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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, May 16, 2019**

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**Chair**

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Thursday, May 16, 2019

• (0845)

[English]

**The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)):** Good morning. Welcome to the 145th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. This meeting is public.

Today, pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), we are commencing our study of the main estimates 2019-20: votes 1, 5 and 10 under Department for Women and Gender Equality, referred to the committee on April 11, 2019.

The committee is pleased to welcome the Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister for Women and Gender Equality. She is joined by Diane Jacovella, Deputy Minister; Nancy Gardiner, Assistant Deputy Minister; and Stéphane Lavigne, Chief Financial Officer and Executive Director for Corporate Services.

I will turn the floor over to the minister.

You have 10 minutes, Minister.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef (Minister for Women and Gender Equality):** Good morning, and thank you, Madam Chair.

*Boozhoo. Aaniin.*

*As-salaam alaikum. Ramadan kareem* to my Muslim colleagues in this space and beyond.

We are on traditional territory that the Algonquin peoples have called home for generations upon generations.

This is my first time meeting with you in this room. I'm thankful to be here to speak with you about the main estimates and how they're going to allow Women and Gender Equality to better implement the mandate that it has been given.

As you know, the focus of our government on advancing gender equality is based on two premises. One, it's the right thing to do. It's the fair thing to do. Two, it's also the smart thing to do. It's the economically advantageous thing to do. When women succeed, everyone benefits.

That pillar, our gender equality pillar, has been a big driver for economic growth for us since we formed government. This plan that we've put together is working: one million jobs, the lowest poverty rate on record and the lowest unemployment rate we've had in over four decades. We have lifted out of poverty 300,000 children who

are not going to bed hungry anymore. Also, we've been able to sign three trade agreements. This is all a sign that our plan is working.

I want to thank the members of this committee for your important work. When you collaborated and you worked together, you had tremendous results. As the minister responsible for this file, I tell the stories, especially around gender-based violence, of how you came together and how you made a world of difference for a lot of people. You've eased a lot of suffering, for example, with the conversations you had with Facebook around revenge porn.

When women have choices, when they have a voice, opportunity and the right skills, when they have safety, and when they have role models and social safety nets, they move mountains. Every single one of us knows women in our lives—and those women are around this table as well—who are able to do big things because of those choices, opportunities and means.

Our government has worked to apply an intersectional gendered lens throughout everything we do and every decision in cabinet. Now it's the law to apply that lens to budgets. More and more, we're seeing committees do a really good job of that. There are still some inconsistencies around the application of GBA+, but we intend to make sure that we get better.

I do want to thank my parliamentary secretary, Terry Duguid, who has been working very hard with other parliamentary secretaries to make sure that the GBA+ is something that committees apply as well.

The Canada child benefit is giving more money to single moms and helping them make ends meet. The lower taxes for the middle class and the raised taxes for the 1%, along with lower taxes for small businesses, mean that Canadians have more money in their pockets. For seniors, especially for women—I know you've done a study on this—the guaranteed income supplement and the fact that we brought the eligibility age back to 65 is lifting tens of thousands of seniors out of poverty, many of whom are women.

There's the national housing strategy, with over \$50 billion now over 10 years to stabilize the housing market in communities across the country. In Peterborough, my own community, the rental vacancy rate is 1.1%. We know that women are the first to lose housing and the last to get housing.

We know that housing is a social determinant of health, but it's also a determinant of gender-based violence. To have a carveout in the gender-based violence strategy—about a third—designed specifically for women-led families is a solution that's going to make a world of difference. There are 7,000 shelter units either being renovated or built anew. That's going to mean that she has a place to turn to when she works up the courage to leave an awful situation.

If we're applying an intersectional gendered lens, talking about feminist governments and working to ensure that we bring others along with us, it's because there has been a women's movement, an equality-seeking movement, that existed long before any of us got here. It will be here long after we're gone. The sustainability of that movement is my number one priority; we know, and results show, that the most effective way to advance gender equality is by investing in them.

For the first time ever, they've received funding over five years, capacity-building funding, with over \$50 million as part of the gender-based violence strategy. The point here is that they don't always have to look inward, applying for grants one year at a time. They can have some predictability and stability with five-year grants that go beyond an election cycle.

• (0850)

We also know there are barriers for those women who choose to enter STEM fields, or trades. We're working to remove them. We know that only 16% of Canadian entrepreneurs' businesses are majority-owned by women—16%. Surely we can do better than that in Canada. We have a strategy to double that number by 2025.

We know that care work is most often a big responsibility for women. What if that responsibility and privilege were shared with the second parent, often the father? We have new shared parental leave that allows for just that. Child care is very much in line with that. Our investment in child care means there will be at least 40,000 new child care spaces. Importantly, there are spaces, through a distinctions-based approach, for indigenous children. We have a new child care framework for indigenous kids—Métis, Inuit and first nations. That's been a smart collaboration between our governments in a nation-to-nation way.

Over half the boil water advisories have been lifted, and we know there's a direct link between women and water. We know that in indigenous cultures and in many others women are the keepers of the water. Water is sacred; water is life. To have lifted half the advisories and be on track to lift the rest of them by 2021—in the next two years—is a big step forward. What that means for those communities, too, is that they suddenly become open for economic development. It's hard to invest if there's no clean drinking water in a community, but we're changing that.

Evidence matters. Data matters, so bringing back the census, and the ability of scientists to do what they need to do.... For example, the shelter survey results from a couple of weeks ago indicated where the gaps and opportunities are. Also, the fact that Stats Canada has a centre for diversity and inclusion statistics, a one-stop shop for all the data we're working on, to create better intersectional, gendered lenses, is really important. That's something that stays long after we're gone. Data and evidence anchor the progress we have made.

The billions we are providing to support education, infrastructure, skills, housing and leadership in indigenous communities mean that we are in this era of reconciliation and that we will not be turning back. Communities have more opportunities to self-determine the paths they want to take.

These accomplishments are significant, and many of them have been happening ahead of schedule—for example, the indexation of the Canada child benefit, not once, but twice, and the lifting of people out of poverty. We are ahead of schedule, with one million jobs. Who would have thought, when we formed a government in a recession, that we'd be talking about a million jobs and three trade agreements three years later? This is happening because our government isn't alone, but is working with our partners to do this.

We know that for all the progress that's been made, more work remains, and we're committed to that work. There are some institutional challenges that we're working to address. The fact that GBA+ is now in law for gender budgeting is an important way that we're addressing some systemic barriers.

Indeed, we are taking that diversity lens to the appointments that the federal government makes, and we have instituted a new appointment process. Thousands have been appointed to really important roles in federally regulated jurisdictions. Now, 47% of those who sit around those important tables, and who make decisions, whether it's port authorities, VIA rail or other important agencies and bodies, are women. The Senate of Canada is also at parity right now, at a time when on corporate boards in Canada, only one in five seats is filled by a woman. Again, surely we can do better in Canada.

We have a gender results framework that provinces and territories have agreed to use with us—a common set of indicators to measure our progress. We have proactive pay equity legislation, Bill C-65 and Bill C-51.

Of course, come June 3, the inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women wraps up its work.

• (0855)

I wanted to give you an overview. Thank you again for all the ways you've been a part of this work.

Madam Chair, I'm happy to take any questions colleagues may have.

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

We're going to begin with our seven minutes of questioning. I'm going to pass the floor over to Salma Zahid.

You have the first seven minutes.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.):** Thanks, Minister, for coming to the committee today.

I'll be splitting my time with my colleague, Bob Bratina.

Minister, I understand that the department is receiving \$160 million over the next five years, including \$10 million in budget 2019 and in the main estimates under vote 10. In addition to supporting the department's work, I understand this can also mean greater support for the women's movement and organizations doing important work, including organizations in my riding like Heritage Skills Development Centre and Victoria Park Hub, a community centre of women organizations. You have been to many of them.

Could you please discuss what this funding will enable for women in Canada?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Underfunded, underestimated and undervalued is how these organizations have felt. That's something we're hearing from international women's organizations and what we had been hearing from those on the ground. These funds are meant to provide them with five years of stable, predictable and accessible revenues, so that they can focus on going from analog to digital, come up with new strategic plans, diversify their funding sources, and better collaborate and share data. Some of them want to turn what they're doing into a social enterprise. This is one of those ways that we give them support to be able to do that.

Most importantly, Salma, this funding means that when someone experiences a sexual assault, they have somebody to go to and the doors are open and the lights are on. It means that when we're investing in trades and entrepreneurship, there are organizations specifically looking to support women in those communities to start their own businesses, to scale up their own businesses and to benefit from the grants that women in communities have now to go and get a Red Seal trade diploma.

It means that they're continuing their advocacy to make sure that we do what we need to do, especially in this moment in time when the winds of populism are blowing the way they are and when the backlash to our progress is so clear. These organizations are going to hold all of us to account and advocate for more of us to be around these decision-making tables.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I'll pass it to Bob.

• (0900)

**Mr. Bob Bratina (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, Lib.):** Thank you, Minister. It's great to have you here.

To be specific because our time is limited, the government launched the independent National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in 2016. I thought at the time that this took a great deal of courage because we knew it would be a difficult file. It's not just collecting some data and releasing a report, but it's far deeper than that.

The commissioners have been examining the systemic causes behind the violence, the greater vulnerability to violence and why these higher levels occur. The report will be presented on June 3. In advance of the release of the report, what steps has the government been taking or will it take to combat gender-based violence, specifically against indigenous women?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** There have been hundreds of inquiries before. This one was a national one. It meant that provinces and territories had to be a part of it. As you said, it was always going to

be difficult. What we promised when we started the inquiry was that we wouldn't wait until we received the report to take action.

The gender-based violence strategy that this committee helped develop was an important step. It is the first time that there has been a federal strategy to prevent gender-based violence, to support survivors, and to ensure that we have a legal and justice system in place that is responsive to the needs of survivors. You helped do that.

Over \$200 million has been set aside for it. Part of the funding that's been set aside is to focus specifically on those groups that disproportionately experience gender-based violence in communities across the country. Those include indigenous women and girls, as well as two-spirit and LGBT individuals.

We have also started, based on the results of the interim report, a commemoration fund to honour our stolen sisters, to make sure families are a part of it.

I will say that with regard to those job numbers that I shared—one million Canadians are working today—these are jobs that didn't exist three and a half years ago. There are more indigenous people working now than ever before. There are more young people working now than ever before. We know that economic insecurity is a predeterminant of violence in some cases. It's not always the case because people who are of good economic means also experience and perpetrate gender-based violence, but it's one risk that we can avoid.

We know that, with regard to the boil water advisories and the respect and the honour that need to be in place, we're getting there. However, we have a lot more work to do. This problem was created over one hundred years of colonization, oppression, racism and sexism. Together, we are on that path. The path is long and is not always easy, but we're together. We're committed to doing it.

**The Chair:** Okay.

Passing it on, we now have Rachael Harder.

You have seven minutes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Minister, your mandate changed on December 13, 2018. The department changed from being Status of Women Canada to being WAGE.

I'm just curious whether you received a new mandate letter from the Prime Minister.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Yes, we're five months into Women and Gender Equality. We went from a small, mighty shop to a full department with equal rights, privileges, authorities and responsibilities.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Minister, sorry. My question is quite simple. I'm just asking if you received a new mandate letter.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** In Bill C-86, the....

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

I'm going to put it back over to the question.

Go ahead.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you.

I'm just asking you a very simple question. It actually just requires yes or no answer.

Did you receive a mandate letter with your new department?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Parliament saw the new mandate in Bill C-86. The scope of the work has expanded to go beyond equality between women and men to include equality between sexes and around sexual orientation, gender expression and gender identity.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Okay.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** That new mandate is in law that Parliament passed and that, as you mentioned, received royal assent on December 13, 2018.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** It did.

Interestingly enough, in your original mandate letter from October 4, 2017—which was under the old agency that no longer exists because, as you know, on December 13, 2018, that agency dissolved with the creation of a new department—the Prime Minister wrote:

I expect Canadians to hold us accountable for delivering [on] these commitments....

He went on to say:

It is my expectation that we will deliver real results and professional government to Canadians.

He then went on to say:

We have also committed to set a higher bar for openness and transparency in government. It is time to shine more light on government to ensure it remains focused on the people it serves. Government and its information should be open by default. If we want Canadians to trust their government, we need a government that trusts Canadians. It is important that we acknowledge mistakes when we make them. Canadians do not expect us to be perfect — they expect us to be honest, open, and sincere in our efforts to serve the public interest.

It's a noble goal. It's the right goal. I certainly agree with the mandate or the expectation that was put out. However, having been given a new department without a clear mandate.... It would seem then that there's no longer an openness to transparency, honesty and accountability because it would be difficult for this committee and for Canadians as a whole to hold you accountable.

● (0905)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan (Outremont, Lib.):** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Ms. Bendayan.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** I believe the minister is here to discuss main estimates and to respond to questions on the main estimates.

**The Chair:** Could you get to the question?

The relevance there is the main estimates, which look at the entire budget as well. As this is a question regarding mandate and the spending for that mandate, I will allow the questioner to continue.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Not being given a mandate letter just seems odd to me, that you wouldn't be given instructions on where to take this department and what to accomplish on behalf of Canadians, and that Canadians wouldn't be given the opportunity to understand that better by making that public.

My question for you, then is, why didn't you receive a new mandate letter?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** No, Madam Chair, the whole thing didn't dissolve and disappear into thin air. Status of Women is the foundation upon which we have built this new department.

I will add that our government was the first to put out there, in public, mandate letters. My mandate letter hasn't changed. I am still working to advance the items that you see very clearly on the Government of Canada website that I am responsible for, with the addition, as is very clearly included in Bill C-86, of the need to expand the scope to include LGBTQ2S individuals in the work we do, and to have more rights and opportunities.

This means that this new department is not going to be vulnerable to the whims and values of the sitting government of the day. It's here to stay. The work is basically the same, with the expanded mandate, so it's very clear in Bill C-86.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** It's interesting to me that you say that the work is basically the same. You're kind of giving a bit of a pat answer, in the sense that the expansion of this department somehow doesn't seem to be of value or of consequence to you, because you're willing to write it off as if it's the same as it's always been, which seems oxymoronic. Does it really make sense, then, to create a new department, to put new funding worth \$10 million towards it, when what you just said is that the mandate has basically stayed the same? Those were your words.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I value the mandate I already had.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I haven't asked the question, Minister.

If the mandate has basically stayed the same, then my question would be—and it's a rhetorical question, and you don't need to answer—

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I'd like to.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** —why all the money, then, towards a mandate that hasn't actually changed?

The Prime Minister hasn't even provided you with a mandate letter, so you don't even know what it is that you're meant to be accomplishing, and Canadians don't actually know what they're supposed to be holding you accountable for.

This poses some very good questions, I believe, that I have put forward here today.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** All of that is wrong, Madam Chair. I have to correct the record.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** My question for you is....

Actually, one more comment—

**The Chair:** Please get to the question.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I find it very interesting that, in your opening remarks, you actually didn't talk about your new mandate at all.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Madam Chair, you asked the committee member to get to the question.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Just to the question....

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Chair, I'm happy to talk about it.

**The Chair:** Okay. Hold for one moment.

First of all, with regard to interruptions, just do a point of order, if you don't mind, just as this is taken care of.... I recognize that this is going to be a very testy issue. The fact is, we have questions regarding the mandate letter versus the interpretations.

I would ask that we try to keep to the relevance of it. I understand where you're trying to go on this one, Rachael, but just get to the question to allow her to answer.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I don't have to. It's my time and I can use it however I want.

**The Chair:** Yes. Go forward, but you were saying that you were going to ask a question, that's all.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** And I will do that. Thank you.

For the record, I get seven minutes and I can use it however I choose, as long as I remain on the topic at hand, which I am doing. I would welcome the committee looking at that further, if it wishes to do so.

The point of the matter is this: in the opening remarks there was nothing said with regard to the new mandate. Furthermore, in your remarks you said that the mandate hasn't really changed. That's a direct quote from you.

• (0910)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** No, it's not.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Further to that, if you are willing to talk about your new mandate, then I wonder if you would find time in your schedule to come back to brief this committee with regard to your new mandate.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I am here now, but you won't let me speak.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Now, I have put forward three—

**The Chair:** Let her just finish and we'll give you time.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I would like to—

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I have put forward three motions at this committee asking you to come forward with regard to your new mandate, and they have been shot down by the members opposite, by your posse, which tells me that this is not a topic you're actually wanting to engage in, that you're actually not wanting to discuss your new mandate, which very much concerns me because, again, there are Canadian dollars that are being invested in something that you actually don't have an understanding of.

That is all. Thank you.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Do I get to respond, Madam Chair?

**The Chair:** I'm looking at the time; there was no question on that. I hear you. We'll allow it to pass to the questions.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** All of that was false.

**The Chair:** Thank you. That will show on the record.

Irene, I'll pass the floor to you for seven minutes.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen (London—Fanshawe, NDP):** Thank you, Minister, for being here.

I have a number of questions, and I would prefer succinct answers because I want to cover a lot of ground.

First, when are you planning to restore core operational funding to women's organizations, funding that was withdrawn by the government in 2006? You talked at the beginning about collaboration and partnerships, yet by favouring project funding over core funding, your government has increased its control over the types of community services offered, while making women's organizations more financially vulnerable. They're busy desperately trying to cobble together short-term proposals, and they cannot do long-term planning for the provision of service, advocacy and research.

Minister, how on earth will they participate in this collaboration?

Second, there's a conference in early June in Vancouver called Women Deliver. Community organizations have been excluded because they cannot afford to go to the conference. When will we see core funding again, please?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** The Government of Canada is not in the business of core funding. That said, as I mentioned, my number one priority is the sustainability of the movement. As the VP of the YWCA in my community, I agree that the strings that came with 12-month, 24-month funding envelopes hurt the movement's ability to move forward. That's why we've increased funding for women's organizations fivefold to go beyond an election cycle, up to five years, which is what they asked for, so they are able to better respond. In the new budget there is an additional \$160 million over five years. I can assure you this was designed in collaboration with the women's movement, and they know we have their back.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** I'm sorry, Minister, but that is not what I am hearing from organizations. I've been in this portfolio off and on since 2006, and women's organizations are very clear that they require stable funding so they can plan and hire, and this mishmash of project funding is simply not working. It's certainly not working for organizations that do the groundwork. I don't accept that answer in any way.

My next question has to do with your statements about women in non-traditional roles and child care. This committee did a study in 2008 of women in non-traditional trades and found that they were excellent. They were probably the best employees ever because they were conscientious and careful. Unfortunately, most of the women who tried to educate themselves for these jobs had to drop out because there was no child care.

You talked about child care; you talked about 40,000 spaces. How is this adequate across an entire nation? Are they publicly funded, are they permanent, is there going to be a program to provide for the kind of child care we need, that we do not have?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** As you know, just as funding women's organizations is a shared responsibility with provinces, so is child care. We've put \$7.5 billion on the table and signed bilateral agreements with our provincial counterparts. In his previous role, Terry, my parliamentary secretary, was a part of that. It's making a world of difference, Irene. If you're asking me about what's coming up, in our platform and our work towards another mandate, stay tuned.

As for your comment about women's organizations, there has never been capacity-building funding for women's organizations—and we now [*Inaudible—Editor*] on women's day so it's not a hodge-podge—

• (0915)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Yes, Minister, there has been.

**The Chair:** Irene has the time as the questioner.

Go ahead.

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

Minister, you're absolutely wrong. There was always capacity-building funding until the Conservatives removed it in 2006. I would have expected you to restore it simply because women's organizations—

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We did.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** You did not. You made it into piecemeal project-by-project funding. Child care spaces in Toronto cost about \$1,200 a month for one child for a family. That is not affordable, and if we are going to have successful child care, it must be affordable.

Minister, you talked about the need to have women represented. Some time ago, I think about in 2004, the NDP introduced a bill to require federal boards to have 50% participation of women. I reintroduced the bill, and I wonder, since you support it, will you ensure the passage of that NDP bill to make sure that women are properly represented?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** That's a great question, Irene.

The fact that only one in five seats is filled by a woman in Canada's wealthy corporate boards is a shame. It also affects our economic opportunities and competitiveness.

So, we introduced a comply and explain model through Bill C-25. Parliament supported it wholeheartedly. We introduced that bill in the understanding with corporations that if we were not able to see results, we'd be willing to take further steps.

The recent data isn't showing much improvement. I'd be interested in seeing your bill, Irene, and wrapping my head around it.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** All right. I most certainly will send it along.

There is some profound concern with regard to funding for the Native Women's Association of Canada. You talked about the importance of work connected with missing and murdered women, and yet NWAC's funding has been reduced and they were the key catalyst for the Sisters in Spirit campaign.

What is your relationship with NWAC? Are you able to interact in a positive manner? In terms of partnerships and collaborations, is

there a good working response in terms of your department and the work that NWAC does?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Thank you, Irene. Yes. We also have a great relationship with Pauktuutit and with Métis women. At the provincial and territorial meetings I've been a part of over the last two years, they've had a seat for the first time ever. When I went to the UN they were part of the Canadian delegation, as they should be. We've signed a bilateral agreement specifically with NWAC. We also have one with Métis women.

I will correct something, though. NWAC's funding has increased under our government. They had, I think, nine staff when we formed government, and it's over 70 now, and that is a direct result of the investments we're making. They're valuable partners and we need their voices and we need them to be sustainable, but we also need to ensure that their individual partners, like the Quebec Native Women's Association, the Atlantic native women's associations—

**The Chair:** Wrap it up, please.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —and the Ontario Native Women's Association also have the supports they need.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** So, absolutely we have a strong partnership—

**The Chair:** Okay, we're going to now move over to our next set of questions because I allowed a much longer time.

Rachel, you have the floor for seven minutes.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Minister, women have fought, not for decades but centuries, for their rights, and I was quite shocked to see last week a march in Ottawa demonstrating against a woman's right to choose, against a woman's right to make decisions over her own body, and this after the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that right over 30 years ago.

Minister, you've always set your sights forward, and rightly so, and in your presentation to this committee you mentioned a number of really incredible accomplishments made over the last four years. Are you concerned at all that there's a risk of some of the fundamental rights that women have fought for actually rolling back and being lost?

• (0920)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I am.

Patty Hajdu says this. Our rights are not carved in stone. Every time we've seen progress there has been a backlash. There was backlash when we got the right to vote. There was backlash when we entered the workforce. There is backlash now as more and more of us enter politics.



Just look at any one of your social media feeds to see what that backlash looks like now, and when we have conversations that still question the autonomy of women's bodies, it's a reminder of the fact that we cannot be complicit and—

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch (Simcoe—Grey, CPC):** Point of order.

**The Chair:** Yes, go ahead.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** I think the member opposite raised the issue of staying on the estimates. I think this is an issue that is not related to the estimates, and I'd ask the minister to focus on that. Thank you.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** That's fine.

Minister, can I ask about something that you raised in your presentation regarding funding for women entrepreneurs in particular. Many women entrepreneurs in my riding are benefiting from grants in order to support their small businesses, and perhaps you can explain to the committee the work that the government is doing on economic empowerment of women.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Women cannot be economically empowered if they don't have control over their bodies. When members of Parliament, members of the Conservative Party join a pro-life rally on the Hill, the message they're sending is that women's independence does not matter—

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Point of order.

**The Chair:** Stop. Maryam, excuse me. There's a point of order. I have the chair.

Go ahead.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** On a point of order, again, I will ask the minister this. She was asked a question about women entrepreneurs—

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Economic matters—

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** —and economic empowerment, absolutely, which is something I feel very passionately about. I'll be asking you questions about it. I'd just ask you to stay to the estimates and to that issue.

Thank you.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Madam Chair, all I'm saying is that it's hard to be able to have economic independence if you don't have control over your body.

We have invested \$1.65 billion in a women entrepreneurship strategy with the goal of doubling the number of women entrepreneurs by 2025. This means support for businesses to start up, to scale up and to be able to benefit from export opportunities. We are the only country with a trade agreement with every G7 country, but if we don't use these trade agreements to get our goods and services to those markets, they are just pieces of paper. Minister Ng is working really hard on export development, as is Minister Carr. They have asked for mentors, conferences and data.

The women entrepreneurship strategy allows for this. There is a lot of demand for these dollars, which is a good sign. It means that Canada's women are—as we see with leaders around this table—ready to take charge of their own destinies. They have great ideas and we need them. Our economy will benefit by \$150 billion when

we increase the participation of women equally in our workforce over the next decade. Entrepreneurship is one of the ways we are doing that.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you very much. I'll pass a last question over to my colleague, Sonia.

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.):** Thank you, Minister, for the great work you and your department are doing.

I am representing Brampton South, where we have lots of youth looking for direction. Are you working on any strategy for youth in working towards gender equality? Can you explain?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Youth are leaders today. They are not leaders of tomorrow. They are leaders today. The Prime Minister says that often, as minister for youth. He brought together young people at Parliament for a youth summit a couple of weeks ago and introduced the first youth policy. That's really important because millennials in particular, and the younger generation, are the most powerful generations to have ever existed. They have access to technology and they have people like us thinking about them every single day.

When it comes to gender equality, part of what we got funding for is youth-led dialogues to advance gender equality. We brought together an advisory council for the Department of Women and Gender Equality to work with us over the next two years to make sure we're adopting youth-centred approaches.

We have also heard a lot about online violence. Parents are worried about their kids experiencing cyber-violence and all the other ways that young people can be violated online. All of us can be, but the young are particularly vulnerable, so we are working on a youth-led initiative that allows us to address and prevent online violence.

I would say that housing for youth is part of the national housing strategy for a reason, especially for LGBTQ youth. If they come out to their families and they are not accepted, they get kicked out of the house. They have nowhere to go and then they get exposed to all sorts of harms and violence that housing could prevent. There is a carve-out for that in the national housing strategy.

We're also providing them with skills they need. We are lowering the amount that they need to pay back after they graduate from post-secondary by giving them more grants and by giving them a grace period because we know they are worried about that.

Most importantly, they are worried about climate change. This is the world they will inherit and they see the rivers rising all around us. They see the forest fires. They see what's happening around the world and they want to know that we are taking concrete action.

● (0925)

**The Chair:** Excuse me. There is a point of order.

Go ahead.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Minister, having sat in your seat, I will kindly ask you if we could stay on the estimates and the issues of the day. I recognize that we have a lot of issues. We could try to boil the ocean here today, but I think that's not our intent.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Please don't—it's warm enough already.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Our intent here is to focus on status of women issues to make sure that the women in this country have the focus and voice that I think they deserve from any government.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** As your colleague said, it's her time.

**The Chair:** Excuse me, Minister, please. That's inappropriate.

At this moment we will continue with one minute of questioning from Sonia.

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu:** Is there any plan to work with our G7 partners on advancing women's equality?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Yes, the G7 gender equality ministerial meeting has happened this year. Last year, under our leadership, gender was mainstreamed throughout every item of the agenda and it also happened in Italy.

We've just agreed on the fact that we were going to better support women entrepreneurs and we are also going to focus on addressing gender-based violence more effectively, particularly online violence. Most importantly, we are going to work together. One of the reasons we are so susceptible to backlashes and losing hard-won gains is our inability to be united and to work together for all sorts of systemic reasons. The fact that G7 countries are working together on this is a really good sign.

**Ms. Sonia Sidhu:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Chair:** We are starting our second round, and Kellie Leitch is next, for five minutes.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Great.

Thank you, Minister. Thank you to all of the public servants who are here today to answer our questions. It's greatly appreciated.

I had the great honour of being Canada's first full minister of Status of Women. I have to say it was an enormous honour. One of the things I focused on was women entrepreneurs. I think that empowering women, providing them with economic opportunities, is the best path forward for dealing with many issues.

In 2014, a report was published, put together under my leadership with Arlene Dickinson, Carolyn Cross, Marissa McTasney—great women. It focused on three things, and the results of the report were very clear. The report was pretty blunt that for women entrepreneurs to be successful, we need money, we need markets and we need mentorship.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Yes.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** We had the first women-led, all women participant trade mission to Brazil.

My first question for the minister—and I will say I am splitting my time, so I will cut you off, Minister, as I'd like succinct answers

—is when will the next all women-led trade mission be, where will it be and under what circumstances?

Second, substantive funding was raised through the private sector to help these women, including from the banking community, which is large in Canada, as opposed to just government funding. What initiatives are being taken with the tier-one banks?

Third, an organization put forward an idea that we acted on called “It Starts with One”, a mentorship program. I'd like a commitment to continue with that program, because the mentorship of young women in this country, I think, is the future of what we will be doing.

Please give succinct answers, because my colleague has a question at the end that I want to reserve a minute for. Thank you.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Thank you for your leadership during your time as minister for Status of Women. I did learn about your efforts to advance women entrepreneurs in Canada, and I'm thankful for them. The women entrepreneurship strategy includes mentorship opportunities.

Export and trade missions are the purview of Minister Carr. I know that he just led the first LGBTQ2 mission and that the idea of a women in trade initiative is certainly high on his radar.

We have a Canada-U.S. business council, as you know, for women entrepreneurs on both sides of the border who are working to advance this work.

As to your question about the private sector, we are working in partnership with BDC and EDC, but also with banks like RBC to help support women who've experienced violence get back on their feet, get the skills and the confidence they need to enter the workforce, which may be via entrepreneurship or other avenues.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Thank you, Minister.

I will be specific and maybe ask you in the future, if you're not able to answer today, specifically what trade mission women will be involved in as an all-women trade mission—

● (0930)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Sure.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** —and ask you to report back to this committee before the end of this session.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I'll send you a note with any details I can get.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Well, actually to the committee. That would be fabulous.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Absolutely.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Second, will the program “It Starts with One” be re-enacted? It has a specific branding and I think it has been very successful. I think it's important.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I'm not familiar with it, but I will look into it.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** No problem. Thank you very much.

Next I have one quick comment, and then I'll turn my time over to my colleague. With respect to a mandate letter, I think it would be highly appropriate if that letter were released to this committee. We as a committee have a responsibility to be responsive to that mandate letter, and not seeing it and not knowing its details puts us at a disadvantage. I would kindly ask you and the public servants involved to make it and those details available to this committee, please.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** The letter is available online.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Thank you very—

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Point of order.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Rachael, you have the floor.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Just to correct the record, there is no mandate letter available online. As per an ATIP that I submitted, the mandate letter actually doesn't exist.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** It does.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** It does not with regards to the new department that was formed on December 13, 2018.

Therefore, I move “That the committee invite the Minister for Women and Gender Equality to brief the committee on her new mandate, given that Status of Women Canada has changed to the Department for Women and Gender Equality, and that the minister appear no later than Thursday, June 13, 2019, and that this meeting be no less than one hour in length, and that it be televised.”

As the minister stated earlier, she'd be happy to take these questions with regards to her new mandate. Unfortunately, that conversation didn't take place today, and so I would very much like the minister to be given a second opportunity to come back to talk specifically with regard to her new mandate and what that looks like to us as a committee and our function in order to serve that.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Madam Chair, I just pulled it up. It's online.

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

Salma, you have a comment.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Are we voting on this motion?

**The Chair:** The motion on the floor right now is debatable and amendable. Because this this motion just presented, everything else ceases. We're on this motion. It's a debatable motion. It's amendable, so if there are any comments—

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Can we please adjourn the debate on this?

**The Chair:** We would have to take it to a vote.

I'll take Kellie's comments....

Salma's asking for it to go to a vote.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Can we please adjourn the debate?

**The Chair:** I just have to confirm this. Because your motion is a non-debatable, non-dilatory motion, we will go directly to the vote.

All those in favour of adjourning the debate?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** The floor remains. Since I stopped the clock, you have one minute, Ms. Harder.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Thank you.

I would again highlight the efforts of the Liberal party and its members to shut down any sort of discourse that would take place with regard to this new mandate. I'm confused by it. This motion is quite simple. It's asking the minister to come forward and talk about the new departments, and it's—

**The Chair:** We cannot use the past tense. We have to move forward from the motion.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Sure.

I think there's a huge opportunity there, going forward. I would hope that we can revisit this motion and that the minister would agree to come to brief this committee. I would hope the members would also agree to that going forward.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Salma.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** The motion is done, so we cannot go further into it.

**The Chair:** Okay.

You have 30 more seconds.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** That is all I have to say.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Madam Chair, LGBTQ2 rights—

**The Chair:** Excuse me.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** —are part of the new mandate. I'm happy to talk about it in question period.

**The Chair:** Excuse me. I have the floor.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Wow. Why are you...?

**The Chair:** One moment.

I have the floor, as the chair.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** I will give you the point of order.

I would ask that I not be interrupted when I am speaking. It does not matter if somebody is a minister or a member. I have the right, and when I ask someone to stop, I ask them to stop.

Thank you.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Okay.

**The Chair:** I'm going to go over to Kellie Leitch, and then back to Salma.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** I have one quick question, Minister.

With respect to violence on campus, one of the items that has been

**The Chair:** We have a point of order from Salma.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**The Chair:** It's a comment. Okay. Good. We're fine.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Okay. Thank you very much.

One of the Status of Women mandates of focus has been dealing with gender-based violence on campus. It was a substantive issue when I was a minister—

• (0935)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The five minutes are now over.

**The Chair:** In the last five minutes, we have had to stop multiple times. Any time there's a motion, or anything like that, I've asked the clock to stop. That has been granted to both sides. Thank you. I'm perfectly aware of the time, as I have stopped it during those times. Thank you.

Go ahead, Kellie.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** I'll be very quick.

I know that Stats Canada is doing a series of surveys with regard to public spaces and how safe they are. Could you provide to the committee the specific questions that Status of Women Canada will be asking, on behalf of young women on campus, and how those questions will facilitate their being protected? I recognize that you won't have time to answer that question, based on my time, but it would be helpful to this committee if those specific questions from Statistics Canada could be provided to us in writing, so that we can evaluate them as well. I think it's an important issue.

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

You're just asking for something in writing coming from the minister, showing that information.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** That would be good. I recognize that the time has run out.

**The Chair:** Okay. Fantastic.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Madam Chair, you said that the witness would have 30 seconds to respond.

**The Chair:** Go ahead. You have 30 seconds to respond. Thirty seconds only.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We've worked with an advisory council to help develop a framework to address and prevent gender-based violence on campuses across the country. They've been doing that work diligently and will be providing us with the report. As you mentioned, there's going to be a survey of post-secondary students, because we know that 41% of sexual assaults on campus were reported by students. Parents care about it. We care about it. There'll be more to come, shortly.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

We'll continue with our five minutes and move over to Emmanuella Lambropoulos. You have the floor for five minutes.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.):** I'll be splitting my time with my colleague, Eva Nassif.

Minister, it's always a pleasure to have you at our committee to answer our questions, and we appreciate that you're here today.

Obviously, we know that gender-based violence is still a huge problem across the country, not just with indigenous communities—although there is a higher percentage there—but within all communities across Canada. We know that as much as our government's been taking that lead and fighting it as much as possible, it's still an issue. Part of the reason is that a culture doesn't just go away within a couple years. These things are taught from a very young age. Toxic masculinity plays a huge role in this.

I was wondering what our government is doing to get men and boys involved in the solution to eventually—and we hope, completely—get rid of gender-based violence.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** That's a great question.

As you know, Terry Duguid has been working very diligently on engaging men in a conversation to advance gender equality, and boys as well. We were doing this as Status of Women Canada. Even when it wasn't our mandate, we were supporting LGBTQ2 individuals and working to engage men and boys. Now, with this new mandate, we actually have the scope and some support in terms of resources to do this work.

We've been having conversations with folks who have been doing this work. There are organizations and men and boys who are actively working every day to advance gender equality in talking about things like toxic masculinity and the paradox of privilege that comes with being a man, and reminding all of us that when women and girls do well, so do men and boys.

I think that's one of the missing ingredients of our efforts to achieve the sustainable development goal number 5. Men haven't always been included in the conversation—for good reasons sometimes, and sometimes because of habit—but we know that men are part of the solution. Men want to be part of the solution, so we're working on a strategy to better include them. That strategy includes, as Irene mentioned, organizations that are already doing the work. We hope to be able to better support them to help them scale up their efforts and to collaborate better together.

What we heard, Terry—one of the most common phrases we heard on the road from folks—was “thank you for bringing us together”. This in itself is success for us, because we don't get to come together anymore. There is more to come on that as well. As you know, the Prime Minister is a big advocate for this as well.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Go ahead, Eva.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Minister, for being with us.

Last February, in my riding of Vimy, I had the pleasure of announcing to an organization in Laval, the Table de concertation de Laval en condition féminine, something to empower women: funding for women's economic security in Laval.

We are doing things. We are changing the lives of women, and this is great, but my question, Minister, is about our conference in June: Women Deliver. It is taking place in our country. It is the largest conference on women and gender equality. Would you talk about our contribution to this conference that is taking place in Vancouver?

● (0940)

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** I realize that Irene asked this question and I didn't get a chance to respond. Women Deliver is the largest conference of its kind for feminists and equality seekers. It's like the Olympics for feminists—literally. Canada had to bid on it. It was a competitive process. It happens every three years. It has happened in Denmark. We're hosting it in Vancouver now. So far, we have over 7,000 people attending and we have a pretty strong wait-list.

Like the Olympics, it's not about what happens in Vancouver alone that's important. What's also important is that people are doing this, that they're coming from 170 different countries and that hundreds of thousands are joining us virtually. In communities across the country and around the world, people are hosting their own Women Deliver events.

The whole point is to use it as a moment to reflect on the progress made, on the push-back that we're experiencing and how to push back against that, and how to accelerate our progress to 2030. If that's our goal, then what happens after Women Deliver is even more important. How do we sustain that work? For those who are experiencing financial challenges, we've invested in organizations like CanWaCH to be able to give out grants. We're also investing in something called Feminists Deliver, with indigenous women's issues front and centre and a really important moment.

**The Chair:** Thank you very much. We're now going to move on.

What we're going to do for equality is give three minutes to the CPC and three minutes to the Liberals. We'll start with Kellie Leitch.

You have three minutes.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** Minister, since you mentioned earlier that you had not heard of or didn't know about the “It Starts With One” program, maybe I can give you a bit of a background.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Sure.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** In 2013 I had the pleasure of becoming the minister. I went out with departmental officials and others and talked to a lot of Canadians, particularly young women interested in excelling in or changing their careers or finding something that would provide them a great opportunity in the future.

One of the things that came back continually was the need for mentors. It was not just that they wanted to be able pick up the phone and call someone. They actually wanted someone who would return their call and have a meaningful relationship with them, someone who would invest time in them as an individual and a person for the long term.

I can say from personal experience that my becoming a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon only occurred because two men decided there should be more women in their profession and that they should make that type of investment. It was a very personal relationship. Dr. Allan Gross, the chairman of orthopaedics at the University of Toronto, and Dr. John Wedge at SickKids were both gentlemen who made a choice that women should be in leadership roles.

I do understand why 52% of graduating medical students were women, and not having any of them enter surgery was a bit of a challenge and a problem for them, but that one-on-one relationship was very important. Numerous other leaders in Canadian society, whether from medicine, business or otherwise, were finding the same challenges—there was enormous talent among young women but they were not actually being allowed or provided the opportunities to get into leadership roles.

The “It Starts with One” program was a result of those consultations and of the need for that one-on-one relationship. We asked every leader who signed up—we had over 5,000—to make a one-year commitment to be in continual dialogue with that young woman, to actually step up and have a meaningful relationship. Whether it be Richard Nesbitt, who had been the chairman at CIBC, or Victor Dodig, who now is the chairman at CIBC, numerous others across the country, including Annette Verschuren, and others, would make that kind of commitment.

I'm not seeing that continue and I think it's a loss to the country. I think we have enormous young female talent—even here in the House of Commons—and we're not realizing their full potential to end up in leadership roles.

I guess my reflection on that and also on the work we did on women on boards, publishing a report on increasing the number of women on Canadian boards.... As you said, Minister, their number hasn't even changed in your time. It started at 18 when I was there. It ended up at 21. You could say that's a rounding error, but it hasn't changed in this government either.

I think that work of providing entrepreneurs or others with leadership opportunities so that they could end up on a board is extremely important. It's all part of the same stream.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Your three minutes is up.

**Hon. K. Kellie Leitch:** I will leave that with you, Minister. It was not my intent to have a diatribe but rather to ask you and the current government to make a sincere investment in that program.

● (0945)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** I rise on a point of order, Madam Chair. The time has been—

**The Chair:** Thank you very much, Rachel. I appreciate that.

I appreciate all of this. I do know the three minutes is up. I kind of find it somewhat condescending. Thank you very much.

We will now go on to Salma for the last three minutes.

**Mrs. Salma Zahid:** Your time has been cut a few times. I have the last three minutes, so is there something you would like to add that you have not been able to?

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** We get to do this work because other people fought for us, mentors who believed in us, women and men and gender-diverse peoples who have gone out of their way and experienced significant hardships so that we have the right to vote, the right to be here; so we can have choices, whether on the careers we pursue or the people we hang out with, or on when, if, and how many babies we have, and with whom. These are hard-won gains.

Especially right now, at this moment in time, we need to double down on our diligence to protect these hard-won gains. We owe it to the courageous silence-breakers who came out through the Me Too, little girls like my nieces and the little girls and the little boys in your lives and the ones questioning their gender identity right now, to keep pushing back against the push-back, and to find ways to be kinder to one another, because this work is hard, and despite our differences, we all want the same outcome. We owe it to them to make sure that, as Canadians, we continue to set a standard for equality and women's empowerment.

A point was made earlier around the transition from Status of Women to Women and Gender Equality. We worked really hard to advocate for the department to become so. I was particularly proud when Bill C-86 passed. I worked really hard on that. I reached out to many who had been working on this for years. The fact that I was able to push it through has a lot to do with the fact that I have a Prime Minister who sees the value in gender equality as the right thing to do, and as the economically advantageous thing to do. The fact that I get to do it is because I have a team around me, in this room and beyond, and colleagues who, in their communities, get that courage and that reassurance from Canadians that we need to do more—that we can't go back. We see what's happening all over the world with women's rights, and we cannot for a moment allow Canada to follow the path of places that are once again questioning the right to having a safe and legal abortion.

A lot of work has been done that we can be proud of, but there is a lot more work ahead of us.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you very much, Minister.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** Finally, with one minute left, we have Irene Mathysen.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Minister, I wonder if you are aware of the bullying experienced by some of the young women who were Daughters of the Vote. How did you respond to that bullying? What actions did you take to support these young women, and will you continue to fund important programs like Daughters of the Vote? Clearly, we need the strength of women in this Parliament.

**Hon. Maryam Monsef:** Yes, to funding them.... I was happy to fund them in 2017 and 2019, and even happier to prepay the next one, because it's really important for young women, and that includes trans women, to come to places like Parliament to see that they belong here and that we need them here.

I've heard both third-hand and direct accounts of folks experiencing bullying. We have shared those challenges with Equal Voice, which shares responsibility for the operations and the management of this.

I'm sure you can appreciate, Irene, if the Liberal government is involved in—

**The Chair:** That's excellent. Thank you very much.

We are now finishing our time, and I want to get into the brief. We will be—

Minister, thank you very much for coming today.

We are going to change the panel very quickly, so we can get directly to work. I will ask members if we could switch it up, and we'll get started in one minute.

● (0945)

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

● (0950)

**The Chair:** Welcome back to the 144th meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

For the second hour, I am pleased to welcome Lisa Smylie, Director General for Research, Results and Delivery in the Results and Delivery Unit; Danielle Bélanger, Director, GBA Plus, Policy and External Relations, joined once again by Nancy and Stéphane.

Thank you very much.

We'll be starting directly with questions today, with seven minutes for the first round. We will turn the floor over to Emmanuella for seven minutes.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Hi. Thank you for being with us today to answer our questions on the main estimates.

I asked the minister about how we're involving men and boys in solutions to the problem of gender-based violence. I'd like to hear from you on whether specific monies are going towards such programs.

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner (Assistant Deputy Minister, Department for Women and Gender Equality):** As the minister said, it was quite an accomplishment to have heard from so many people, men, boys and other folks across the country, when we held many sessions with organizations and others to hear about the experiences and the ways that men and boys can contribute in a positive way to gender equality. Our parliamentary secretary, Terry Duguid, was leading that initiative.

Right now we are looking at the ways we can actually support projects that could help do that. In the past we have supported projects like the Moose Hide Campaign, which has done amazing work with indigenous people across this country in support of the work that young men and women in indigenous communities do to ensure that gender-based violence is something that's top of mind. We continue to support projects like that, which will continue to support gender equality.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Is there any type of funding—whether it's now or in the future, that you foresee—going towards programs that touch kids in schools with regard to gender? Now that the mandate includes gender equality and members of the LGBTQ2+ community, I was wondering if any kind of funding is going towards gender education or sex education that includes LGBTQ2+. We've heard from many that this is not touched on even in schools that teach sex ed and that, basically, there's one type of sex that kids learn about and this is the way. This doesn't help people who are still trying to find themselves and are confused about their gender.

Is there anything going towards things like that?

• (0955)

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** I'll start with an answer, and I may turn it over to Lisa as well to provide some further comments.

Right now we're working with the LGBTQ2 secretariat to determine how the funding we received in the 2019 budget will be spent. A lot of the focus is around building the capacity of organizations that support LGBTQ2 people in Canada. Right now we are just at the beginning of looking at what that funding could look like as we go forward.

**Ms. Lisa Smylie (Director General, Research, Results and Delivery, Results and Delivery Unit, Department for Women and Gender Equality):** In terms of specific funding for things like sex education, that's the purview of the Public Health Agency of Canada. I do happen to know that they have funding for a project that is updating the “Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education”, but I'm not in a position to speak about the specifics of that.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Obviously, we spoke about the women entrepreneurship strategy and how we've been helping females who run businesses. I have a lot of females in my riding who are business owners and who have come to speak to me about this project many times. What kinds of projects will we be funding? What are we looking for from these female entrepreneurs? I know we're generally trying to support women, but what types of companies would have better access to this type of funding?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** As the minister mentioned, there was nearly \$2 billion set aside in budget 2019 for the women's entrepreneurship strategy. The four pillars of that strategy are helping women-led businesses grow—part of that is around skills

development and networking—increasing access to capital, improving access to federal businesses in innovation programming, and enhancing data and knowledge to allow us to actually invest \$9.5 million in collecting data for women entrepreneurs.

From working with our colleagues at ISED, we understand there is a huge demand for the programming and for the money that's going to be used to support women entrepreneurs. It just demonstrates to us that the demand is huge in Canada for women, and we will continue to support them in their efforts.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** How much time do I have left?

**The Chair:** You have two minutes and 10 seconds.

**Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos:** Since Rachel won't be on the panel today, I'll allow her to take the rest of my time.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Thank you.

You mentioned co-operation with ISED, which I know is ongoing with regard to women entrepreneurship, and the women entrepreneurship strategy in particular. Given that this committee has and is continuing to work on issues related to women in the military, could you explain the co-operation between officials in your department and officials at the Department of National Defence?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** That's an excellent question. Thank you.

We had officials from that department join us earlier this week as part of our gender-based violence advisory committee. We had colleagues there explaining and working with the committee members to give an overview of all the work they are doing. They are strong partners with us.

I will turn it over to Danielle, actually, to give us more highlights around the work we've been doing with DND.

**Ms. Danielle Bélanger (Director, GBA Plus, Policy and External Relations, Department for Women and Gender Equality):** Thank you, Nancy.

Under the Canada strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence, DND is one of our key partners. They have increased supports for their members and for families through their enhanced family crisis teams. They'll be providing funding to sexual assault centres that are close to Canadian Armed Forces bases. That service is key, and they're doing an awful lot of work with those families and those members in particular.

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** I would just add that the members of our gender-based violence committee were absolutely incredibly impressed by the work that DND has undertaken to support the members, and really felt that the work they were doing was a model that could be used in other places in the country. They felt very strongly about that work and that it be shared more openly and with other organizations within Canada.

The people who are part of that committee have incredible backgrounds and expertise related to gender-based violence, so DND was very interested in hearing from them just to get a really strong sense on the ground of what their work is doing and how it could impact members of organizations in communities—

• (1000)

**The Chair:** We're now going to move over to Rachael Harder, for seven minutes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** You mentioned that more money would be spent on gathering data. What will be done with that data once it's gathered? What will be accomplished? What goals can we be expecting or what objectives will be met based on that data?

**Ms. Lisa Smylie:** One of the objectives of collecting that data is to make it publicly available. As members of this committee might know, we released the gender results framework and a set of key indicators for measuring progress on gender equality. With budget 2019, we also released a website on the gender results framework that makes the data in the framework public.

The idea or the objective there, the goal, is to provide that data to people working on the front line, so that they can implement evidence-informed programs and policies and folks can track progress that we're making collectively on gender equality.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Right now, this committee is undertaking a study with regard to women in the Canadian Armed Forces. We're hearing from women who have experienced some fairly tragic events. They've been discriminated against based on sex or gender. They've been discriminated against based on family dynamics, their own family dynamics, having children, being a single mom.

What is the department, WAGE, doing in conjunction with the Canadian Armed Forces to make sure there is a positive reality for women, one where women are able to enter the Canadian Armed Forces with the reasonable expectation they will be respected and treated with dignity and honour and not face any type of violence, whether physical, emotional, psychological or verbal? Are there any actions being taken by WAGE in advocating on behalf of these women?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** As we mentioned earlier, we are partners with DND in assisting them with any type of information they might require, whether it's data or research, and providing them with advice and guidance, as well as access to our advisory councils to support the work they are doing.

As I said, they did go through the work they are undertaking. They did acknowledge at that council that this is not the end, that it was very complicated and there's more work to do. They did appreciate the advice of the council and we will continue to work with them as required.

Danielle, do you have anything to add to that?

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Within the last year, a number of articles have come out that have talked about GBA+ and whether it's actually being realized throughout the different departments in the current government.

The current government has come under some scrutiny that GBA+, though being a goal, is actually not being met. What's being done to make sure that GBA+ is actually being engaged in by all

departments across this government and that all policy decisions are being put through a lens by which women and other minority groups are considered in the decisions that are made?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** There's been a tremendous amount of work going on over the last number of years on GBA+. The minister raised a few points. The agency's becoming a department under legislation is one really critical factor, and the budgeting act is another.

The fact that it's mandatory for all Treasury Board submissions and cabinet submissions to have a GBA+ and that this analysis be considered is something that's been really critical for us. Integrating GBA+ in departmental plans is as well.

Another piece that I should mention is that there was a forum that we led in the fall. There were over 1,000 participants who came together over two days to learn from each other, and also to share best practices related to GBA+ to ensure that folks, not only in government, but also across the sectors—in the private sector and organizations—understand the benefits of gender-based analysis and utilizing it. We've heard the concern raised around intersectionality and ensuring that work around rural women, indigenous women and racialized groups is strongly considered as we're doing a GBA+.

We do know that there is continuing improvement and work to be done. We will continue to do that through our training and supports provided to other departments. As the department becomes a lead in this area, we will continue to provide that advice and guidance to other federal departments.

• (1005)

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** In February this year, there was an article released that mentioned an internal survey conducted by Status of Women Canada measuring the implementation of gender-based analysis plus. It found that fewer than half of the departments and agencies have a GBA+ plan in place—so, fewer than half—and that most departments would report that they lacked the internal mechanisms to apply a GBA+ strategy. That's pretty significant. With regard to a government that boasts about implementing GBA+ and making sure that all policy decisions go through this lens, to then find out that fewer than half of the departments are actually implementing a plan and that they lack the infrastructure to do so is alarming to me, and it should be to Canadians. There seems to be a discrepancy there and, I would say, a mistruth being propagated by the current government.

How would you respond to that?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** As I said earlier, I think that the need to continuously improve how we're doing this work is definitely recognized. The agency's becoming a department is one of those steps for sure. Having the capacity to develop a central support function, to have a centre of expertise that will support and continue to support other government departments that are doing this type of work, is critical.

We know that most organizations do have key elements of the GBA+ capacity in place, and we do know that the number of FTEs focusing on GBA+ in departments has increased. However, we do recognize that there is continuing work to be done in that area, and we will continue to support those departments.



Danielle.

Oh, sorry.

**The Chair:** We're over the time.

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** Okay.

**The Chair:** I'm now going to move over to Irene Mathysen for seven minutes.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Thank you for being here. I appreciate the light that you can shed on these many questions.

I want to pick up on the gender-based budgeting plus.

You mentioned, Madam Gardiner, that there is a plan to put in place a centre of expertise. Can you describe that? Is it funded? Is it in place? How do you see the concrete follow-up that I think we're all looking for with regard to GBA+?

**Ms. Danielle Bélanger:** In terms of gender budgeting and GBA+, the government passed the Canadian Gender Budgeting Act, which requires the Minister of Finance to report to Parliament on gender and diversity impacts to all new budget measures.

We also have a gender-results framework, which represents Canada's road map to gender equality. We have also been working very closely with the Centre for Gender, Diversity and Inclusion Statistics. In doing so, within WAGE we have a centre of excellence on GBA+ through which we work very closely with the minister, with the Department of Finance and with Statistics Canada in order to build the evidence base to ensure that a GBA+ is applied to policies, programs and various initiatives.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** There has been some discussion in regard to a program to end gender-based violence. To be quite frank, we've been waiting for it and we're not seeing it. Organizations are concerned that these plans have not been fully developed. When can we expect them and will these plans include concrete outcomes, timelines and deliverables to ensure that women are indeed at the centre of any programming to reduce gender-based violence? As has been mentioned, women's economic security depends on that.

Where are we in regard to a program in terms of gender-based violence?

•(1010)

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** As I said, we just met with our gender-based violence advisory council earlier this week. The strategy for the federal government is to invest over \$200 million in the prevention and addressing of gender-based violence.

Our department, WAGE, has one of the program elements that invests about \$10 million a year. The minister has just announced recently about 60 projects that total over \$50 million in support of that. Organizations from across the country applied for that funding. It's very community-based and focused on figuring out what some of the required pieces are, what programming elements are required and what services are required to be in place on the ground.

Organizations are just starting to put those projects in place, so hopefully we'll continue to see progress on that.

**Ms. Danielle Bélanger:** At WAGE, we have four different initiatives under the strategy. This includes the gender-based violence knowledge centre, which includes an online portal,

knowledge mobilization products, data and research. As well, we do coordination. Then we have governance and reporting under the strategy.

Under the strategy there are six different government departments that have funded initiatives as well as others. We ensure there is coordination across the federal government in terms of reporting on what the different initiatives' outcomes have been.

We also have a youth awareness campaign, which the minister alluded to earlier, and a gender-based violence program, as well as the development of a framework to address GBV in post-secondary institutions.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** On that last point, I'd like to pursue it, first internationally and nationally.

Canada needs to continue its work in defence of sexual and reproductive health and rights—obviously, internationally through development assistance. The money for that program is set to end in less than a year. Given the need to support SRHR objectives, like abortion, contraception and adolescent sexual rights, is the department prepared to ensure that Canada will step up beyond the end of the funding regime with the \$500 million that's needed over the next 10 years? Have you any sense of that?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** That program is not specifically focused in WAGE, so we will get further information and get back to you on that, if that's okay.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** I would appreciate that.

In terms of the national perspective, the minister talked about young people being violated online and taken advantage of, not knowing the reality of bullying, and things like that. In regard to that, Canada accepted and received a recommendation from the UN in 2018—the universal periodic review—to take action and ensure equal access to comprehensive sexuality education throughout the country.

That's a human right. It's a right under the Canadian charter and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Has the federal government looked at the fact that sexual health and reproductive rights are not being taught in jurisdictions across the country? Is this something that concerns you? I'm referring back to the minister's comment about young people and their rights to sexual health and reproductive rights.

**Ms. Lisa Smylie:** In response to a previous question, I had mentioned the fact that the Public Health Agency of Canada is currently funding a project to revise the “Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education”. WAGE is working with the Public Health Agency of Canada in providing technical advice for that project. The project is designed to ensure that at an early age, and throughout their life course as well, folks are provided with adequate information to engage in healthy relationships, healthy sexual relationships.

There's an effort to provide more information on consent to reduce gender-based violence, so we are actively participating in projects to ensure comprehensive sexual health education to support sexual reproductive health.

• (1015)

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

We're now going to move over to Eva.

Eva, you have seven minutes.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll share my time with my colleague, Rachel Bendayan.

I want to thank everyone for joining us today.

We all know that, in most cases of domestic violence, women are the ones who are abused by their partners, men in general. The best way to put an end to this scourge is to include men and boys in our processes.

In the 2019-20 departmental plan, you said that you'll develop a strategy to involve men and boys in promoting gender equality.

How will this strategy be developed?

Ms. Gardiner, can you tell us about it?

[English]

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** The men and boys strategy and the participation of men and boys in the development of the work that we've been doing around gender-based violence has been very important.

As you've noted, there was and is a commitment to continue to work on that piece, looking at how men and boys can be engaged appropriately in ending gender-based violence, and looking at the whole focus on gender equality.

We have had a number of conversations across Canada over the last year, working with organizations and men and boys to give us ideas and suggestions on how that work could be done. We are also now looking at what type of projects we can support that would enable that work to continue, and to build the strategy going forward.

In terms of what the strategy will look like, we are continuing to do that work, and the year 2020 is when the strategy will be fully developed.

As I said, there have been many examples of projects that we've worked on, including the Moose Hide Campaign I spoke about earlier, White Ribbon, and Walking In Her Moccasins. Many

organizations have been very focused on this work over the last little while, and we will continue to work with them.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Can you give us an idea of the funding? Has there been any change compared to last year? Can you provide some more details? How much funding was provided this year?

[English]

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** There was \$1.8 million committed to focus on this particular initiative. Right now, we're working on what type of pilot projects we would be able to support that would continue the work at looking towards building a men and boys strategy. At this point, we are still in that process of figuring out what those projects would be, based on the support and the information we received from the consultations, and working with our partners and stakeholders.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** I have another question. It concerns the front-line organizations that often appear before our committee. Most of the time, they come to complain about the fact that they need more grants.

What does the 2019-20 departmental plan say about grants? Will the funding be recurrent? Will the amounts be the same as before, or have you taken these issues into consideration?

[English]

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** It's an excellent question.

Many of us work very closely with our partners on the ground in communities. I think the thing that we are most proud of at WAGE is that in anything we've been doing over the last few years, we've been doing in consultation with our stakeholders.

We have an ongoing program at the department to support projects in advancing women's economic security, safety and leadership. The minister talked very passionately about building the capacity of women's organizations on the ground. There was \$100 million announced in budget 2018 to continue that work, and there have been announcements of over 250 organizations receiving support to build their capacity to do the work they need to do to establish themselves and to continue to do the work supporting services and the women who come into their centres.

Budget 2019 spoke about and provided \$160 million to continue that work and to continue to support the women's programs specifically. That funding will be rolled out in the coming years to allow that to continue to happen on the ground.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** I now pass the floor to my colleague, Rachel.

• (1020)

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** I was wondering how long you have been working at Status of Women now, or WAGE.

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** I've been with the department for about a year and a half.

Most of my experience has been with ESDC, working on social programming and employment programming.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Perhaps you know, or perhaps you can get advice from your colleagues about this, but I'd be interested to understand some of the organization changes in the transition from Status of Women to WAGE. Did this mean an increase in funding for the department or an increase in support and the number of officials in the department?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** Over the last three years, and since I came into the department, there's definitely been an increase in capacity—about four times the amount of support contributing to the work we are doing. Because we've received a large number of new programming dollars, there has been support to increase the capacity not only in Ottawa, but across the country in our regional offices.

We have also increased support for policy, such as new policy areas and increasing the ability to continue to do the type of key policy work we need to do in support of the new mandate, as well as the mandate of the past Status of Women before we became WAGE.

Lisa's area is also brand new to the department over the last year, I would say.

Lisa, do you want to speak to the research and data piece?

**Ms. Lisa Smylie:** In budget 2018, we got dollars specifically to support data collection and research in support of GBA+ and the gender results framework to ensure that our policies and programs are being informed by evidence and research.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Was that not available previously?

**Ms. Lisa Smylie:** That was not available previously.

**Ms. Rachel Bendayan:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Rachel, thank you very much. Your time is up now.

We are able to go into a next round, or we could vote on these main estimates. I'm going to take it to the committee to decide.

Are there more questions from committee members, or would we like to go to the vote? If we go into another round, we're talking about another 15 to 20 minutes.

I just want to see what the will of the committee is.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** I have a couple of more questions.

**The Chair:** That's not a problem.

I'll do a reduced going-around. We will start off with CPC. We'll go three, three, and then back to Irene to finish off. Is that okay?

We'll do our very best. It will probably be two to three minutes, but I'm looking at what we have done to this point.

You have the floor. Rachael or Rosemarie—who's taking the question?

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I will give our three minutes to Ms. Mathysen.

**The Chair:** You're passing on that? Okay. Doing that is allowed

Go ahead, Irene. You have the floor for three minutes.

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

I have a couple of questions. There was some discussion relating to our study on the violence experienced by women in the military and at work in terms of sexual assault and harassment. To what

degree you have worked with DND with regard to the recommendations of Madame Deschamps?

One of our witnesses indicated that if DND were to pursue the recommendations of Madame Deschamps' report, it would be a very effective kind of approach and resolution to the issue. Are you familiar with the report? Has it come up in your discussions? Does DND seem to be working around that report?

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** I would say that we're familiar with, but not in a position to speak to, the details of the report.

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

There was some discussion, too, about the event coming up in Vancouver in June. It's a conference called Women Deliver. We have heard there's a parallel conference called Feminists Deliver, and it's happening at the same time in response to concerns about a lack of funding for women's organizations to participate.

Has the department ensured that all women's organizations can effectively participate in this conference, which Canada is privileged to host, which has been described as once in a very long time frame?

•(1025)

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** We have been working very closely with Feminists Deliver. Our team has been on the ground with them in Vancouver. We have provided support to them as well. Early on, they did recognize the concerns that you have recognized as well, including the concerns of indigenous women and folks who are working and living in the Downtown Eastside. We will continue to work with them right up until the conference.

Also, we have been working with CanWaCH, an organization that we have provided support for and to, to allow for bursaries for Canadian organizations to participate in the event. Also, in the lead-up to the event, there are a number of local events that will ensure that local organizations and local women are given the opportunity to participate.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Just very quickly, the minister indicated that funding is already in place for a future Daughters of the Vote.... Can we—

**The Chair:** Irene, if you could hold your question, you will still be able to ask it as your last question.

We're going to pass it over to Bob for his three minutes and then we'll come back to you for your final question. You've used Rachael's three minutes.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** Okay.

**The Chair:** Bob, you get the floor for three minutes.

**Mr. Bob Bratina:** My question is about the relationship in the budgeting process with StatsCan. Are you satisfied with the available data to make good decisions on budget allocations? Moving forward, how do you work with StatsCan to get the information you need?

**Ms. Lisa Smylie:** There's always more that we can do. Certainly we have a great working relationship with Statistics Canada. We work very closely together to make sure that we're aware of the needs of those working on the front lines of other levels of government, of our own departments, in terms of data, and to make those data available.

Moving forward, with Statistics Canada we are going to continue to work closely with the end-users of data, again to identify their needs and make sure that we're targeting our data and research dollars to fill those knowledge gaps.

**Mr. Bob Bratina:** We have a number of things related to that in the departmental plan. It says the Department for Women and Gender Equality will “undertake and fund research...to fill existing gaps in knowledge”. Theoretically, that relates to the information coming down from StatsCan.

**Ms. Lisa Smylie:** That's correct. For example, through our gender-based violence strategy, we have funding that we send to StatsCan to work on three new national surveys to fill data gaps on gender-based violence. We also have funding that goes to Statistics Canada to help fill data gaps on the gender results framework, from a national perspective.

**Mr. Bob Bratina:** Thanks, Chair.

**The Chair:** I'll pass it over to Irene for her last question.

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** It was connected to Daughters of the Vote. I was interested in how future funding will be secured and how the department will make sure that the young women who participate feel safe, have a full program and actually come out of it wanting to be parliamentarians.

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** That's an excellent point. The project the minister spoke about is a project we have with them. It is not just a one-year project. It is a three-year project. We're able to support the funding of the initiative in future years. That's an agreement we have with Equal Voice.

We are working and continue to work with Equal Voice to ensure that the programming it puts in place takes into account any of the concerns that may have been raised, and that it is addressing those concerns but also putting in place any type of training or opportunities that young women would need to participate fully in the initiative.

It is very positive. We've also received very positive feedback on the event and the experiences of many of the young people who have participated. We feel that it's a very important project we will continue to support.

● (1030)

**Ms. Irene Mathysen:** I have one quick question, and this has to do with our core concern with regard to the economic security of women. We know that women cannot organize their lives, particularly if they have a family, if they're alone raising a family.... Have you collaborated or does the department collaborate with other departments in regard to the national housing strategy? There are figures about how sometime in the future there will be houses—but we need houses now. Women are under-housed and they can't manage.

Secondly, and also as important, is child care. The minister talked about 40,000 spaces, but we need far more. Are there plans in place to create those spaces? How will you ensure that they are affordable? The cost of \$1,200 a month is not affordable for a family, and certainly not for a single mom trying to manage.

**Ms. Nancy Gardiner:** We work very closely with other departments in creating an environment that increases women's economic security. As I said, I spent most of my career working at ESDC on programming that supports increasing women's access to skilled trades, pilot programming in labour market initiatives, as well as youth programming. We've heard loud and clear the importance of economic security. We've done some consultations and work with our indigenous partners. We have an indigenous women's circle where we're heard very clearly as well...some of the responses to MMIWG will be tied to the economic security of women.

**The Chair:** We have now finished our round of questioning. Are all members ready to go to the vote on these estimates?

DEPARTMENT FOR WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$44,621,369

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....\$55,073,977

Vote 10—Advancing Gender Equality.....\$10,000,000

(Votes 1, 5, and 10 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the votes on the main estimates to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Just as a reminder, the next meeting will be on Tuesday, May 28, 2019, continuing the committee's study on the treatment of women within the Department of National Defence.

On behalf of the committee I would like to thank Danielle, Stéphane, Nancy and Lisa for joining us today. Have a good day.

Today's meeting is adjourned.







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