've been told that CIDA, along with the Canadian embassy and the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, was actively involved in lobbying for the mining law that was recently passed in Honduras. I want to give you an opportunity to respond to that in a moment.

Truthfully, I find that quite exceptional, since there was a survey in November 2011, and our information is that 91% of Hondurans were opposed to open-pit mining, which this bill allows. Another aspect of it is that the water supply would be at risk, depending on where certain areas were unprotected, and this would put in grave jeopardy the livelihoods of farmers.

When we hear this kind of thing, knowing the good work that you've traditionally done and continue to do—and I want to stress that—I think it is important to give you an opportunity to respond. I'll actually have two particular questions in a moment.

The process that's in place says that theoretically people can say no to the mining, but it's pretty clear that the rights have already been granted to some companies. To come to the question, why would Canada want to get involved in a situation where it's obvious that the affected communities don't want us to be part of it and they don't want that particular activity to take place?

For the second question, could you name any projects that CIDA is currently funding jointly with extractive industries in Honduras? Could you provide us with some details, if they exist, and the nature and the purpose of the projects?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Of course, I can only comment from the CIDA perspective, and I'll address the last part.

I mentioned already that our thematic priorities in Honduras are health and education—which is in support of children and youth—and food security. At the same time, we have different mechanisms in CIDA, including our regional programs, to address some of the other issues. I talked about human rights because this is the topic here, but we also have some mechanisms that allow us to provide technical assistance, depending on requests that we receive.

To your question about whether CIDA has been involved in matters related to the extractive industry or to mining, we do not have the kind of partnership that you mentioned with extractive industries. We did provide some technical assistance to the Ministry of Natural Resources in order to help the Government of Honduras with...you referred to the mining legislation. What we did is we provided advice on identifying areas of compliance and non-compliance with international norms and standards, and we also helped them with assessing priority needs in terms of the governance and their regulatory capacity to get up to those international standards. That's the extent of our involvement related to the mining sector.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** That's good to hear. It was being portrayed to us that Canada was lobbying on behalf of...and I thought it was very important to allow you the opportunity to respond to such a concern.

Coming back to the partnerships that you were talking about, is there joint funding between the extractive industries and CIDA to deliver any of these?

• (1335)

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** In Honduras?

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Yes.

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** No, we're not involved with those types of programming through our country program in Honduras at this point in time.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Are there other places where you are?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** We have various activities, yes, related to.... In each country we have strategies and plans that are different, and I'd be happy to come and talk about that at the right opportunity. Yes, we do have some programming that is more related to economic opportunities, sustainable economic growth, including in the extractive sector.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** I'm sure you realize there are questions about Canada's extractive industry. We had a corporate social responsibility bill that tried to address it years ago. There are a number of areas. That's why we would express interest in that in the fashion we have, because the fact that Canada delivers is very important. In some instances, the extractive industry in these countries is the sole connection to Canada for some people. So we want to ensure, as best we can, that the appropriate processes are in place.

How is my time, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** Thirty seconds.

**Mr. Wayne Marston:** Thirty seconds doesn't work very well.

There were 60 people killed there, according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, in connection with land disputes. Can you offer any information on the investigations? Have they reached any conclusions? Are people actually being brought to justice in those cases?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I don't really have information on that. CIDA doesn't really work in the area of land tenure or land rights. Other donors do, but we do not.

In terms of our involvement when it comes to land use, our food security programming works more in the area of making sustainable use and helping the farmers manage their resources efficiently, because some of this land has limited productivity. That's more the way we work with the small producers when it comes to land-related matters.

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

We go now to Ms. Grewal.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC):** Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to our witnesses today for their time.

I just want to continue with Mr. Sweet's question on youth in Honduras. Since in Honduras 60% of the population is under the age of 25, this represents quite a significant human capital potential. In the short term, it will be really very difficult for the government to

meet the country's need for health care and education services, partly due to the worsening physical situation, combined with the significant pressure placed on these services by the young and rapidly growing population there.

Could you please elaborate a little bit more on other measures, besides education, that CIDA is taking care of? Is anything else being done there for the youth, besides education?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Besides education I can mention our health work. We have a number of health initiatives. I mentioned an initiative we have to help prevent some diseases. I also mentioned in my statement a project that has now been completed where we helped with community health—training at the community level.

I also mentioned that we have an ongoing project with UNICEF and UNFPA, where we provide services to adolescents, talking about youth, helping them deal with some issues that are specific to adolescence. That also goes a bit beyond health per se, but it helps them by giving them some skills for their self-esteem, choosing healthy lifestyles, like doing sports. That goes a little bit beyond health or education per se and equips youth to engage in activities that keep them outside of the more risky behaviours that we know are a big challenge for the country.

In terms of health, we do have a few other initiatives. I should indeed have mentioned that through the World Food Programme we are providing meals for the children at school. This is another important measure, because it's been researched that not only does this help the kids achieve better learning outcomes, but it stimulates the parents to send them to school and keep them in school. This is a very important measure as well when it comes to protecting the children.

• (1340)

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Speaking of health, CIDA has a focus on child and maternal health there. This being said, how does CIDA work to improve the prevention of illnesses and disease for children and mothers?

Furthermore, is there any kind of support by the Government of Honduras to improve the health system specifically for children and women there?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Yes, indeed. In fact, Kate can also speak to that in more detail in terms of our specific programs. When we work in any sector—so in the case of education and health—we actually work and support the government programs. Obviously, we are concerned about the sustainability of this support, and it's important to help develop the government capacity as well to manage and deliver those services. We do have initiatives that are supporting the health. In the case of health, in fact, we've just started an initiative to help the government collect better information so that they have the right information systems in place to make better decisions in terms of investing in their health programs. We all know that information is key in order to make the best choices. We do help them also at a more systemic level to develop their capacity and their tools to make better investments.

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk (Deputy Director, Honduras, Americas, Geographic Programs Branch, Canadian International Development Agency):** To add to what Lise has already contributed, I would also just highlight that our programming with the World Food Programme also addresses vulnerable groups. In addition to the nutritious school meals we provide on a daily basis, we also have a component through the WFP that provides supplementary nutrients and meal supplements for vulnerable groups. Those include women, children, and families who are basically in dire poverty, whose children are being monitored for their health and who are known to be undernourished.

We also have a project that I'll just speak a little more to, which Lise mentioned in her opening statement, regarding Chagas and leishmaniasis. When you were asking about specific programming to reduce illnesses, both Chagas and leishmaniasis are preventable diseases, and they're treatable if they're actually identified. Certainly Chagas is, if it's identified in those under the age of 15. So we've been programming in that area to help the government reduce the incidence of both Chagas and leishmaniasis in Honduras.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** Mr. Chair, do I have some more time left?

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Marston):** You have 12 seconds.

**Mrs. Nina Grewal:** That's fine. Thank you.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Marston):** I thought it might be. We were told by the chair to keep things very much on the line.

At this point we'll go to the Liberal Party.

Mr. Cotler, go ahead, please.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank you, Ms. Filiatrault, for your very comprehensive presentation.

I'm going to focus on the human rights issue per se, though I'm not unmindful of the fact, as you mentioned, that your work in the areas of food security and health and education has a human rights fallout, particularly in the matter of child protection.

I want to focus on the human rights issue. The issue of human rights defenders, the plight of human rights defenders, has been a central concern of this committee. It was even behind the establishment of our inquiry into Honduras, which was established in October 2012, which was in the immediate aftermath of the assassination of two prominent human rights defenders at the time. Indeed, as a preamble to the motion setting up this committee established in October 2012, already 76 lawyers had been murdered over the previous three years, and there have been more since.

My questions to you are as follows. I'll do them all so you can deal with whichever.

CIDA represents Canada on the G-16. Human rights, as you mentioned, are one of the five priorities of the G-16 in its joint declaration of 2012. Has the issue of murdered human rights defenders been put on the agenda of the G-16? That's question one.

Question two, an independent and impartial judiciary is a key component of human rights protection. CIDA is involved in the justice sector programming, as you mentioned. Is CIDA involved in

the education and training of judges in Honduras? Do you have any appreciation of the independence and effectiveness of the judiciary?

The final question is whether this issue of murdered human rights defenders has come before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which you referenced in your presentation, by way of petition or otherwise.

Those are my questions.

• (1345)

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Regarding your first question, I just want to clarify that the G-16 is represented at the level of ambassadors, but because our ambassador is not resident in Honduras—our ambassador is resident in Costa Rica—and because our director of the CIDA program is resident in Honduras, she sometimes would represent Canada at the G-16. Also, the G-16 works at the donors' level.

I must say, I don't know if this issue of human rights defenders was ever on an agenda of the G-16. I would have to check with our colleagues in order to answer that question. I suppose we can get back with an answer to that question. I'm not aware.

I don't know, Kate, if you have that answer.

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** No, sorry.

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I'm sorry, I don't have that answer.

In terms of education and training of judges, the one initiative that I mentioned where there is training of judges is through this Justice Education Society of British Columbia. This is a Central America initiative. This is the project we talked about earlier, the Justice Education Society of British Columbia.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** I know you referenced that the project is intended, among other things, to reduce impunity. Impunity, of course, is central to what is going on with the murdered human rights defenders. I don't know if any independent investigation has even been set up in Honduras to that effect and whether CIDA is involved in that type of issue with the B.C. group.

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** CIDA funds that initiative, and there has been training of judges during the course of that Central American initiative. But in terms of more specificity of a dialogue, we are not directly involved. In a way, it would be a good question to ask this group that is actually implementing that training, I would suggest.

Then going to your third question....

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** The whole issue of the murdered human rights defenders has been brought before the Inter-American Commission.

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** The Inter-American Commission, yes. Actually, again, that's a very good question. I know there were four petitions. In fact, let me just check.

There were a number of petitions brought by Honduras in front of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, but I don't have the details of each petition, so I wouldn't be able to tell you. I think there were 16 petitions that were brought. If you just hold on a second, I think I do have that number for you, but I don't know the details of each petition.



Sorry, there were 24 petitions that were received from Honduras in 2011 by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, but I would have to do more investigation to find out which topic they brought up specifically.

**Hon. Irwin Cotler:** But it would be open to Canada to also petition on that issue, would it not?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I guess Canada can submit petitions. I don't know if it's possible to submit petitions on other countries. When you say "Canada", it can be an individual or an organization that can submit petitions to the commission.

**The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Marston):** At this point, on this conversation, the time is up for this particular witness, as much as I'd love to give them more.

I understand Mr. Sweet has a follow-up he'd like to put forward.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Along the line of Mr. Cotler's questioning, the program that you're in charge of, where you're training government and non-governmental organizations in the justice sector, can you give me a little bit more detail about where this training is targeted? Who are the individuals in the justice sector who are being trained by CIDA?

• (1350)

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Just to be sure, we're again referring to this project from British Columbia, correct?

**Mr. David Sweet:** No.

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Okay, sorry. I'm glad I asked.

**Mr. David Sweet:** No, there's a different one. CIDA's inter-American program trains justice sector personnel.

**Ms. Lise Filiatrault:** Oh, yes. Okay.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Who would those personnel be?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** This is indeed part of our regional program, and this is the improvement of justice systems in Latin America. This is implemented by the Justice Studies Center for the Americas, which is based in Santiago, Chile.

Let me just check. I'm sorry, I have a lot of information about many things and I want to make sure I give you the right information.

Yes, here it is. When we say "justice sector personnel", it's been mainly from government, but it included also NGOs and other organizations. I don't have more details with me, but we can find those details if you're interested.

**Mr. David Sweet:** That would be good. I'd like to know whether these are clerical staff or prosecutors, and what level they're at.

Mr. Chair, could we have that as an official request to be followed up?

You mentioned these preventable diseases, but give us an idea. I've never heard of Chagas or leishmaniasis. What kinds of diseases are they?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I'll ask my colleague, who's more versed in this project, to answer.

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** Chagas is conveyed through a Chagas beetle. In Honduras we're trying to eliminate the transfer of this disease from the vector, which is the beetle, to humans. Usually they bite children. That's where we try to concentrate our treatment and our surveillance and monitoring systems.

**Mr. David Sweet:** How serious is this? Is it like lyme disease?

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** It doesn't kill people outright. People live with this disease for a long time, but it generally shortens their lifespan. Usually people who live with it for a long time who haven't been treated have to have a heart monitor in place.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Wow. So it is very serious.

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** Yes. It reduces their productivity.

Leishmaniasis is also a vector-borne disease, transmitted through insects. It eats people's skin and their organs. It's not a very nice disease.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Would leishmaniasis show up similar to leprosy?

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** Yes, it presents the same.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Is there a way to cure it?

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** It is treatable if caught early. The important part is proper surveillance and monitoring and also education and awareness among the population about how to look for this, how to treat the insect bites, and how to look after your home and prevent the bugs from coming into your home and making your children more vulnerable. Homes that are determined to be infected can also be sprayed in areas where the prevalence of the disease is very high.

**Mr. David Sweet:** What percentage of the population is affected by these two?

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** It depends. In some departments of Honduras it can be very high. We've been reducing it overall, but I think it's in nine departments of Honduras, out of their 16 departments. It's been eradicated from three, and we're still working on the other six.

**Mr. David Sweet:** Can you give me an idea of the worst-case scenario in those departments?

**Mrs. Kate Stefanuk:** I'm not 100% sure. I can get back to you with that information.

• (1355)

**Mr. David Sweet:** Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

Perhaps we could request as well, if you were able to find more information, that you pass it along to the clerk of the committee for distribution to the rest of the committee. Thank you very much.

We turn now to Monsieur Jacob, who I understand will be splitting his time with Professor Scott.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Jacob (Brome—Missisquoi, NDP):** That is correct, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing before us this afternoon and for sharing their experience with us.

As you may know, when mining operations are set up, the relations are often conflictual between Canadian companies, the local communities, the environmental groups and those who look out for human rights.

According to the president of the Mining Association of Canada, companies have made mistakes in the past. Does CIDA follow up on social responsibility projects of Canadian mining companies that operate in Honduras?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Thank you for your question.

When it comes to managing relations and carrying out follow-ups with Canadian companies, that role falls to our colleagues at DFAIT. I think this question should be asked to our colleagues at DFAIT since they follow up on these kinds of matters.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** All right, thank you.

I have a second question for you.

Agricultural productivity is low in Honduras and many regions of the country are faced with a serious problem of food insecurity. A growing rural population also puts pressure on the country's natural resources. Honduras has environmental problems due to the deterioration of its lands and deforestation.

In your opinion, what are the major factors that contribute to food insecurity in Honduras?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** Thank you for your question.

As I mentioned earlier, there are different aspects to food insecurity and one of them, as you mentioned, is the quality and deterioration of soil. Other aspects include the management of watersheds, deforestation and farming practices. These are all causes that affect soil productivity and we are working on improving them.

I mentioned earlier that a number of food security initiatives are underway. In fact, we are implementing projects with Oxfam Canada, CARE and the FAO. There is another initiative underway in the forestry sector as you mentioned. Each project has its own objectives and results, but they all help, for example, train small-scale farmers on more sustainable techniques in farming practices and water management. On the whole, these projects help increase productivity and product diversity which can, among other things, improve nutrition.

So there are a number of factors that play a role in food insecurity. Earlier you mentioned natural resource management, but there is a whole other dimension of this problem that we haven't discussed here. For example, we could talk about nutrition and the variety of foods available.

There can also be problems in the area of education. Food insecurity is also linked to water and hygiene. It is a multifaceted problem. Now to answer your more specific question on natural resource management, that is part of the measures we are taking to resolve this problem of food insecurity.

**Mr. Pierre Jacob:** Thank you.

I will give my remaining time to my colleague.

• (1400)

[*English*]

**Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I know I have very little time, so I'd like to follow up on the reference from Mr. Cotler about some of the recent killings. Antonio Trejo Cabrera was a lawyer who was killed in September 2012. His brother was killed last month. Antonio was amongst those opposing congress's creation of special development regions, informally known as charter cities. Opposing them is unconstitutional, bringing a case before the court.

Now, bracketing their legality—I'm not going to ask you about that—and given that charter cities or special development regions, as they're called, are presented as important for economic development, what position has Canada—or CIDA in particular—taken or does it now take on the initiatives of special development regions as a policy matter? Has Canada to this point done anything to facilitate the creation of those entities, either in terms of Canadian or non-Canadian actors who would like to be part of special development regions?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** What I can say is that as a program in Honduras we are certainly aware of the question of model cities and of the interest for this question in Honduras. But our CIDA program is not involved in this, really, and we don't really have any linkages with that. We are looking at the information and we've been following this, but we don't really have any link with the model cities.

As I explained the nature of our program and the nature of our activities, there is no direct link or involvement between CIDA and the model cities.

**Mr. Craig Scott:** I have one quick last follow-up then.

Given no current involvement, has CIDA been thinking through the whole question of model cities? And if there comes a point when Canadian companies want to be involved in their creation or participate in them, is CIDA prepared to support that kind of involvement if it falls within other guidelines for development and corporate cooperation that the government is currently exploring a little bit?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** That's a little bit of a hypothetical question and a question for the future, so it is hard to answer.

There is a dimension in the model cities about attracting investment and generating opportunities. I believe this committee also asked questions of our colleagues in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and once again there is a link to investment or companies, so there might be more on their side that I really cannot comment on.

In terms of our programming typically, we establish our priorities for each country we work in. We have country strategies and we implement them, and we regularly assess our priorities based on the context and the country and based on what other donors are doing. We do that on a regular basis. When we do that in the case of Honduras and we analyze it, at that point we look at the context and the country, including the context of the model cities, and we'll factor that into our analysis for future programming recommendations.

**The Chair:** We're going to have to end now, but I just have a very quick question to follow up on the last one.

You mentioned that you would add this into your analysis. What would then happen with that analysis? Does it guide your decisions directly, or do you then have to take it back to the minister and get the minister's approval and go through a process that involves going up to the ministerial level?

I ask this because obviously Professor Scott asks these questions, as we all do, with an eye to future Canadian policy, and we want to make sure we know what the pathways are that will allow whatever policy preferences this committee thinks are appropriate to be implemented into government policy.

Do you know the answer to the question I just asked?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I'm sorry, the sound is not very good, so I'm not sure I understood your question correctly. You are asking me if our analysis of the context...?

**The Chair:** Yes. You mentioned you do analysis and you put it in future reports. My question is, what happens to those reports? Are they simply for ministerial advice, or do they become public, or do you act on them without having to go to the minister?

**Mrs. Lise Filiatrault:** I was referring more to the analysis we do for ministerial advice.

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

Thank you to our witnesses, both of you, for being patient at the front end of this meeting and for providing such useful testimony throughout.

Colleagues, I don't think there's any other business we need to discuss of an administrative nature. Thank you for your patience and for seeing the clock with the same flexible eye that I did.

We are adjourned.

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