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

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**EVIDENCE**

**Wednesday, October 26, 2016**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

• (1530)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** All right. I'll call the meeting to order.

I'd like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional grounds of the Algonquin first nations.

Our guest for the first panel discussion is Tracy O'Hearn, who is the executive director of the Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada. Welcome, and we look forward to your comments. You'll have 10 minutes.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn (Executive Director, Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada):** Thank you very much. I didn't realize that I would be your only witness, so I tried to keep our remarks brief to allow as much time as possible for a discussion.

I'd like to begin by bringing greetings on behalf of President Rebecca Kudloo. She sends thanks to the chair, vice-chairs, and committee members for the invitation. She lives in Baker Lake, Nunavut, and was not able to be here today, so I am here on her behalf. My colleague Rose Mary Cooper is here as well.

We'd like to begin by lighting a candle, to remind us all of why we are here today and who we are here for. As you all know, quite recently we lost Annie Pootoogook in Ottawa. Regardless of the circumstances or cause of her death, she is one of far too many Inuit women who live in very difficult circumstances, a lot of times for reasons beyond their immediate control. My friend and colleague Rose Mary will light a candle for Annie. Perhaps, as she does, we can just take a moment to reflect on Annie and the far too many women we've lost.

[A moment of silence observed]

Thank you.

This is one of the candles that we used for some ceremonies and remembrance at the pre-consultation meeting we held leading to the national inquiry around missing and murdered women. It was a very powerful four days.

I don't expect you all to be familiar with Pauktuutit. I know some of us have met before and worked together before. Pauktuutit is the national representative organization of all Inuit women in Canada. It is unique from the Native Women's Association of Canada. It is autonomous from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. The organization has been in existence for 32 years, since 1984, with a very broad mandate. It was created upon the initiation of the then Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, which at that time was very busy with the regional land claims

negotiations and settlements implementation. They recognized that there was a broad range of social and health issues that were priorities that needed to be addressed. Recognizing the traditional and valued role of women, they asked that Pauktuutit be created with its own separate and unique mandate. We're very proud that 32 years later we're still able to continue the spirit and intention of the original founders.

When we met earlier this afternoon, in looking at the scope of your study and wanting to keep our comments quite brief, we prepared some comments that specifically relate to the priorities for the study into violence against women and girls.

We have done some initial work on cyber-violence, specifically looking at human trafficking and sex trafficking of Inuit girls, primarily—not only girls, but boys as well—and looking at the unique vulnerabilities. We had been aware of it for some time, but often government priorities change. As a result, we may have new or emerging opportunities to look at issues.

We had a workshop three or four years ago at one of our annual general meetings. That's the one time of the year that we know we can bring Inuit women together from all the regions to talk about priorities and past resolutions, and set direction for the organization. When we first started, we got a bit of money, and we had to think, how are we going to bring this up? A lot of our work is done in Inuktitut. There are many different dialects of Inuktitut, and some vary from community to community. When we started planning our workshop, we had to think, how will we even introduce this? There's no concept in Inuktitut that would equate to human trafficking, and sure enough, a lot of people associate trafficking with cars and cities.

• (1535)

As an example of the way we do our work, we had to find a starting point. We asked people to please advise on how to start bringing this up nationally so that we're not scaring people, so people don't have the idea that some arm is going to reach out of a computer monitor and grab their children, but also to raise awareness.

There are some unique vulnerabilities.

The Northwest Passage is now ice-free. We're seeing cruise ships full of wealthy tourists stopping in remote communities that in many ways were previously, I don't want to say out of touch, but not subject to those sorts of visitors.

We also have a lot of mines, resource exploration and extraction, and a lot of transient workforces, primarily male. We have done a bit of work on the social and health impacts of mining on Inuit women. We have looked at everything from racism to sexual assault in the mine as a workplace in Baker Lake.

Coming back to cyber-violence, unique vulnerabilities for the exploitation of women and girls, we're seeing new things that hadn't been anticipated like the opening of the Northwest Passage.

We were only able to do that one small project, looking at human trafficking and sex trafficking. Government priorities changed. We haven't been able to do any further work, but there certainly is a need.

We don't use the term "hyper-sexualization", which is referenced in the scope of your study, but as I've already said, there are many concerns about exploitation and the unique vulnerabilities of Inuit girls and boys, and young girls.

We know that the communities across the north experience the highest rates of violence in the country. I'm not going to bring forward a bunch of statistics; they're readily available.

There has been a housing crisis in the communities for decades. Various levels of government either absolve themselves of responsibility or are busy trying to meet many urgent and competing priorities, as the Government of Nunavut is.

When we think about hyper-sexualization, my colleague and I have seen it far too often: young girls who may live in an overcrowded home with violence and not enough to eat. Food security is a huge issue in the north. There are children who are hungry in the north. These are some examples of how they can be uniquely vulnerable to being preyed upon by regular workers, but also, as we know, there are very sophisticated predators around the world who identify vulnerable victims.

When looking at hyper-sexualization and thinking about our work and our priorities, we see the increasing sexualization of very young girls, unfortunately, who may see sex as a commodity to be exchanged in return for a secure place to stay, and food. Too often drugs and alcohol are used to lure young girls. So yes, we're very familiar with that.

In relation to rape culture—

I'm sorry, am I at one minute?

These are some examples in how we looked at the scope of your study.

In terms of the equality of Inuit women in Canada, you asked for recommendations about what the federal government could do. The federal government needs to consult directly with Inuit women through Pauktuutit. As I said, we're not represented by NWAC or any other organization. There's a meeting this afternoon of the new Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Indigenous Forum. We're not there. I didn't know about it. We weren't invited. I learned that in passing from a colleague in our building who was on his way to the meeting.

So I'd welcome the opportunity to talk more about substantive equality. Whether we're looking at this issue or any other issue, we

continue to look for opportunities to work in a meaningful way with the federal government. We have not had the success we expected a year past the election.

● (1540)

I do thank you for your time. I don't know how that went so quickly. I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Excellent. We'll certainly dig into this a bit deeper with our questions. We are going to start our first round of questioning with Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** Thank you very much for being here, Ms. O'Hearn. I very much appreciate your sharing your information and experience with us.

You mentioned the housing crisis as one of the many challenging priorities for Inuit women, and perhaps the north more generally. I can't comprehend the scope of the challenge that you are facing with the geography, in combination with the cost of infrastructure in the north, which I understand is many degrees greater than it is in most of our country.

Could you perhaps elaborate a little on the kinds of investments we could recommend that would really help women in different indigenous communities in the north from a housing or a transition shelter perspective, or even support services for women who have been the victims of gender-based violence?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** That's a broad question. I know that our colleagues at Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami are planning a national housing forum in formal partnership with the regional land claims organizations. They are sort of the facilitators of infrastructure, as in bricks and mortar.

In thinking about our participation in that forum, we again try to come back to our primary concerns. I am glad you raised the issue of the needs of victims of violence. We've spoken many times about the need for safe shelters. There are 53 Inuit communities across Inuit Nunangat—in the Beaufort delta, Nunavut, Arctic Quebec, and Nunatsiavut. In those 53 communities, there are approximately 15 safe shelters, so more than 70% of Inuit communities do not have a safe shelter for women. There are a number of issues around that.

We hope to work with INAC this fiscal year to try to develop some evidence around the actual needs. We have just identified a highly skilled research consultant whom we hope to work with. We need evidence. I can't give you specific recommendations that are evidence-based; I wish I could. There is no second-stage housing at all.

It really is a very complex and broad question you ask. There are no quick fixes. The building construction season is short. It depends on shipping seasons and getting construction materials there ahead of time.

We've done as much work as we can, almost on an anecdotal basis around what the needs are, so we appreciate help in trying to develop that evidence. I don't want to use the term "business case" in relation to that issue. That's the best answer I can give you today.

• (1545)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** On the same broad issue—and I appreciate that it is very broad—we are going to end up making recommendations to the government as a result of this study. If only 15 of 53 Inuit communities have access to a safe shelter, I assume there is probably a gap in the kinds of support services that would often be associated with the shelter as well.

Would it be a fair assumption for me to make that you would like to see safe shelters and support services that can be accessed by each of these 53 Inuit communities?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I wouldn't want to say yes or no to that question. Shelters are still a band-aid. They are an emergency response to violence that has already happened.

We hope to try to build some evidence around investment and prevention, which would only reduce the hard financial costs of medevacs, rehabilitation treatment out of territory, and so on.

There is a policy issue that I bring forward every year and that I think would benefit from a recommendation by this committee. The federal government, through INAC, provides funding for shelters on-reserve only. If we think about that in terms of what many would consider to be a fiduciary responsibility, not a policy-based decision—if we think about the federal government's fiduciary responsibility via the Constitution—Inuit communities are specifically excluded from accessing any federal funds specific to shelters in indigenous communities.

It was around \$40 million a year. This government doubled it to \$80 million a year, but as I have said quite recently, that's double the nothing that Inuit communities have been able to access. The federal government will tell us that shelters are the responsibility of provincial and territorial governments. That may be the case, but looking at the Government of Nunavut as an example, with the myriad of serious issues that they are trying to triage on a daily basis, we know that shelters haven't made it up their list of priorities as they should. As a result, nothing is done.

That could be a very significant and substantive recommendation from this committee—that Inuit communities be able to access equitably federal funding for shelters in indigenous communities. I really appreciate that question.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I have only about one minute remaining, and I would like to spend a day with you learning about different things. I hope we get into the justice system for victims, but since we only have a minute, could you lay out the biggest priority or maybe a few of them that the federal government could help with from a prevention perspective? That would be very helpful, but we are short on time. I appreciate it's difficult.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Yes. It has only been two generations since Inuit have been living in communities so we've seen huge shifts from the traditional economy to the wage economy. The housing stock has not kept pace with the fastest-growing population in the country so within that context there is such a need to help build capacity in the communities.

Generally, there aren't civil society organizations, not-for-profits, that we take for granted across the country, even to engage in developing proposals and receive funding, so that is an area where

we try to fill that gap, definitely human development, capacity building, and options. I know these are big issues and big recommendations, but we need to find the starting points.

I wish I could be more specific.

• (1550)

**The Chair:** That's no problem.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** You're welcome to come to our office any time. We would be happy to welcome you.

**The Chair:** We're going to go to Mr. Genuis for seven minutes.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC):** Thank you, Ms. O'Hearn. It's great to have you before the committee today.

I note your organization has done some work specifically on engaging men and boys in the fight against violence against women. Could you share a little of the work you have done in that area and some of your insights?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** It would be my pleasure. That was in my notes that I didn't get to.

With Status of Women Canada, under the previous government we completed the first phase of a two-year project looking at precisely that, engaging Inuit men and boys. We did several pieces as part of that. We did a gender-based analysis that demonstrates the different impacts on men and women because we know women have had greater success in engaging in the wage economy, in securing full-time employment, and there has been a really significant change in the traditional roles.

Men who had been valued as hunters and providers have been increasingly displaced from that role, are feeling devalued, and so I think that's a great example of what is different in Inuit culture and what has changed significantly today. It is an example of what needs to be addressed to try to encourage men and boys to become part of the solution.

We've always looked at both sides, to see that a problem has a solution. Unfortunately, and even though that funding was committed under the previous government, we've been trying to finalize a proposal with Status of Women Canada for the best part of a year for phase two. Again, when I say I wish we had achieved more success with the current government by now, that's a perfect example of where despite our best efforts we haven't been able to move forward. We're ready.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Thank you.

Your comments are very interesting. I don't want to put words in your mouth, but are you saying that many men in these communities are going through a bit of an identity crisis because of changes that are happening that are affecting men in a particular way?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** That would be a fair way to describe it. Yes. Absolutely.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** That's interesting.

One of the things we've talked about earlier in this committee when it comes to men and boys is the impact of false beliefs that come from pop culture, and from for instance pornography that lead to certain attitudes about violence.

I would be curious for your thoughts as well and on policy responses that can address the fact that people are absorbing false and negative beliefs about violence from certain kinds of media.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I don't want to sound completely theoretical and so abstract as to be vague, but people have only lived in settlements for two generations. There was the imposition of foreign systems of education and religion. We could call it patriarchy, colonization. We can describe it many ways. All of these things were imposed. Traditional ways of justice were displaced and devalued. That is the big picture to look at.

In terms of policy recommendations, I think we're already off to a good start looking at the TRC "Calls to Action" and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. We have a lot of direction, a lot of recommendations. What we haven't had is the political will to get serious about it.

I wish I could give you discrete responses and solutions and policy recommendations. I can't.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** I appreciate your comments. It's interesting. I want to then probe a bit this connection between media and colonization. We know that these different kinds of media presentations of violence have an impact on people everywhere, but it sounded like you were saying that the nature of that impact on people with this fairly recent history of colonization may be different. Could you flesh that out a bit? Is the impact more? Is the impact less? How do you think the impact would be on an Inuit community, let's say, compared to elsewhere?

• (1555)

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I couldn't reply in any sort of evidence-based way. I worked with the Pauktuutit for more than 20 years overall, and very early on, pornography was identified as a significant priority in the communities. This was before the days of Internet. This was before the days of regularly scheduled flights, mining and resource extraction, and transient workforces. In my time, pornography has been identified. We're talking probably about copies of *Playboy*. If we look at what has happened to pornography across society, the unbelievably violent nature of pornography, and what we're learning from other places about the normalization and desensitization as a result, absolutely there has to be an impact. We haven't had an opportunity to do any research into it. Given the myriad immediate priorities, that hasn't been identified as a top priority by our membership for the organization. Maybe in some ways the Internet access isn't what we take for granted here. There is no fibre optic, and there are very slow download speeds, which might be a good thing when we think about things like streaming of pornography. I don't even really know what is out there now. I think it would merit some discussion.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Do I have more time, Madam Chair?

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

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Restorative justice mechanisms have some relevance to this area. Do you have any thoughts on what we can learn from the Inuit and other first nations peoples who have some greater history with these mechanisms? Maybe you can answer it in someone else's time.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** That's a very full question.

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** It is now over to Ms. Moore for seven minutes.

[*English*]

**Ms. Christine Moore (Abitibi—Témiscamingue, NDP):** I heard about your strategic plan for Inuit violence, prevention, and healing. I would like you to talk to the specific aspect of Inuit community. Often we do not properly consider the specific knowledge of different communities. In your plan for the Inuit community, can you tell us what the specific aspect is?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** We have three broad priorities. First, are services which include shelters and services for women. I have to talk about child sexual abuse. We have recommendations for community services for children who experience or witness violence and for adult survivors of child sexual abuse. We also need interventions for children currently being sexually abused. There is the need for counselling for abusers, so again, engaging with men and boys. And we need healing centres.

Our second thematic area is education, training, awareness, and capacity building. This means ongoing outreach, violence prevention awareness, and education efforts. Building community capacity, as I mentioned previously, is part of this. Another is equitable and adequate resources for an enhanced and sustained violence prevention strategy, including targeted interventions and strategies for youth.

We know that more than 50% of the Inuit population is aged 25 or under. That's a unique demographic with clear current and future public policy implications, and urgent priorities that have to be addressed, or they will only get exponentially worse.

Our third area is housing and recognizing that the big infrastructure of bricks and mortar construction is beyond our scope and belongs within other jurisdictions. It is part of our strategic plan.

Those are our three primary areas of focus and suggested actions.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** My other questions are related to mine workers and violence against Inuit or sexual exploitation. I know that often workers try to recruit, if I can say, women for prostitution or offer them some money in exchange for services. Often it's the women of the community who are hired as a cleaning lady for a room or a kitchen worker. How can we address this specific issue to the Inuit community because it's really them that are targeted for this sexual exploitation? Could we do better, when the mine is under construction, to prevent those bad habits from ever existing? Can we do something in the cycle to prevent that abuse?

• (1600)

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** We absolutely can. On our website, we have a qualitative and quantitative report of a project we did in collaboration with UBC, looking at mining in Baker Lake as a bit of a case study. We have fairly detailed recommendations in our report online, ranging from the negotiation of Inuit impact and benefit agreements to immediately looking at identifying social and health issues, with a view to mitigation and enhancing resources. We've considered everything from the initial negotiation of an IBA, to greater awareness among Inuit women of their human rights and in the workplace, their rights as an employee. We've just recently been approached by the Government of Nunavut. They're looking at updating their human rights legislation, which is tremendous, and they're looking at including a range of sexual orientation issues.

We have developed a number of recommendations. Please, give us a call if you have any trouble finding it on our website and then we'd be happy to talk about it further.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Do you have an idea of the number of assaults when things are not going well there that are reported in terms of mines, or most of the time do you stop sending this worker there and try to close the story without reporting it to police?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** That was beyond the scope of our project. It was really quite a small project.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Okay.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I think we received \$25,000 from the Canadian Women's Foundation and UBC, by coincidence, had received a similar-sized grant. We collaborated and, I think, got tremendous value for quite a small financial cost. That was beyond the scope and it wasn't really the objective of that study. It certainly would be worth looking at.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Since we are talking about money, I think that in June 2016 your president said that she's looking at an empty wallet all the time when it comes to financing the program. Is the situation better now?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** No, it's not at all. No. I'm quite sorry to say that we're finding the current government much more difficult to work with than the last government.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Okay. Could you explain a little bit more?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Pauktuutit is forced to rely far too much on annual project-based activities. That involves a proposal in response to government criteria and priorities to be assessed against certain criteria. We're pretty expert proposal writers. Looking at INAC, as an example this year, the practice had been that there would be a request for proposals around six thematic priorities in 2015 and 2016. Some

we weren't even eligible for, but at least we had some guidance around projects to support economic development or social policy reform. That's where violence prevention for us is an opportunity to advance our work. We knew broadly in the last mandate of the previous government that across the department, there was approximately \$20 million available for a full range of projects, some on first nations education on-reserve only, so very broad....

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, that's your time on that question.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Even at this point in this fiscal year, there has not been a call for proposals. I've had to almost beg for a hint of what might be funded. We're still having to negotiate, as I said, for the best part of a year with Status of Women Canada for a proposal for funds that were committed by the previous government.

• (1605)

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We're going to go to Mr. Serré for seven minutes.

**Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.):** Thank you for your presentation and dedication. As a member of the Liberal indigenous caucus, I really appreciate your hard work on this. I'm also a member of the natural resources committee. I'm a strong promoter of expanding the mining industry sector and also some of the impact and benefit agreements. I'm definitely going to take your comments back to the committee and see how best we could incorporate some of those recommendations you made, especially around the social impact. Thank you so much for bringing this up.

I wanted to also thank you for sharing your concerns about the consultation, and some of the findings have been noted. I appreciate your taking the time to highlight that. That's how we can try to resolve some of these issues.

I wanted to ask about the funding that you receive right now from the current Status of Women. What is the mandate and the scope of the funding and the service that you're delivering with this funding?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I believe the only funding we currently have with Status of Women Canada predates this government, and we are in the second year of a two-year project looking at mentorship.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Can you expand on what you are doing with the mentorship?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I am not the hands-on project manager, so I apologize for not having the details at my fingertips.

It's a logical progression of previous project work around supporting and encouraging Inuit women in business. When we were doing a project a number of years ago, there was great interest expressed in mentorship. There's a need for mentorship. It can be frightening for anyone and very intimidating. It's difficult to read forms. Where do you find investment capital?

We identified a full range of information needs that women had. Mentorship came through very clearly. There's also a great interest among Inuit business women, who had achieved some success, in mentoring others and helping others come along so that everyone can go forward together.

There was just a very timely call for proposals from Status of Women Canada, looking at supporting projects to encourage women's mentorship. We competed with every other organization across the country and were successful. We have developed a model; we're looking at getting it piloting, getting a good match between mentor and mentee. We'd be happy to share more information.

That's our current funding working relationship with Status of Women Canada.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Also, your association has the action plan on addressing the needs of Inuit children sexual abuse.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Yes.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** Can you explain a bit more about some of the recommendations there when we look at the families, regarding the protection of children and the justice system? You had some recommendations along those lines.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Again that's a very big question.

We haven't been able to do any substantive work on child sexual abuse for a number of years. We don't have good evidence about the incidents. It's very difficult anywhere to get solid evidence, for lots of reasons. We know anecdotally about a lot of issues around child welfare, foster care, what happens to kids who are taken into care. We know, again anecdotally, that there's not a lot of reporting, for lots of reasons.

I've been told, again anecdotally, that there's not a child untouched either directly or indirectly by child sexual abuse, and that stays with me every day. There aren't the services in the communities that we take for granted here. There has been some reluctance around intervening and prompting disclosures without supports, which can be more re-victimizing.

Your question about the criminal justice system is very big. It's an area that really does have to be looked at. From our perspective, we have been more immediately concerned with protection, prevention, protection of the child, treatment for offenders, and trying to raise awareness. Breaking the silence.... It's a great taboo. There's such great stigma, fear of talking about it, so we're at different starting points in trying to find the best place to intervene. We work with the Department of Justice in Nunavut, to the extent that we can.

That's the most specific answer I can give you, other than that it really requires a lot more work.

•(1610)

**Mr. Marc Serré:** We certainly heard from other witnesses about the lack of data and that it's widespread. We have to try to find ways to get that data.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** We must.

**Mr. Marc Serré:** What do you think are the best practices that you could share with the committee, when you're trying to raise Inuit family awareness of domestic violence in order to eliminate that violence? What are some of the best practices that you could recommend?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I can't offer a best practice, because we haven't had evaluations over time, but we can offer some promising practice from our expertise. We are very good at communicating. Information has to be communicated in accessible Inuktitut or understandable and relevant English. We have great success, because people know our logo. We're credible. They'll pick up our publication—I mean no disrespect—far more quickly than they will a Justice Canada publication. We can certainly offer some promising practices around communicating, about how we try to communicate, and around partnerships.

I'd also like to say that we'd be happy to meet with the indigenous caucus at any time.

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

We're going to go now to Ms. Vecchio, with five minutes for questions.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** Like Sean, I could take you for about three or four days and just try to get all that information, but I want to start with really basic things, if you don't mind.

I think part of the issue is that we're dealing with a lot of urban and rural MPs. We have to recognize that we're talking about Nunavut.

First of all, what is the population of a place such as Baker Lake?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Baker Lake is around 1,700.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I want to look at maybe one specific area, whatever area you may know the best, one of the best places where you can say that this is what we have.

What I'm trying to find out is how many schools there are within the community. Would there be one school? Would it be separated into secondary and primary? A lot of times we're talking about how we can educate people, but we have to recognize that education here in Ottawa is much different from what the children in that area are receiving.



I'm looking at key things, if you want to just go on this. I'm looking at things such as the geographical area. How large is the area that maybe one hospital would be serving, or one police unit? How many schools or hospitals would there be there?

You mentioned that there are no shelters. There are no shelters, but how many counselling services might be available to those populations?

Part of it is that we have to recognize it's not where we are. It's not southwestern Ontario, something that I know in my own backyard. It's very different.

As Garnett was talking about, you said we don't have high-speed Internet, fibre optics. For some of us, the challenge is that we don't realize how those simple things that we have in our own backyards are not what you have. Could you share some of those things with me?

On my other question, and then you can take the rest of my time, if you're looking at a person who is victimized, let's say a child, are most of the children victimized by their own relatives? Would you have a percentage on that, like 80%, 90%, 100%? I don't know if that would be the case. What would be the normal...? If someone were to report it, what is the normal process?

You have the floor.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** Thank you very much. I'll try my best.

It's really unfortunate that Rebecca Kudloo couldn't be here today. She works in education for the Government of Nunavut. She is primarily a voluntary president, and she would have great expertise.

There are four regions of Inuit Nunangat. There are four comprehensive land claims agreements. Nunavut is one.

In the western Arctic, there are five Inuit communities, Inuvik being the largest. They're now building a road from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk, which is great. There is the Inuvialuit region.

Nunavut is another region, the most well known and the largest. There are 26 communities in Nunavut. In Nunavik, Arctic Quebec, there are 14 northern villages—in the census definition, they are called “northern villages”—north of the 55th parallel.

In Nunatsiavut, we've all just been shaken into alertness around Muskrat Falls. On the northwest coast of Labrador, which is Nunatsiavut, there are five communities within that land claim region.

They're all different. Each has a regional centre. There's Inuvik in the west. In Nunavut, there are three regions: Kitikmeot, which is the western Arctic; Kivalliq, where our president lives, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, north of Manitoba; and Baffin, in Qikiqtani. There are 13 communities in Baffin.

I believe there's been a hospital in Rankin Inlet for the last few years. They're all very different. I don't trust my immediate recall. There's a hospital in Inuvik. There's one in Iqaluit. There are two in Nunavik. There's one on the Ungava coast and one on the Hudson Bay coast, and there are none in Nunatsiavut. The closest is in Happy Valley - Goose Bay.

• (1615)

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** What's the distance between those?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** They are all fly-in, fly-out communities. There are no roads, with the exception of the one now being built between Inuvik and Tuk. They are all fly-in communities. If we think about violence resulting in physical injury that requires health care, it's medevacs to Iqaluit or often to Ottawa, from the Baffin region to a southern facility.

Every community has a health centre. A lot of them are only staffed by nurses. There are lots of issues around health human resources retention and recruitment.

With regard to schools, there's a school in every community. Some may go to grade 12.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, that's your time.

We're going to move over to Ms. Vandenberg for the last five minutes.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** I want to thank you very much for coming here today, and especially for lighting the candle for Annie. I know that's really shaken our local community and nationally, as well. I really appreciate your honesty and everything you've brought forward today. I think you've given us a lot of food for thought.

One thing you mentioned, and you didn't get a chance to really go into the question about traditional justice, was that there's no child who is untouched in some way. This is very disturbing. I know we've heard in other areas that there are more indigenous children in care now than there were in the sixties scoop. To what extent would there be a reluctance to report, if there is sexual violence happening in the home, because of the fear of the breakup of the family?

How can we develop programs that would allow—as we've heard with campuses and other things, where there's an alternative justice—it to be more about the safety and the protection? How do you develop those kinds of programs? How could the federal government help to ensure that the children, if there is violence in the home, feel that it is safe, and that there is confidentiality and that there are mechanisms for them to report?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** There are experts far more knowledgeable than I am, and who I would encourage you to speak to.

There is a reluctance to break up the family. Within the last two generations, but fairly recently, there was a reluctance because of the loss of a provider, as in a hunter, so absolutely there's concern about breaking up the family because of the loss of survival and the means to survive.

• (1620)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** You had mentioned that traditional justice was devalued. What did you mean by that? How do we bring some of that justice back into the child protection system?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** We're talking about, I would suggest, two very different worlds. Prior to living in settlements, people were nomadic and living in much smaller groups with much greater interdependence, and it has been said with greater equality between the sexes out of necessity. There were occurrences of violence, but they were handled. When we think, in 2016, about shaming as a means of social control, or gossip as a means of social control, or some form of justice, it seems completely irrelevant now, but those were very effective tools, because people had to depend on each other for survival. If you're being ridiculed, and possibly with the threat of banishment, that was pretty significant. No one would advocate returning to drum dancing as a means of settling disputes, but that is something that was used, and it was effective because there were respected leaders.

That's a very large area of study, and there are experts you could certainly meet with. There's a very well-known woman, who's our friend and colleague. Her name is Yvonne Niego. She's Inuk. She recently retired from the V detachment of the RCMP in Iqaluit and is now a senior official working with the Department of Justice at the Government of Nunavut. I spoke to Yvonne within the last year or so just to get an update on what is the status of an intervention or response protocol in the communities. Yvonne said, "In theory, there's a police officer, there's a social worker, and there's a nurse." In theory, that should be the immediate response. Maybe those positions are filled, or maybe not. Maybe those people are getting along and talking to each other, or maybe not. There's the theory and then there's the practice, and it results in a whole lot of gaps.

You ask a very complicated question. I think I can best help you by referring you to experts like Yvonne Niego and many others.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I appreciate that.

You had also mentioned that, on the flip side, there are some previously isolated communities and that because of mining, because of cruise ships, and because of an outside economy there are transient populations that are now moving into these areas. Obviously, that puts some of the women and girls in more vulnerable situations.

Can you tell us, perhaps, if there are any things we can do to ensure the safety of women and girls in these communities where you might have a large influx of people who are coming from outside of the community?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I'll speak about Baker Lake as an example. The mine is outside the community, and I think it's about a two-hour trip by road from Baker Lake to the community. The workers don't even land in Iqaluit. They're flown directly into Mary River, Pond Inlet. They don't stay in Pond Inlet. They arrive at the mine, they come out of the mine directly to a southern centre, so I understand they're not even deplaning in Iqaluit.

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, that's your time.

We'll go to our last five-minute round with Ms. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** You're back to me. Thanks very much.

I want to go back to the line of questioning I had for you before. Anita had asked you similar questions regarding the protocol. You mentioned a police officer, a nurse, and things of that sort...if they're

all working together and playing in the same sandbox well. But we have to recognize that that might not always happen.

Let's go back to some of the stats. I know a lot of these are available, but in a situation you said every individual in your community is impacted by some sort of abuse. If we're looking at children, could you give us a percentage where it's a parent or somebody living in the house? Do you know those stats?

• (1625)

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I'm sorry, we don't.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** That's probably part of the issue too. You just don't have that ability to do the data.

When it comes to outreach programs, I applaud you for working with what you've got when it comes to dealing with men and young boys. What sort of things are in the school systems to help children and young adults know what is right and what is wrong, what is sexual abuse, what is violence, how they have a voice in saying, this is what our options are and how they can stop it as well?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I'll give you an example from Nunavik. They have the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services, which is mandated by the land claim. They have quite a complicated working arrangement with the Province of Quebec and the land claim, and I think the federal government. Somehow they do what they do extraordinarily well. They've developed their own form of a good touch, bad touch program that is delivered in schools by a number of people, including traditional Inuit counsellors, elders, and respected role models. They have developed their own resources, and I know they'd be happy to share them with you.

We have developed some resources. One resource is called *The Hidden Face*. We adapted two DVDs that were done in Greenland. They took our DVDs, provided training to their workers, and have integrated that into the range of tools they use. I can't tell you how it's used hands-on in the school, but I think that's a great example. Different regions are at different levels of activity, different levels of awareness, and have other priorities.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I think it's absolutely fascinating in a very difficult way, where you hear these stats, you have these discussions, and we realize how fortunate we are. Not everybody has the greatest opportunities that you're talking about.

When we talk about employment, what would the main employment in some of these areas be? You talked about mining.

Would you have an idea of average family income?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I couldn't give you that number right now. I have read the numbers.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Would there be a way that you could send this to the committee just so we can look at that?

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** By all means. We can certainly follow up. I know it is readily available. There are community profiles that also look at Inuit average incomes. The general population average income can be skewed by high-income transient workers.

In Iqaluit, the economy is largely driven by government. The territorial government is there. The federal government has a presence there.

Certainly, on health care. Two communities that have very little... they have a hamlet office, a local town council, a nursing station, a store, often very little else, so there's a huge gulf and difference.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Totally changing direction, we talked about the Northwest Passage and about trafficking. You had done phase one. So far in phase one of the study, what were you looking at? What sorts of things would you be looking at for phase two if it were to proceed? What did you do in phase one, how would you proceed with phase two, and what are some of the measurements we could look at? What needs to be done going forward?

**The Chair:** You have 30 seconds.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I have 30 seconds.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** You could call me.

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

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** I'm sorry, I want to be very respectful of your time—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Yes.

**Ms. Tracy O'Hearn:** —and you're asking big questions.

**The Chair:** Oh, definitely. Tracy, you've done such an outstanding job. We actually had planned another panellist who was unable to come. Being the only person being grilled by this lively crowd here, you've done exceptionally well.

If there are things you'd like to add, though, I would invite you to send them to the clerk.

We're going to continue. I'm going to suspend so that we can let you have an opportunity to depart, and then we'll come back for our committee business.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

•(1625) \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_

•(1650)

*[Public proceedings resume]*

**The Chair:** *[Public proceedings resume]*

We're resuming.

We have the motion before us that came from PROC, other than the (g) from PROC is not the (g) that we have, so I have Ms. Harder on the list to make a comment.

**Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC):** I was just curious if we could have (g) from PROC read to us, just so that we know what's being omitted.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** Yes, I can explain.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Some people might have that memorized verbatim, but I don't.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** I can explain.

*[Translation]*

The motion on in camera meetings adopted by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs lists the reasons for which a committee may meet in camera. Item (g) of the motion states that a committee may move in camera “when conducting an inquiry pursuant to the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment”.

The reason it was removed from our motion is that only the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs is empowered to conduct inquiries into breaches of the Code of Conduct for Members of the House of Commons: Sexual Harassment.

Since the Standing Committee on the Status of Women does not have the authority to conduct such inquiries, that item of the motion initially adopted by the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs was removed from the motion we will be dealing with. The reason for its removal is simple: it doesn't apply to our committee because we don't have the necessary authority.

**The Chair:** That's quite clear to me.

Do you understand?

*[English]*

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** I do understand. Basically, what we're saying is we're functioning under PROC right now, so PROC is just more inclusive than we need to be so...

**The Chair:** No, she's saying that the element that's missing from this one that's in PROC has to do with addressing harassment, which is their area of responsibility, not ours.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Right. But right now, as it stands, we're functioning under PROC, aren't we? No?

**The Chair:** Ms. Vandenberg.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I'm on PROC. Normally there is a tradition that if there are motions passed at PROC, those motions are then considered for other committees, because PROC is seen as a bit of a lead committee when it comes to those things. The motion here actually went through months of parties talking to one another and negotiating to come up with the proper wording. I know the clerk and others were consulted to make sure that the wording met the intentions. This was a long discussion in PROC.

My question to Madam Moore was, if they were deleting something.... So it wasn't the same motion. It seems the only thing we've deleted is something that only falls under the responsibility of PROC, which would be anything to do with code of conduct or sexual harassment or privilege. Those things are automatically referred to PROC. Because our committee does not deal with that issue, we wouldn't need to do it. The rest of the motion would be similar, but it's up to our committee to decide if we want to pass the same motion as PROC or not. I, for one, am in favour of that.

•(1655)

**The Chair:** Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** I'd like to call the question.

**The Chair:** All right.

The motion is before us. It's identical to PROC except for the exception that you mentioned.

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

**The Chair:** Those will be the conditions under which we will go in camera, in future.

I believe that is the end of our committee business for today.

Does anybody have any other items they want to talk about?

Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** It's not a new item. It's just to make sure I'm clear on the plan of action with respect to our plans. We're all going to take it upon ourselves to review the prior suggestions and circle up with our own caucuses. At the next steering committee meeting they'll form a plan of action for discussion at the whole committee.

Is that correct?

**The Chair:** That's partially true. What I would like is, once your parties have talked about what you'd like to submit as motions, I'd like those motions to go to the clerk so that we know, then, how many we have. Then we can spend time, at future committee business, discussing them and deciding which ones we want to do and what order we want to do them in.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Thank you.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** Ms. Harder.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Do you have a specific time frame in which you're looking to have these motions submitted?

**The Chair:** Yes. I was thinking if we got them by Monday of next week, then we would be able to make time on Wednesday, because of the notice of motions.

Will that work?

So if I can have them by Monday of next week, that would be great.

**Ms. Rachael Harder:** Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** Mr. Genuis.

**Mr. Garnett Genuis:** Just for purposes of our discussion, I want to make sure I'm recalling what we had talked about correctly. As far as I heard, there were four different potential topic areas. One, broadly speaking, women's participation in the economy; two, a study about refugees; three, pornography in the media and the relationship to violence; and four, the Divorce Act. Those were the four possibilities that were raised. Am I missing anything?

**The Chair:** Madam Moore.

**Ms. Christine Moore:** The access to shelter will be really our priority if we can.

**The Chair:** Right, and I would add that those are the four that we heard about today. That's not to say there won't be others that would come forward once you've done your review.

Are we good? Wonderful.

At the next meeting we will have the New Leaf Program from Pictou county, Babely Shades, Collectivité ingénieuse de la Péninsule acadienne, and Manon Bergeron and Sandrine Ricci from the Université du Québec à Montréal.

Thank you for that and I look forward to voting.

The meeting is adjourned.

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