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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Thursday, March 10, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Thursday, March 10, 2016

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** All right. Seeing as how it's 3:30 p.m., I'll call the meeting to order.

It is again a great pleasure to have back with us Minister Hajdu, along with Ms. Ballantyne, Ms. Savoie, and Ms. Lapointe, members of the department of the Status of Women.

We are excited that you're here to discuss with us today our supplementary and main estimates. I believe the minister has some opening remarks.

I would turn it over to you.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu (Minister of Status of Women):** Thank you so much, Madam Chair, and thank you for allowing me to come on such short notice.

I'm thrilled to be able to be here. I've brought with me my incredible team from Status of Women to answer the really difficult questions, as they are training me up.

Without further ado, I'll get started.

Thank you for the invitation to appear before this committee on the Status of Women Canada's main estimates, our report on plans and priorities for the fiscal year 2016-17, and the supplementary estimates (C) for the fiscal year 2015-16. It's a pleasure to be here again.

Joining me today are Meena Ballantyne, head of the Status of Women of Canada; Linda Savoie, the senior director general for the women's program; and Anik Lapointe, the chief financial officer and the director of corporate services.

First I'll talk about the main estimates for 2016-17. The main estimates provide Status of Women Canada with \$31.7 million to carry out its work, which is outlined in more detail in the 2016-17 report on plans and priorities. This \$31.7 million represents 0.01%—I want to highlight that—of the approximate \$288 billion in overall total government spending. In government terms, it's essentially like five bucks.

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

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Sorry, but I'm going to go a little off script here. I actually compare the Status of Women agency to running a homeless shelter. It's in the same category, it really is, in terms of funding. We do an incredible amount with very little money, and I want to acknowledge the incredible work they do on such a small budget.

Before I expand on the priorities set out in the RPP, I would like to highlight the fact that the government is reviewing its reporting framework to ensure that it meaningfully allows Parliament and Canadians to monitor our progress in meeting our commitments.

The five priorities in the RPP support the government's agenda for advancing equality between women and men and also my mandate commitments, which are preventing and addressing violence against women and girls, preventing and addressing violence against indigenous women and girls, strengthening the gender-based analysis plus implementation, increasing the representation of women in leadership roles, and promoting women's economic security and prosperity. These are all goals that I'm sure you're very familiar with.

I'd now like to highlight some of our work in each of these areas.

Let's talk about addressing violence against women and girls.

As you know, I've been mandated to lead the development of a comprehensive federal strategy on gender-based violence, aligned with existing provincial and territorial strategies. I'm currently engaging with my colleagues across federal portfolios and with key stakeholders across the country, including provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women, as well as experts and advocates. I will be meeting with my international counterparts next week at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women—some of you are attending—to get a better sense of their violence prevention strategies and what works and what doesn't work across the globe. This engagement process we're undergoing will be used to identify key gaps and opportunities for action to develop a federal strategy on violence against women and girls.

We're also working on ending violence against indigenous women and girls. As you are aware, the agency is playing a key role in supporting the national inquiry into murdered and missing indigenous women and girls and is working closely with the Minister of Indigenous Affairs and the Minister of Justice and their departments.

I was part of the pre-inquiry design process, and the level of engagement across Canada was incredibly encouraging. We heard from nearly 2,000 individuals in the 18 pre-inquiry design meetings that were held from coast to coast to coast, but we also heard from well over 4,000 other individuals, both on social media and through the inquiry website, where they provided their input via an online survey. We were really encouraged by the tremendous passion both of the people coming in person and of those submitting their thoughts online.

What we've heard very clearly is that we need to act now and not wait until the inquiry is completed. There are a number of things that we can do now and things that we have been doing that we can sustain. Over the coming year, the agency will provide funding and professional assistance to organizations for projects designed to support indigenous women and girls in engaging with their communities to address the root causes of violence. We will continue to act by investing in promising practices that can help prevent violence against indigenous women and girls.

We are also looking at advancing women in leadership roles. We're going to invest resources strategically to support projects that help increase women's representation in leadership positions. I am very passionate about this particular aspect of my mandate, because I believe that when we have women who are determining the faces and structures of our governance, our organizations, and our businesses, it in fact leads to more equality.

• (1535)

A few weeks ago, I announced a new call for proposals, inviting organizations to propose projects that will empower women in two different ways. The first will identify projects that engage indigenous women and strengthen the role they play in their communities, and the second involves projects to empower women for political or community action. We've heard a lot incidentally from civic partners, municipalities, that really want to work on engaging more women at the municipal level of politics, so this is an example.

We will continue to work closely with our federal partners toward diversity in Governor in Council appointments, and continue efforts to advance gender balance on Canadian boards.

The government has just announced a new, rigorous approach for selecting high-quality candidates to fill 1,500 Governor in Council appointments on commissions, boards, crown corporations, agencies, and tribunals across the country, and this new merit-based selection process will result in candidates who truly reflect Canada's diversity. Again, that will strengthen the organizations and the divisions that determine what Canada's policies look like.

The third priority supports women's economic security and prosperity. The agency will continue to explore economic opportunities for women by engaging key stakeholders to address women's under-representation in key sectors, such as the skilled trades, which is very important. As you know, we have extremely low rates of women participating in sometimes quite lucrative careers. I see one woman right there who could speak quite eloquently about that.

The Government of Canada is also committed to addressing the issue of the wage gap, which as you know is worsening. While women have made significant progress on a number of fronts,

including educational attainment and labour force participation, there is definitely room for improvement. We will work with the provinces, territories, and others to use all the levers to address the wage gap in Canada.

We are also working at implementing gender-based analysis, and you know that we saw the Auditor General's report in February, which indicated that although we had made some progress, we had a long way to go in applying GBA. We're continuing to collaborate with our federal partners to improve implementation of GBA, and we're exploring ways that we can better monitor and report on its implementation, and recognize that departments are accountable for using this.

Status of Women Canada will also continue supporting our federal organizations across various sectors to ensure that gender considerations are being integrated into decisions on federal initiatives through training, tools, and support.

Status of Women Canada will also continue to work internationally. Next week, I'll be leading Canada's delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York, where Canada will be promoting the need to support women and girls globally, and advance women's rights as human rights.

Within Canada, we'll continue to engage very actively with the federal-provincial-territorial forum of ministers responsible for the status of women, and I really look forward to our meeting this June, where we will be discussing violence against women, including violence against indigenous women and girls, the gender wage gap, and gender-based analysis.

As you can see, we're planning to target our \$31.7 million to clearly advance gender equality in Canada, and I know that I can count on your support toward our mutual goal.

[Translation]

Madam Chair, as you can see from the initiatives I have described today, we are very much looking forward to the year ahead and the progress we can make for women and girls in Canada.

[English]

Thank you, *merci*, and I'll add *meegwetch*.

I will now be happy to answer your questions, and by the way, *meegwetch* for those of you who are not from Ontario is thank you in Ojibwa.

**The Chair:** I have Ojibwa in my riding.

Thank you very much, Minister Hajdu.

Now we'll begin our questioning on the main and supplementary estimates with our usual seven minutes, starting with my Liberal colleagues.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Thank you, *meegwetch*, and thank you for all you're doing. It's pretty amazing.

I have to tell you, on Tuesday, I think all of us were so impressed with everything that happened. It was one of those days where I went home and was just on cloud nine.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I was comparing it to the wedding I never had.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** One of the things we're going to be looking at, our first study, is violence in the lives of women and girls, and part of that is the cyber-bullying. How much in the way of resources is going into that from your ministry right now?

• (1540)

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne (Head of Agency, Status of Women Canada):** I'll start, and Linda can expand.

We allocate resources to leave them flexible for opportunities, such as the cyber-bullying project, so we have invested I think a couple of million dollars.

**Ms. Linda Savoie (Senior Director General, Women's Program and Regional Operations Directorate, Status of Women Canada):** Two million to three million....

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** That's \$2 million to \$3 million over the last year or two.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** That's in multi-year projects over two years.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** We know that this is an emerging issue. This is something that we worked on with some of the groups to generate some momentum behind it. This is one of the emerging issues that we can get on the radar and get people to talk about, which is one of the things we do with our project funding and grants and contributions.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I can see your having a role to play in the education part of it.

Jumping over to gender-based analysis, one of the things that, actually, Marilyn and I were talking about was the fact that, as members of Parliament, we make decisions based on economic impact and environmental impact. We really need to also be looking at that from a gender perspective. We wonder if you think it would be helpful if our committee brought forward a motion that encourages MPs and their staff to do the gender-based analysis on your website.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I think that's a great idea. I wonder how many people around here, so far, have done GBA on the website.

Well, there you go.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** My challenge to the committee was going to be—

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** That would be a great thing to commit to doing before your next meeting. It isn't a very long exercise. It shouldn't take you more than 20 minutes to half an hour, I would say, at the outset. Maybe a little bit longer...?

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** Yes. It may take just a little bit longer, a couple of hours.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I think it would be a great thing for you to do, probably before you put the motion forward, so that you can get a sense of the time. Anything we can do to encourage our colleagues to reflect on the lens they're making their decision from...right?

We all carry with us these inherent biases and we all work on them. This isn't to say that anyone is doing this from a nefarious place. We are raised in a certain way. We're acculturated in a certain way. We have, sometimes, invisible biases that we're unaware of.

The GBA tool is really useful for taking a look at ourselves and our own biases, and how that influences how we're making decisions. I think it's a useful thing for all parliamentarians, not only in the area of gender equality but also in the area of diversity and inclusion. I think working on getting our colleagues to take the time to do that would be excellent.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I was going to bring a motion today, but I thought, I can't very well encourage everyone else to do it if I haven't done it myself.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Thank you for that.

The other thing is that I have reached out as well to my cabinet colleagues to encourage gender analysis as they move forward in their commitments and their mandate. It is part of my mandate to work with them, especially on memorandums to cabinet to make sure those memorandums to cabinet have a full gender-based analysis conducted. I will continue to work with my colleagues, including their central agencies, to ensure that GBA is applied. This is a work in progress, but I think one way to start that conversation is definitely to encourage people to take the GBA. There are a variety of mechanisms.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Especially as policy-makers, right?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely.

I think you raise a really important point. That's why I think this committee is so important. The policies that we implement are often shaped by our world view, so it's really important for us to reflect on how any policy we create will affect other areas, other groups of people that we may not have any real inherent knowledge of. That's, I think, our responsibility as parliamentarians.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm sharing my time with Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** I thought I was farther down the list, but that's okay.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I don't have the list. Someone took my list away. I don't have it in front of me.

**The Chair:** Ms. Nassif, you have the floor.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Thank you, Madam Chair.

Maybe the minister will be able to answer my question. It's about the budgetary expenses.

Year over year we have seen an increase in the annual budgetary expenses, which is great for our mandate as long as we can deliver efficiently. However, I was wondering if you are able to comment on provincial contributions to similar initiatives. In the plan, it was outlined that integrated provincial and territorial efforts, or at least combined efforts, are important.

Have intergovernmental initiatives complemented each other well? Are you optimistic about the increase in specific efforts?

• (1545)

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** Sorry, I hope I understand your question. You're talking about the intergovernmental...?

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Yes.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** As the minister was saying about the FPT meeting....

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I have been very encouraged, in the short time I have been minister, to be able to connect with the majority, if not all, of my colleagues across the country, either by telephone or in person. As a matter of fact, this morning I met with Caroline Cochrane from the Northwest Territories. She is a brand new MP and minister of the status of women. Because their Parliament is so small, she also holds many other portfolios, but she was very keen to meet with us to talk about the relationship between NWT and the federal government. We talked about many of the things that gender equality intersects with, things like housing, homelessness, access to education, the economic security of women, and the sparsity of opportunity for many women in the Northwest Territories.

We will be moving forward in that vein, and we have our first FPT meeting in June face to face. We have had a teleconference to plan the agenda. I am really excited to work with all of my colleagues. We think that even some of the provinces that have been less focused on this issue are sending delegates. We have, if not the minister, a delegate of the minister. I am very excited about the June meeting. It is going to be very important as we move forward with this federal strategy in particular, but also in terms of sharing best practices and evidence. As they are planning or implementing programs, as they are gaining all the research and evidence from their expenditures on gender equality, we can gain the knowledge from their efforts, and vice versa. We can share with them things that we have done that have worked or have shown promise, or things that have not shown promise. That is the benefit of collaborating so closely.

In terms of the murdered and missing indigenous women, as you know, we had a provincial round table, and we were so encouraged to get a commitment to full participation by all the provinces and territories. This was extremely critical because many of the issues that families were raising as significant issues that they believe either led to the disappearance or murder of their daughter, or stopped fulsome investigation, were really in the control of provinces—things like child protection and in some case policing. It is a very important component.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** We are going to move now to the Conservatives with Ms. Vecchio for seven minutes, plus one.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Thank you very much, once again, for being here, and congratula-

tions on having such a successful International Women's Day. The first question I am going to ask is very specific to the budgets and upcoming future budgets. I noted that in 2017-18 there is a decrease of \$687,869. Estimating from 2016-17 and then going down to the future years shows that in the future there is a decrease in the budget. Maybe you can explain more to me. I recognize that, as some of these programs wrap up, these are some of the budgetary measures for that, but we are forecasting that there will be new projects. I am wondering why we have a decrease of almost \$700,000 in that budget.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I am going to let the head of my agency take that.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** You might have seen that every year we have some money coming from other departments for a couple of years. It is a combination of those, plus we deferred some funding. We reprofiled some funding because 2015-16 was an election year and we knew that with the minister coming we wouldn't be able to spend the money, so instead of having it lapse and go back into the consolidated revenue fund, we deferred it until the minister had time to look at the priorities and decide where the funding should go. We reprofiled some of the grants and contributions funding over two years.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Okay.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** By 2018-19 that falls off, so it is not a real reduction.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** It is not a decrease. That's fantastic. Thank you very much for explaining that.

We have had a lot of uptake in our community. People are very encouraged by the new programs that have come out for empowering women, both the first and second programs. I am just wondering, for my own background, what our ceilings are. There isn't a lot of information about how much a group or not-for-profit organization can receive for this. Is it matching funding? Can you give me a little more detail on that? Are we looking at a \$50,000 cap, or a \$500,000 cap? Those are the sorts of issues that I would like to discuss. Are matching funds going to be expected from the applicant?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Well, that is a good guess. The cap is \$500,000, and there will not be an expectation of matching funds. From my perspective, as someone who has run an NGO, I think that is a really good thing because if you are running a small or even a medium-sized not-for-profit, often times you are already begging, borrowing, and stealing to meet your operating budget, and you are automatically excluded from things that require a matching fund. I am very thrilled that this is the way it is structured.

In terms of International Women's Day, I have heard a couple of compliments. I want to compliment all of you as well because I know that you were all out there. In particular, my critics were out there, participating with me, celebrating women, and highlighting the need to do more. Before I get any more compliments, this was really a group effort, so thank you very much.

• (1550)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Fantastic. As we carry on with this, I am looking at some of the priorities. I know that we have done some studies on violence against women, and we must continue to do those studies, but looking at some of our previous studies.... Have there been programs that have wrapped up that we have reports on from last year? As we move forward, I do have some studies from 2015. Have the reports been put in, and has something been activated because of those reports? Is there any action taken on those reports received from 2015?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** We collect data for two reasons. First, we want to know whether a particular approach is effective or not and whether we want to continue down that path. Sometimes it's not clear immediately; sometimes it takes a couple of different versions of it, or tweaks to it.

Second, we provide our data throughout government. We also do studies so that we can provide information to our colleagues in different departments and to our provincial and territorial partners. As minister, if I saw a trend that a specific approach was not successful year after year, then I would say we should try something else.

Sometimes it's very difficult to apply what we've learned in one community to another community. For example, what might be successful in the Northwest Territories might be a terrible plan for Toronto. We have to be really careful that we're not applying the lessons that we learned from one area to a completely different area. I have a lot of faith in my department and Linda's ability to do that.

Did you want to add a couple of words, Linda?

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** Sure. The information we get is not simply derived from projects. It is also influenced by some of the work that's been done in this committee and identified as best practices. We are not the only holders of levers to implement these. The work done to identify the best practices is implemented most of the time in other departments. They would also have things they learned to share with the greater collective.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** There are two very different groups that we're looking at, the women off and on reserves. I think the work we're doing there is really important. We recognize all the work that you have done in your community. Is there anything that you would like us to detail when we're looking at the violence against women?

Based on your expertise and your recent work, is there anything we should focus on when we study this in committee?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I think we talked about a few different roads that you might go down. It is important to look at the experiences that young women are having such as cyber-bullying and some of the problems arising from the use of social media. That's something that I'm curious about, and I know we don't have a lot of research on it. I hope your experts will be able to shed some light on this for us. I think that's very important.

Although you're right that there are distinct groups of women we prioritize, there is going to be overlap. Indigenous young girls are experiencing the same types of social media bullying and cyber-bullying as non-indigenous girls. So there is some overlap in the work we're doing. Our young girls are not talking about it all that much, yet we know that it's happening and sometimes at astronomical rates. Young women are growing up thinking this is a normal experience. It troubles me that often they're not sharing these experiences with their parents and they're not talking about the bullying they receive online. This can be an extremely isolating experience for young women. I would really like to focus on this issue.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes, absolutely.

**The Chair:** Now we're going to turn to Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you, Chair, and my thanks to the minister for her generosity in including me and the opposition leader in your celebration on Tuesday night. It was great to be on the stage with you.

I'm going to talk mostly about political priorities. I think that's fair, because I'm not sure we have you for the whole panel, is that right?

**The Chair:** She's here for the first hour.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Okay, good.

I want to talk about the commitment within your mandate to the federal gender-violence strategy and action plan. Can you describe in more detail what funds are going to be used by the agency to support you in carrying out that mandate and where that fits?

• (1555)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** We don't have a special pot of money we're asking for that will be dedicated. We're going to use existing internal funds to do the work. To develop the strategy it will be about pulling the key stakeholders together. I am meeting with colleagues across the country and my ministerial colleagues in Parliament. I have a meeting in the next couple of weeks with some of the significant ministers who have portfolios with these issues so we can start to brainstorm what the structure of this project will look like.

I think we need to make sure we have a broad engagement strategy, just as we're doing with the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls. Perhaps it might not be to the same level where we're hearing family members and that kind of thing, but we must make sure that for all of the work that has been done at the ground level those leaders have an opportunity to weigh in. They are representing a broad group of stakeholders.

I met for example with the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters. They've done a lot of great work. This has been a passion of theirs for years. Although the name is about sheltering, don't let that fool you. They're focused on violence against women, and they've done some very good work. I'm excited to work with people like Lise who have stakeholders from all across the country who are working at the grassroots level.

From my perspective this needs to be inclusive. We need to make sure we're building on the knowledge we already have. In terms of the money, we have the money built into the budget for that.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** It's a high political priority, and you're going to build on the work that's been done already, which makes it possible to do it without additional budget.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** That's right.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Excellent. Thank you.

For gender-based analysis, can you tell us what you are committing in funds that is going to get us a different answer the next time the Auditor General looks at implementation? I think there's probably broad agreement around the table that we haven't come as far as we would like to have come. I'm glad our committee is going to be looking at this because we want there to be a different outcome. What's going to be different next time, and what budget commitments are you making that will get us where we...?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I think there are a couple of things that are different.

One thing is that right now we're planning on using our existing resources, but I think we're planning on doing this a little differently. We have incredibly strong leadership on this issue. There is an expectation from our Prime Minister that cabinet ministers work with me on ensuring that GBA occurs. There's a climate now around gender equality, and you may have felt this in your own work. This isn't going away. This isn't a flash in the pan. This isn't something we add on as a nicety at the end. This is a mandate, and it's interwoven in my mandate that I must work with all of my colleagues. Right now we're working out the accountability frameworks as a government so we can come back to you and show you the outcome measures that we'll be monitoring and be accountable for to you and to Canadians in terms of those mandate letters. Those mandate letters are public, and that's another significant feature that I think will drive momentum. Ministers know they're accountable for producing quality work that reflects gender-based analysis. I think a big part of a commitment to equality is setting the tone and the leadership that needs to happen in order to do this.

Right now we are looking at our resources. We don't want to be under-resourced. We're anticipating a greater demand because there's a greater demand from our Prime Minister that this happens. We will evaluate as we go along to see if we have adequate resources. At this point we're going to work with what we have.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thanks.

With the murdered and missing indigenous women inquiry, you've identified that there are actions you've found that do not need to wait for an inquiry and things you can act on now. Are those built into your budget needs? We want to make sure you're not hamstrung in being able to implement solutions early.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** As my colleague said earlier, some of the work we do provides recommendations and actions to other agencies that have far greater fiscal capacity to act. I look toward our infrastructure spend. Those are the kinds of things on a broad scale that will start to work on alleviating not just violence, but poverty and economic disparity, and improve people's opportunity to gain education.

I must say, working on the ground, if people don't have a safe place to live then they can't focus on the next step. They can't focus on getting a job. They can't focus on... In some cases they don't even have clothes for the next day. You can't keep your clothes because you have no place to keep them, and they're being stolen.

These kinds of basic needs are what we're talking about when we're talking about social infrastructure, and it's going to be critical in terms of moving forward on this file and many of my colleagues' files. As well we have a number of projects that work on looking at ways to work with women who have experienced violence, but more importantly to work with young women and girls to start to prevent the violence that's happening. We are very focused, and we're expanding our scope to include work with young men and boys because we know that we have focused for so long on young women and girls that we've almost forgotten to have the conversation with young men and boys about their responsibility to end gender-based violence.

These are some of the actions we can take right now. I'm excited about the potential in terms of supporting indigenous communities to have a better quality of life and how that will impact on many of the social conditions we see across those communities.

• (1600)

**The Chair:** All right, very good.

Now we're back to Ms. Ludwig who I understand is sharing her time with Ms. Sahota.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** I am. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Again, thanks to all of you for attending. I'm very pleased to hear about the directions we're going in.

My questions are around funding allocations. You've identified a couple of priority areas, but what about this in terms of geographic regions in Canada? Will there be different funding priorities? Will it be allocated fairly and transparently across the country? Or will it be based on the priority sectors?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** We do have some regional representation in the country, which is working with the various parts of the country. We look at the balance over three years for where funding has gone so that we can actually make sure it is equitable, but we don't necessarily assess each project on a regional basis. What we're really trying to do is make sure that over time we're not favouring Atlantic Canada, say, or Alberta, or for that matter, Ontario, and that over time it does balance out.



We are very well supported by these incredibly hard-working Status of Women employees, who are out in the country and supporting grassroots work through grant management and development.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** That's great. Thank you.

Sometimes we'll read or hear in the media that the rate of violence against women and girls has increased or decreased, but I've often found that the data collection is not consistent. If it's just based on reporting, we know from research that the number of people who actually report is a poor reflection of the actual incidence. If we look at the number of people who are actually convicted, that's significantly lower. Is that one of your priorities in terms of the policing side, the reporting side, and the outcomes as well?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely, and without data, it's very hard. With the end of the long-form census, we've had a real data lapse. We're really excited about bringing back a tool that will enhance our ability to monitor this more closely.

But we also had, a long time ago—maybe we can speak about it—a specific survey that was very broad and very comprehensive. It looked at rates of violence against women. It was on self-reported rates of violence, but it was very comprehensive. We haven't had any data since then.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** Yes, that was in the nineties, and it was the last time that there was a very comprehensive survey done on violence against women.

Since then, as the minister has said, Stats Can has stepped in and has done its victimization survey on self-reported and police-reported cases. We are trying to work with Stats Canada to beef that up and ask them more questions. We're going to use some of the funding for that as well.

Other countries have done comprehensive surveys, which we haven't done here since the early nineties.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** I have one last point. Is there a caution, then, in comparing the data in 2016, let's say, to data from the 1990s? We hope people are much more empowered today to come forward than they were in the 1990s.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** You get a baseline in the nineties, but you're absolutely right that things have changed. The methodology of data collection, more awareness, and the increased rates of reporting—because people are more empowered and more aware—are all factors there. This is part of the gender violence strategy, this data piece, and how important this is to know in regard to whether the rates are actually going up or down, and if you are making a difference with your prevention efforts.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** That may very well become a recommendation, that we need better data, accurate data, and regular data.

In my previous life in public health in working on substance use, we conducted our own regional substance use survey with students. It was invaluable. When it was cancelled, it was a huge loss because we couldn't drill down to our own specific area. The loss of that kind of very specific data was a real loss to the programming, quite frankly, because we didn't know anymore.

It's the same with this. From my perspective, that would be something we'll be advocating for, that we have good data with which not just to set baselines but to assess our progress over the years.

• (1605)

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** Thank you.

Ruby.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.):** Hello, Minister, and thanks to you and everyone on the panel for joining us today.

I'm curious as to how the action plan for women entrepreneurs works. I know that there's been an increase in that department, but I'm not even aware of how the funds were allocated previously and how this increase will benefit this program. From the key elements, it seems like.... Does it have to be a larger established organization, or can it be start-ups as well? How do people get funding, how does it get allocated, and how do people find out and get involved?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I'm going to let Meena Ballantyne take this as the action plan for women entrepreneurs predates me.

**Ms. Meena Ballantyne:** In terms of the main estimates and the RPP, we work with Industry Canada, or Innovation, Science and Economic Development now, as well as Global Affairs on the action plan for women entrepreneurs.

We provide some funding to women entrepreneurs and we also have done ministerial-led trade missions and promotional campaigns to encourage women to go into entrepreneurship because we know that is part of the economic security pillar of the priorities that we're doing, and we know that women entrepreneurs are looking for tools and networks and mentors.

In budget 2015 we got \$350,000; \$200,000 of it was in grants and contributions funding, and \$150,000 was in O and M. We've deferred some of that grants and contributions funding so the minister can decide on what the priorities for women entrepreneurs might be, moving forward. But the money was for 2015-16, and we've spent it.

We had a big women entrepreneurs forum last March where 350 women entrepreneurs came from across the country. We had a promotional campaign, which is still on our website, which offers resources and tools to women entrepreneurs, and we had the trade mission.

But that's not enough. The money from Industry Canada, or ISED now, and from Global Affairs, which has a business unit that runs the women in international trade program, does a lot of work, and they have a lot more money to invest in this priority.

We also have projects under the pillar of economic security where we have funded women entrepreneurs as well.

**Ms. Linda Savoie:** As a preface to all this, the action plan for women entrepreneurs brought together a number of initiatives that were in existence in a range of departments. One of the very big pieces was a piece for the Business Development Bank of Canada that had \$700 million of funds that they were going to make available over three years to finance women-owned businesses.

The tiny part that Status of Women Canada has is miniscule in the context of the action plan.

This being said, Status of Women Canada plays an important role. There is an interdepartmental committee where we make sure that the voice of women business owners is heard across the various business development and economic agencies.

To give a bit of momentum to this we have had some calls for proposals where we specifically sought projects that explored the barriers for women business owners. All these projects started in maybe the last 18 months or so, so they're in their fairly early phases but we hope the information this will bring to light will be useful to our colleagues in the economic development agencies and they can adapt and adjust their programs, because that's where the money is.

**The Chair:** That's excellent.

Now we'll move over to Ms. Harder.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** Very quickly, I have a question for clarification, but I also have a series of other questions.

I would ask for succinct answers; that would be really helpful for me so I can get through all my questions.

First, the comment was made that the long-form census somehow helps us with regard to the violence against women question. Am I misunderstanding or is that the statement, and could you help me understand why that would be?

• (1610)

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** From my perspective the long-form census provides a lot of information about the status of people's wellness and health, their socio-economic conditions, their living conditions, and a number of factors that are going to interplay with women's equality.

I think the more data you have about the wellness of people, and you can actually then desegregate it by gender.... It gives us a sense of things across the country with regional comparators of how women are doing in a number of ways. The more data you have, the more you can actually break it apart.

For example, if you're looking at housing security, you can actually break that apart and say that women from 24 to 35 who live in the Northwest Territories have experienced extreme housing insecurity. Another example would be seeing a real underemployment of women who are 16 to 24, particularly in the Alberta region. You can also look at what kinds of sectors people are employed in.

All of that data gives us a better snapshot on how women are doing across all of our various mandates and portfolios. Of course, those things intersect with vulnerability. As people are more economically secure in a better housing situation, for example, they

may still experience domestic violence, but they most likely will not experience it in a prolonged way. They will have more assets to be able to move on in their lives.

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

I think with that we run the risk of assuming causality rather than association, so I think we just have to be careful of that going forward.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Can I just respond to that?

I actually disagree. There's quite a bit of research on the social determinants of health, which clearly have linked things like housing, economic success, and education to people's health and wellness outcomes, so I'm very confident that those things are linked.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I would agree with you there. Definitely that can be the case. I guess, without asking the question specifically of the same individual, you cannot assume causality. All you have is an equation for association.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Well, we'll leave that up to the researchers to sort out.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Okay.

Anyway, in the documents we were given, one of the statements that was made was that this would be the last report that would be given or delivered in this way, and that future reports would lend greater transparency and accountability. I'm just wondering if you can briefly help me understand what future reports will look like and whether or not it's then possible to track the year-to-year efficiency and effectiveness of this department.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely. As we move forward in this new government, what we really want to do is make sure that the money we're spending shows concrete results for Canadians and that we can prove not just outputs but outcomes. So if you know anything about evaluation—which it sounds like you know a little bit about—there are two things we measure: outputs, which are things like reports, documents, and research; and then outcomes. What we really want to do is make sure that we're evaluating the money we're spending, regardless of what ministry or division it is, through the lens of outcomes.

Also, this is more of a longitudinal approach. You're not going to be able to say that you spent this money in May and by September gender-based violence had gone down, but what we want to do is make sure we are trending in the appropriate direction.

We are working right now on creating our tools. The Prime Minister and the government have been very clear that we are all accountable, not just to our mandate but in terms of the efficiency of our budgets. We'll be coming back to you as we develop the tools so that you can take a look.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** One of the risks that was identified in the report we were given was this, "Given its broad mandate and the demand for its program and policy interventions, SWC may be perceived as not meeting/responding to stakeholder expectations."

I think, really, what this is getting at is that it's possible that this department could exist and not actually make a real difference. I'm just wondering how, over this next mandate of yours, you'll be ensuring that we have measurable outcomes so that we know that we're achieving something.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** That's something we're working on right now with our department. We're in the process of determining what, exactly, we're going to measure that will demonstrate that we have effectiveness. We know we do have a very limited lever, if you will, to influence widespread societal change, but we will be looking at concrete measurements that will demonstrate that we're making progress.

They may be things we can control, like an increase in number of departments that are actually GBA-trained or looking at the efficacy of using GBA for our memorandums to cabinet and whether or not they're done in a fulsome way. I'm just shooting these ideas out, but we'll be looking for specific indicators that we have control over, understanding that some of the work we do will contribute to better outcomes in other departments.

• (1615)

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Over to you, Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thank you very much. I really appreciate the agency, and your time in coming to see us again.

I want to focus on the report on plans and priorities. I'll start with an issue that relates to both gender-based violence and promoting economic security, and that's your co-operation with the infrastructure minister.

I've met with a number of groups in my riding, both women's centres and centres for men who were perpetrators of domestic violence to become educated to try to end the practice. I was blown away by how often they cited the need for public transit in small communities for people to access their services.

Have you been working with the infrastructure minister to help people access this valuable social infrastructure?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** In a very broad sense, given that it's not specifically in my mandate to influence public transit, but certainly I am very vocal about the need for supports that will move marginalized populations, for example, men who are living in precarious ways—whether or not they've been perpetrators—and that will enhance efficacy of communities.

That's something I am passionate about. In fact, I think the more we can support vulnerable populations, the more we have better outcomes, economically and socially, in our country.

More specifically, the work I've been doing with Minister Sohi and Minister Duclos is around that mandated piece in my mandate that speaks to enhancing women's shelters and transitional homes and making sure we have access for women who are fleeing domestic violence.

You raise an excellent point and it echoes what I've responded to in other questions. In order for us to make movement on things like

gender-based violence, we have to support the wellness of the entire community. I thank you for noticing that.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Certainly while we're on the mandate of transition shelters, which was more explicitly referred to, I noticed some of the biggest detractors of violence against women are women's resource centres in my community, and I'm sure across the country as well. When I spoke to some of the members who run those facilities, they sometimes complained that because they didn't provide shelter services but provide a lot of similar services, they run into some hiccups when it comes to core funding.

Can you give us some guidance as to how organizations like that might access support from the federal government to enhance their own programs?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** It is a tricky spot, and I can't tell you how many times since I've been elected that I've been asked by my own municipality if Shelter House will now get core federal funding. In fact, the answer is sadly no, because we're not in the business of providing operational funding to programs on the ground. The federal government is there to prevent the need for these kinds of organizations long term. The investments that we're making are much more structural than that.

Of course, there are always program funds through various different projects or proposals, but the sustainable funding is always a challenge. I would say the answer is that we need to work very closely with our provincial and territorial partners on things that lead to outcomes that will alleviate the need for things like homeless shelters, for example.

It's not the answer that oftentimes people are wanting to hear, but the honest answer is that if we were to provide operational funding for every single not-for-profit organization that's underfunded, that's all we'd be doing. Our mandate is making sure that those structures and systems are healthy and well, and are supporting people to live in a way that reduces the need on some of the NGOs that exist at the community level. That's not to say that their work isn't incredibly valuable.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Of course, and I think the honest answer is the correct answer.

If these organizations would like to find out how they can promote the priorities, is the website the best resource for them to learn from?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely.

They can go to the website, or they can contact us. We can walk them through various options we might have. We can also sometimes direct them to other more appropriate funding sources within government.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Certainly.

Do I have additional time, Madam Chair.

**The Chair:** There's one minute left.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I'll be very quick then.

In a previous life, I spent time working with a human rights NGO, and we had a strong focus on the LGBT community, among other sectors. I'm very curious. If the mandate of the agency seems very focused on violence against women, is there any attention paid to violence against other members of the LGBT community, like transgender violence or violence against—?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I'm really glad that you asked that question.

Yes, and I think we'll be expanding our focus to make sure that transgendered people have the same focus. We know that's an extremely vulnerable group of people, especially transgendered women. They are often victimized in incredibly traumatic ways, from both genders. My perspective is that's something we need to move forward with and be more vocal about.

Thank you very much.

• (1620)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thank you very much, Minister.

**The Chair:** Wonderful.

Thank you, again, to the minister and to Status of Women Canada for coming in and helping us to better understand the estimates.

At this time, we have to vote on the supplementary estimates and the main estimates, so there is standard chat to read.

Pursuant to Standing Order 81(5), the supplementary estimates (C) 2015-16, votes 1c and 5c, under Officer of the Co-ordinator, Status of Women, were referred to the committee on February 19, 2016.

Shall vote 1c under Office of the Co-ordinator, Status of Women, carry?

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Does the minister need to stay?

**The Chair:** No, the minister doesn't need to stay.

We would excuse you, and—

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** You're voting now.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** On a point of order, I thought we had the minister for one full hour.

Don't we have 10 more minutes? We'd have time for two more questions.

**The Chair:** Actually, this voting is part of the estimates time.

**Ms. Anita Vandenbeld:** If the minister is willing to stay for 10 more minutes, is there consent to allow two more questions, or three?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** It's so rare that we get the minister here. We should honour this time and the 10 minutes we have.

We have the committee meeting for another hour.

**The Chair:** That's fine.

If you have time to stay, we'd love to have you stay.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** I would be happy to stay for the remaining eight minutes.

**The Chair:** In which case, I will move over to Ms. Vecchio, who I understand is sharing her time with Ms. Harder.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** We have some time there, ladies. Are there any questions specifically you haven't asked that you feel you want to ask?

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** All right.

We chose as a committee to study violence against women, but it's also of course a part of the department and what you're doing. I guess one of my questions is this. I'm not a huge fan of doing redundant work, so I'm wondering if there's a way we can partner together to make sure the research that we're doing here at this level is complementary and beneficial to the department so that we can actually move forward. Again, coming back to that idea of concrete objectives but also results, I'm just wondering how we partner with you in that.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely. As I said, there's not a ton of research on the issue that we raised earlier around the social media cyberworld that young girls and women are facing. Also, the issue of campus violence is something that's fairly new and fairly—well, not new. I shouldn't say the issue is new. The focus is new, but the issue is not new, which I can say as a woman who was on campus many years ago.

Also, we talked a bit about the hypersexualization of girls in the media the last time I was here. There's this culture that we're raising our young women and girls in that demands that they look a certain way and be a certain way, and in fact they are sexualized at a very young age. Those are things that I think certainly you could focus on that would be complementary to the work, and the research that you will do will fold into the federal strategy, so it will not be redundant. We won't be calling the same level of witnesses, but what we can do is present this committee's work as the evidence around those topics.

Then, of course, is the notion of engaging boys and men. How we do that, and how do we make sure that we do that in a way that's complementary to the work?

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

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Carrying on with that, one of the concerns that I have heard and I am aware of is the fact that we have seen some violence in some of our situations because of the cultural differences. Don't get me wrong, I do support bringing refugees into this country. When new Canadians are coming to Canada, what is it that we can do right now, as the government and as Canadians, to support the way our culture and our values...? I do see there has been a bit of an issue with that. What would you suggest? What are we doing to help those women who are coming as new refugees?

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely. One of the things that we can do is make sure we don't stimulate a culture of hate and fear. It's extremely important that especially Muslim women who are coming to this country are not made to feel ashamed of what they wear or what they believe, and that we don't stimulate that perspective in our citizens. These people are fleeing war-torn countries. They're coming from horrible conditions. They're looking for safety for their family and themselves. What we need to do is be supportive allies in their resettlement process.

• (1625)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Although I agree with that, I am fully aware of the situations people are coming from. I am speaking of one-offs, where we do see the violence that is existing within those, and some of the organizations that I've worked with in our communities have also been concerned with the values.

I do support what we're doing as Canadians. I think it's very important. As a Canadian, I would sit there and also support their coming and trying to integrate them into our communities, but we have seen some of this, so I'm wondering what we're doing to promote that within their families, not so much for Canadians but within their own families, so that there is not the violence in those new refugee families.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** One of the things that we are working on is the permanent residency for spouses. It is a very important component of making women safer. The dangling of citizenship that a male spouse can do to terrorize his spouse is one of the biggest tools he has to actually controlling his spouse. Part of the rationale behind giving that permanent residency to a female spouse is to make sure she does not have her citizenship threatened, so that if she is in an abusive situation she has the freedom to go to the police or go to an agency or go to a shelter, for that matter, and not be threatened of having her citizenship revoked. That is one very important piece.

Many of our multicultural organizations work very closely with families and are able to work really closely with women who are experiencing violence. Often they have people who speak their own language, who are familiar with the culture, and who can provide culturally appropriate supports.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That's exactly what I was looking for, making sure we have those organizations and those associations that are reaching out, because I recognize we have seen some of this in our larger cities in southwestern Ontario. That's why I'm asking those specific questions.

**The Chair:** Ms. Vandenberg, you have two minutes, so just one question.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you.

Minister, thank you so much for being here again.

I noticed that in the five priorities in the RPP, the one that we haven't had a chance to address yet is the one on the representation of women in leadership roles. We all know that if you have a critical mass of women in any legislative body you start to see advances in the material well-being of women and girls, you start to see advances in health and education. I wonder if you could comment just a little about that in the remaining time.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Well, I'm pretty excited about this part of the mandate, not that it's not all great, but I agree with you that one of the ways we can actually move gender equality forward in leaps and bounds is to make sure our agencies, our organizations, and our private sector, for that matter, have more women leading the way.

We can do it ourselves, of course. We as a party had an event where we called women and girls and encouraged them to step forward into politics. I think we're all free to do that kind of mentorship at the ground level. We have a number of projects, and our recent call for proposals is focused on exactly that, empowering women to step up to participate, whether it's at a community level or a political level, and at all levels of politics. We often focus on federal politics because we're here, but really the numbers are even more abysmal at the municipal level. We've supported organizations that have done a lot of research around municipal elections, and we're disseminating that information as fast as we can.

Again, the leadership and the focus that our Prime Minister has placed on the need for gender equality and the value of gender equality, not just from a human rights lens but from a fiscal lens is stimulating a lot of activity within the Status of Women, and I'm happy to report that they're very busy.

**The Chair:** You have 20 seconds.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Thank you.

In my last 20 seconds, I want to thank you very much for your leadership on that. We, particularly in this committee, all know that, but it also makes a big difference for younger women growing up to have those role models.

**Hon. Patty Hajdu:** Absolutely. Thank you so much.

**The Chair:** Thank you again, ladies. You did a wonderful job.

**Voices:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** We'll now go to the vote on our supplementary estimates (C).

OFFICE OF THE CO-ORDINATOR, STATUS OF WOMEN

Vote 1c—Operating expenditures.....\$76,000

Vote 5c—Grants and contributions.....\$1

(Votes 1c and 5c agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the supplementary estimates (C), 2015-16, to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Now we will turn to the main estimates 2016-17. Pursuant to Standing Order 81(4), votes 1 and 5 under Office of the Co-ordinator, Status of Women, were referred to the committee on February 23, 2016.

OFFICE OF THE CO-ORDINATOR, STATUS OF WOMEN

Vote 1—Operating expenditures.....\$9,801,615

Vote 5—Grants and contributions.....\$20,630,000

(Votes 1 and 5 agreed to)

**The Chair:** Shall I report the main estimates 2016-17 to the House?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Chair:** Thank you. We will now move to committee business.

As a result of the previous meeting, you will remember that people were to submit the names of witnesses for the motions we had agreed on. Those names are being circulated now. I would ask the parliamentary analyst to describe what it is you're receiving. Then we'll go from there.

• (1630)

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard (Committee Researcher):** A calendar is being circulated around the table right now. It shows the dates remaining until summer, as well as the initial list of witnesses that members of the committee sent to the clerk.

Then we have the work plan that the committee asked me to prepare. I will stress that this is a draft work plan. It can be completely changed. It can be wiped clean. It can be kept. Whatever the committee wills, I can do. I'm happy to follow the will of the committee on the work plan. This was just to give you a starting point and to give you some ideas.

You'll see at the very beginning of the work plan that meeting one and meeting two are dedicated to briefings from departments and agencies and other governmental bodies. Typically, when committees start studies, they want to hear from departments and agencies to see what programs exist, where we stand, and what existing data we have. This would be a good way to start, so I've suggested that at the very beginning.

Then I've organized it into thematic panels. Again, I'll stress that these panels always depend on the availability of witnesses. It does not always work out as it looks in the work plan. This is a tentative example. I started by dividing it into different types of victimization that young women and girls experience, as outlined in the motion. I moved on to groups at risk, which was also outlined in the motion. Finally, I divided it into responses, where witnesses may have an idea of how we can respond and perhaps create solutions and changes in response to the violence.

That's the initial work plan. I'm happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

**The Chair:** This is a lot to absorb.

We have options. In the interest of trying to move the work of the committee forward, the really important thing is that on the schedule coming up, our next meetings are April 12 and 14.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** What are we doing on March 24?

**The Chair:** On March 24 they will adopt a Friday schedule, because Good Friday is the next day...

No...? It's not confirmed yet...? Okay.

It's possible that we could have that one, and from there it would April 12 and 14. If we want to call witnesses—

Yes, Ms. Sahota.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Just following up on the overwhelmingness of all of this, there are a lot of witnesses to be called or to review. We were also only given about a day's notice to submit our witnesses.

As I walked here today, some other people came to my mind. I would request—of course everyone's free to submit witnesses—that this be an initial set of witnesses.

Maybe we could just take the order the analyst has used to compartmentalize. You can see in her first order that she's used some of the federal departments. Maybe we can agree that the federal departments are a good framework to start with. Then we could take some more time to go over the witnesses and to submit additional ones throughout.

• (1635)

**The Chair:** Is there a motion?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Yes. I would like to move that we accept the federal departments as our initial witnesses, perhaps on the 24th if anybody is available. The clerk could look into that, and then we could continue from there. I'm not going to set a date, but I hope we can agree on a date where we can submit initial witnesses.

**The Chair:** Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** To add to that, I wonder if we could take these witnesses and have our subcommittee compartmentalize them a little more. I know this morning I did that with Public Safety. We took 40 witnesses and whittled them down to 24.

**The Chair:** Is that an amendment to the motion?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** It's an amendment to the motion that the steering committee or whatever we're calling it take the rest of the witnesses.... Perhaps we could set next Thursday as a date to have additional witnesses. We could do that immediately upon our return.

**The Chair:** First we have to discuss—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Thank you for guiding us, Marilyn.

**The Chair:** I'm getting better at this, as you may have noticed.

We first have to agree on the amendment. Is there support for it?

The amendment is that the rest of the work plan be referred to the steering committee, preferably at a meeting next Thursday—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** As soon as we get back.

**The Chair:** On the week that we return.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** The steering committee can meet before the committee meets.

**The Chair:** We don't have to meet within the time slot. We can meet anytime. How about at the next available opportunity?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Yes.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** When we come back.

**The Chair:** The amendment is that the rest of the work plan be referred to the steering committee, which should meet at the first available opportunity.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** I'd like to add a subamendment to that. It's something that slipped my mind. I'm just going off the cuff right now.

If we could get some advice on other witnesses from our lovely analyst, that could also go to the steering committee and they could look at those in addition to the ones we submit.

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard:** If you look at the work plan—and I know you just got it—you will see I've added in brackets who proposed each witness.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** Yes.

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard:** Where we were lacking perhaps a national organization, a leader in that field, I took the opportunity upon the request of the committee at the last meeting to suggest witnesses, and a little asterisk was put behind it. That was at your guidance. Those can also be taken away.

What I could do is prepare a document that summarizes the witnesses, what their role is. This would explain who everyone is. At the next available meeting, you could look at that document. It's hard to guess who these people are from a name on a piece of paper. I'd be happy to prepare that if the committee wills it.

**The Chair:** Ms. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thank you very much for that. As a point of clarification, we're going to look at these and the steering committee is going to step back once we've received all the additional names in the next week and a half, and then we'll prioritize who we're going to see, starting with the government departments. Is that what I'm understanding? That's the amendment and the subamendment that's been put on that.

**The Chair:** We'll go with the motion, the amendment, and then the subamendment.

The motion is that the next meeting be what you see in your work plan under A and B. The amendment to that is that the remainder of the work plan be referred to the subcommittee to meet at the first available opportunity to bring back a revised work plan to the committee.

The subamendment is that we would request the analyst to submit additional witness recommendations to be incorporated into that draft work plan.

• (1640)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Which she's already done.

**The Chair:** Which she has said she's already done.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** If I could...inside the subamendment the analyst would bring back a little briefing of each of these witnesses, which she's just offered to do.

**The Chair:** That doesn't have to be a subamendment. It could just be a request.

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** If the analyst could also...some of these subjects, if there are experts that you know of out there, I don't think we could possibly capture everything in a day, and your depth of knowledge is probably better than all of ours. I know you've filled in holes, but if you look at a certain issue and say they should consider that, then the subcommittee can look at that list, yours and all the submitted ones, and pair it down from what we had.

**The Chair:** Did I hear you request that you want the analyst at the steering committee?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No, but she has the list and she can look to see where we have holes and add some.

**The Chair:** All right. The separate request is that you're going to do a briefing. Do you understand what you're doing?

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard:** Yes, my understanding is that I am to fill in any holes in terms of missing witnesses that are key to the areas that are described in the work plan, and then also bring biographies and descriptions of the organizations and individuals.

**The Chair:** That's excellent. All right.

Do I understand that the subamendment is withdrawn?

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** It's withdrawn.

**The Chair:** That's good.

Ms. Harder.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Ruby, I have a friendly amendment to make to the original motion. Help me if this is beneficial or not. I'm wondering if you guys as a subcommittee have to meet and then finalize this work plan, then there wasn't a deadline attached to your motion. I'm just wondering if we should put one there, and I'm wondering if it would be agreeable to choose March 21 as our first Monday back as a sitting day.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** In my motion, I mentioned any date that we can all agree on. But before the steering committee would meet, they would need to have and we need to give the analyst enough time to... so within a week would probably be good.

This is just initial witnesses. I'd like to clarify that obviously as our work progresses, no one is precluded from coming up with other wonderful witnesses who can assist us in the study. This is just to get the ball rolling.

**The Chair:** Can you do the request within a week?

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard:** Yes.

**The Chair:** Excellent, so that's good.

That doesn't need to be an amendment to the amendment.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I'm just trying to nail down a concrete date by which you want us to submit any further witnesses.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** It's Thursday. Wasn't that in there?

**The Chair:** That was not in there. There's no closed door when you can stop coming up with witnesses because as you start interviewing people, you may decide to take a different path.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No, I know what Rachael is saying and I thought I did say that.

I was thinking we could pick a different date, but any witnesses for the steering committee to look at should be in by Thursday, and then we have a list to look at next week.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Yes, that is what I'm getting at.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Yes.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** You guys have a lot of work to do, and it's going to be really frustrating if you go to the effort of putting together an initial work plan and we come to you two days after you've done all of that work with another plethora of witnesses.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I must have thought it and not said it.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** People work to a deadline, and I do think we need a date—

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** —for those names to be in for us to consider.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Yes.

**The Chair:** All right.

Could the parliamentary analyst comment?

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard:** Yes. My understanding is that you would like next Thursday to be the deadline for witnesses, but that on Monday you would need the list with the biography of everyone as well. Is that correct?

For translation purposes, that will be very tight. Could I suggest even Wednesday midday? An extra day or something would be helpful for translation purposes.

• (1645)

**The Chair:** Wednesday at noon...? All right.

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Thank you.

I'd benefit from hearing the original motion from Ms. Sahota, and I would be grateful if we could commit to that. Then we could figure out the loose ends.

While I have the floor, I'll say that there's one question that I do have on the main motion. Why are we starting with this one and not with gender-based analysis? I wasn't aware of there being a debate on the floor around that. That's one question.

The other one is just a bit of a reality check on the ability to scope out witnesses if indeed it is something that we can always add as a new idea if a witness emerges. If it truly is open and organic, then great, but my reality check for next week is that a lot of our young staff have kids on spring break, so they're not going to be in a position to do the research for us. Also, some of us are leaving the country—fortunately to be with the United Nations delegation—so we're going to be short of some of our Status of Women staff as well.

If Thursday is the deadline to get new witnesses in, great, but to me, with the seven industry witness panels that we have set up here, it feels like we're actually going to have quite a lot to chew on for the next couple of meetings as far as testimony and inquiries go, so I'm not sure that we'll benefit from rushing the work on the NGO witnesses.

I may be the only person who is in the position of having a challenge in coming up with a Thursday or Wednesday deadline, but I'll ask the question on whether we actually need to rush that part of it that quickly.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** It is certainly at the will of the committee. For example, should they decide that we aren't going to be able to meet on the 24th, the next day would be April 12. That then gives us quite

a bit of time if we have seven different organizations to hear from. It's at the will of the committee.

Ms. Vandenberg.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** On the issue of the 24th, I think it seems quite likely, from what I'm hearing, that we will be having a Thursday sitting on the 24th, not a Friday sitting.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** Even if it isn't, when we have departmental officials, they're here in Ottawa, so it's less difficult to change them. I think we might go on the assumption that we're meeting on the 24th, although that doesn't necessarily change what Sheila is saying.

**The Chair:** No, that's true enough, especially since, if we are meeting on the 24th, there are seven different departments, and I'm not sure which ones would be available. But you can see the amount of time that it takes to interview even one department, so I'm in agreement with Ms. Malcolmson. I don't think we necessarily need to rush the work, especially considering that people are away and it is March break.

Ms. Sahota.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** My initial motion was basically along the lines of why we are rushing this to begin with. That was the whole thing. To begin with, why are we rushing this and why do we need to have all these witnesses lined up immediately at the beginning? It seemed like there was some kind of rush or structure, which was why we had to do it in 24 hours for some reason.

That's why I was proposing a longer time, maybe a week, but if you need a week and a half or two weeks, as long as we have these departments in place and we have initial witnesses to get rolling on, I'll throw this back to the committee to say it's okay if we come up with another date that we can unanimously agree on.

**The Chair:** Ms. Damoff, you had a comment.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I was wondering if the analyst has any other foundational-type witnesses who could fill up a third meeting for us? People who are outside of the department, but who have a sort of broad overarching...

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard:** Do you mean not-for-profits?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No. The example I use is that at public safety we had the Canadian Mental Health there today. We were talking about PTSD. They're an umbrella organization, so someone like that.

Are we short of days? If we meet on March 24, and then we're back on April 12, we have two meetings. Is that right?

• (1650)

**The Chair:** Yes. It could go to three depending on the length of questioning.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm trying to figure it out logistically. If we wait until after March break then that means we only have two days to do the work plan. We don't have time to get witnesses called for April 16 or whatever that date is.



**The Chair:** Yes. That's why the motion on the table is to hold meetings A and B at the next scheduled meetings of this committee, with the amendment being to refer the remainder to the steering committee. After the report, with the witnesses identified, they can come to this committee with a work plan once it's available.

What that means logistically is that we will have something to do if we have a meeting on March 24. We'll have something to do on April 12 for sure. We'll probably have a bit of carry-over into March 14, but we could use the rest of that time to flesh out and discuss the work plan that would be available well before that.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** We'd have to do the work plan on April 12 when we get back, because we're not here again. If we don't do it the week of March 23—

**The Chair:** Why wouldn't we do it the week of March 23?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Sheila was asking for more time so that it wasn't March break. If it's not during March break then the witnesses come in on say March 21.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** The analyst needs a week to do the—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** She needs some time to put the list together.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** We're still safe, I think.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** You have lots of time to put in witnesses, but you don't have lots of time for the steering committee to meet and do the work plan.

**Ms. Ruby Sahota:** The steering committee can meet a week later.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No, we can't.

If that's the case, I'm wondering if we either do the departments over three meetings, or we get the analyst to take some broad-based foundational types of witnesses to come to that third meeting. Then we'll have time.... Do you follow what I mean in terms of the dates?

**The Chair:** Yes, absolutely. I think if we planned that A and B would take three meetings then that gives us enough time for the steering team to meet. I think that's good.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** That's right. We need three meetings planned out is what I'm saying.

**The Chair:** The witness deadline wouldn't change. The witness deadline is still to be submitted by the middle of Wednesday.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No, we're going to extend it.

**The Chair:** Okay, so you're going to extend it now to which day?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Sheila, when's a good time to extend it to?

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Even giving us until March 22 would mean staff could get back from the family break and be able to chew on it, unless it's going to be open-ended, in which case I don't need to hold anything up. I'd say a deadline of March 22 would be ideal. The analyst then has a week for analysis and translation. Then we can sit on it for a few days and meet the first day we're back.

In the meantime we've already invited these government panels to come. We have two or maybe three meetings to talk with them. There's a lot of material.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Quite frankly the public safety one, if we're talking about cyber-bullying, could probably be on its own.

**The Chair:** All right.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Do you know what I mean? That's a fairly broad one. There are a couple you can pair together, but it may be that we just take one completely for that aspect of it. I'll leave that up to you to figure out.

**The Chair:** Sure...depending on their availability. All right.

To be in order we have to do the amendment first. The amendment is, and this will go to the subcommittee, that witnesses be submitted by Tuesday, March 22, and the work plan be referred to the steering committee to meet at the earliest possible occurrence.

That is the amendment. Is there any further discussion on the amendment?

(Amendment agreed to)

**The Chair:** All right.

Now that we've voted on the amendment, we will vote on the original motion.

The motion is to hold the meetings A and B in the proposed work plan on March 24, April 12, and April 14.

Is there further discussion on that?

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

**The Chair:** We are getting in the groove on this.

There was another question that Ms. Malcolmson had brought about why we started on this one instead of GBA. I had thought that at a previous meeting, when we had the two of them there, it was the will of the committee to go on the first one. I would certainly entertain at this point discussion about what else you want to do with that.

Ms. Malcolmson.

• (1655)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I don't recall a vote, and I didn't recall a conversation.

**The Chair:** There wasn't a vote, for sure.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** My concern is that the earlier we can sink our teeth into GBA, we may be able to effect some of the very significant decisions that are coming up, both through budget, through departmental considerations. Plus, we have the Auditor General's report that's very fresh, as opposed to this enormous study, which we haven't yet scoped. We don't have terms of reference; we don't know how broad it could go.

It feels a little more beautiful to me to focus on gender-based analysis, which I do think is a more contained subject. The earlier we can sink our teeth into it, the earlier the government can get the benefit of our advice. That's still my preference. Gender-based analysis was also the vote that was unanimous. The violence against young women and sexualization of young girls was not a unanimous vote.

That's just my small pitch. If the train has left that station—

**The Chair:** Is there a motion?

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Part of the difficulty is that we haven't asked the analyst to scope out either of these, and we don't have a witness list.

**The Chair:** True enough.

Ms. Vandenberg.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** We could start a similar process for GBA as we have for violence against women and girls, say during the course of the constituency week. Then maybe reporting sometime a bit later next week, we could start submitting witness names. At least that gets the process started. In the work plan, we could decide how many meetings.

It doesn't mean we have to do one or the other. We could see how many meetings we dedicate, and it can also be dependent on the availability of witnesses.

**The Chair:** Right.

I'm hearing a request, then, to submit your ideas for witnesses we'd like to call for the gender-based analysis to the clerk. Do we want to put a timeline on that?

**An hon. member:** March 22.

**The Chair:** You want the same timeline that we had suggested for the other. March 22...?

Very good.

**An hon. member:** Is that the initial list?

**The Chair:** That's just the initial list.

We're creating lots of work for our analyst. Should she focus her efforts on gender-based analysis, or should she focus them on what we had previously voted on?

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** We may not have voted on it, but I thought we were doing the violence against young women and girls first, and then gender-based analysis. I remember a discussion about being a new committee and trying to juggle two studies at once.

Rachael, I think it was you who had mentioned that.

**The Chair:** Is there a motion?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Yes.

I move that we study violence against young women and girls, followed by a study on gender-based analysis, and while we're studying violence against young women and girls, that the—

**The Chair:** Parliamentary analyst...

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** —parliamentary analyst start to put together potential witnesses for the gender-based analysis committee study.

Can I speak to it for a minute?

**The Chair:** Sure.

That's the motion, and now I'll entertain discussion on the motion.

You don't have to include the request for analysts as a motion. She does our bidding without motions, apparently.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I found it really helpful when we did the work plan for public safety this morning, that we decided how many meetings we wanted to spend initially on the study, and then we slotted the witnesses into it, rather than taking the witnesses and making that the length of the study.

I think maybe when the steering committee gets together, we can get a bit better time frame. When I put this forward, I didn't intend for this to be a never-ending study. I think it's big enough that we may, as we're looking at it, say we need to look at just this and that's a separate study that the committee can do later.

I agree with you, Sheila, that I don't think we want it to go on forever. Maybe we can try to get a more concrete work plan. We will maybe do eight meetings on this and then three meeting on GBA, and then we can come back to this if we want.

We could maybe do that at the steering committee level to try to get a more concrete plan in terms of timing.

**The Chair:** Is there other discussion on the motion?

Mr. Fraser.

● (1700)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** To build on that suggestion, I think your last comment may not have quite dovetailed with the motion on the table. I think the motion is to study one first and then the other.

I think your comment was to say let's talk about this at the steering committee so we can establish a plan.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I think we need a more concrete plan on timing. I guess what I meant to say is, when we look at it, it may be that this one is going to take.... From what I understand, doing a study of eight meetings for a committee like ours is actually quite a long study. Maybe we will have time before the end of June to do both.

**The Chair:** Are you making two separate motions?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** No, I'm not. I'm going to shut up now.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Let me just explore this momentarily. If you were making a motion saying we were going to begin with the violence against women agenda while we are collecting the other information, and then your second motion was that the steering team consider how these two things will be coordinated, that's a possibility.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** We'll just leave it where it was.

**The Chair:** You just want to stick with the motion—

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I do.

**The Chair:** —that we will start with the violence against women whilst we gather witnesses and a work-plan draft on the GBA.

Is there any discussion on the motion? I see none.

(Motion agreed to)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** May I ask a question?

With other studies that I've been involved in, there has been a scope of work, and we know what it is we're working towards and what we're trying to achieve. Is it understood that the motions passed are what describes the work plan, or are we to expect or should we solicit a more specific mandate? That would help me know what additional witnesses to pull in. That's one question.

The other is the number. Are we allocated, per party, a certain number of witnesses that we get to prioritize or choose? I've heard of other committees doing that. I'm not sure what the practice of this committee has been.

**The Chair:** For your first question, when it comes to the steering team taking a look at the work plan, that is an opportunity to provide scoping recommendations that would have to come back to the committee as a whole to be looked at. There is nothing preventing you from making a motion to get the steering committee to go do that specifically, get that task done. That was the first question.

The second question—

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** It's about the number of witnesses. Is there an allocation on a per party basis or is it a collective decision?

**The Chair:** It depends on the committee. In some committees, they would put the witnesses forward and then they would move or vote, which is another possibility. We've taken the holistic approach that we have all of them. There is a possibility that it could be a voted witness list. That's at the will of the committee. I would entertain a motion at this time, if there was a recommendation from the committee, about how you want to allocate witnesses.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** None of us have done this before.

**The Chair:** We all learn together.

Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** This seems completely appropriate to be dealt with by the subcommittee on agenda and procedure.

I would move that we direct this question to the subcommittee on agenda and procedure at their next meeting.

**The Chair:** Is there any discussion on that motion?

(Motion agreed to)

**The Chair:** Is there any other committee business that we wish to discuss at this time?

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I would just like to thank you. This has not been an easy process for any of us, Marilyn, and we're all new. It's been a bit like herding cats, and you've been very patient. You're doing an outstanding job in trying to steer us into motions and get us moving. I just want to thank you.

**The Chair:** You're welcome. Certainly, I'm new as well as learning the parliamentary process. I think I'm starting to get the hang of it, though. In terms of trying to see how to move things forward, I want to be fair but I want things to move along so that we do get things accomplished.

There was some favour around the discussion earlier of having this committee complete the online GBA training. Would there be a

motion or an interest in bringing a motion that this committee achieve that by the end of April?

• (1705)

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'll move that.

**The Chair:** So moved by Ms. Damoff.

The motion is that we would all complete the online GBA training by the end of April.

Is there discussion on the motion?

Ms. Nassif.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** We can find it on the website of the Status of Women, but would you send us a reminder? It would be a reminder for all of us, so we can do it maybe in the next week.

**The Chair:** That's a very good recommendation. The clerk will send a link.

Is there other discussion on the motion?

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Chair, I was just going to suggest, in an informal way, that we all encourage our staff to complete the module online as well, but I don't want to bind them to our motion.

**The Chair:** Excellent.

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I'll add to Mr. Fraser's suggestion. Right now, all of the consensus process inside the NDP caucus involves gender consideration. When we make recommendations to each other, we ask what impact it has on gender.

I am now talking with our whip's office and House leader's office about whether we can bump that up and use GBA+ in that measure, so there's a consideration that we might talk with our party, House leaders, and whips about maybe encouraging them to take the test as well. Then they might have more of a sense of whether that can fit into each caucus's process as well.

Thanks for the motion. It's a great idea.

**The Chair:** I'm really sorry because I should have been paying attention, but I was actually in conversation with the clerk. She says that I can't force any committee member to actually take the training. She said that we can encourage them, which is exactly what you said.

Is there a motion coming forward, then, to take it further than that?

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** No, it's just an informal encouragement to caucus members to encourage their own House leader and party whip to consider taking the test as well, because I think it will help all of our processes.

**The Chair:** It might be an idea to send an email out with the link to all of them.

I'm the chair. I'm remaining neutral in this area.

Ms. Nassif.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** Share it on social media, so everyone can do it now.

**The Chair:** Is it open to everyone? I think so.

Ms. Vandenberg.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** It sounds like the chair may be encouraging us to put a motion to have the chair mail the link to GBA+ to all members of Parliament.

**The Chair:** Is there a motion?

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** There is such a motion.

**The Chair:** Excellent. Is there any discussion on that motion?

The motion is that the chair will send a link to all parliamentarians to encourage them to complete the gender-based analysis.

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Can I speak to that? I appreciate the spirit of it, but we started off by saying that none of us has actually taken the test ourselves, so I think it might be a little premature.

**The Chair:** Would you like to table that motion for a future meeting?

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I will table the motion.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Perfect. Very good, and we'll vote in favour next time.

**The Chair:** Is there any other committee business that we want to discuss at this time?

Seeing none, I declare this meeting adjourned.

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