



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO



NUMBER 063



1st SESSION



42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, May 18, 2017

—
Chair

Ms. Marilyn Gladu

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• (0845)

[Translation]

The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)): Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We are continuing the study on the economic security of women in Canada.

Today, we are hearing from Nathalie Goulet, director of the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail, as well as Ruth Rose-Lizée, a member of the same organization.

Thank you for joining us and welcome.

[English]

We also have Beatrix Dart, a professor with the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto.

Welcome, Beatrix.

We'll begin with Nathalie for seven minutes.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Goulet (Director, Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail): Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for inviting me to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

I will briefly introduce the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail, or CIAFT, and will then yield the floor to Ruth Rose-Lizée, who will continue with the presentation.

CIAFT is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that advocates for women's rights in the workplace. It is the foremost organization in Quebec's women's movement focusing on rights in the workplace. That includes Quebec's pay equity legislation, work-family balance and various related social programs, labour standards, and so on. It also covers employment, including the partnership we have established with Emploi-Québec and the Commission des partenaires du marché du travail.

I now yield the floor to Ms. Rose-Lizée.

Ms. Ruth Rose-Lizée (Member, Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail): I assume that you already have a lot of figures on the wage inequality between men and women, so I will not provide any figures. We actually sent you a 2015 document that provides a number of figures with respect to that.

I will instead move on to the recommendations.

First, we would like the federal government to introduce proactive pay equity legislation in its area of jurisdiction and ensure that this legislation is properly implemented. We now have 20 years of experience with the legislation in Quebec. Some shortcomings have been noted, especially when it comes to non-unionized women. I believe that the federal government could benefit from Ontario's and Quebec's experiences to immediately and vigorously enforce the legislation.

Second, we note that women who take care of vulnerable individuals and children are still underpaid, especially in the areas of early childhood education, work in seniors residences and home support services. Those areas come under provincial jurisdiction.

Furthermore, I sat on the 1986 child care task force. The recommendations we issued to create a Canada-wide program on child care have still not been implemented. The current government has put in place small funding programs for organizations, but we think that it could do much better and that the money should go only to public non-profit organizations that are certified by a provincial or a territorial government. One of their objectives should be to fairly compensate individuals who have a very heavy responsibility in the areas of health and welfare of children and vulnerable individuals.

When it comes to access to employment, we think that the government should reintroduce its equal employment access programs, not only for women, but also for other discriminated-against groups, such as visible minority recent immigrants, aboriginals and persons with functional limitations.

There are still issues in terms of access to language courses, especially for immigrant women. There are also problems in terms of the failure to recognize foreign degrees. Since immigration is a federal responsibility, the government could do a much better job in that area.

Concerning employment insurance, we have also sent a text that documents issues of discrimination against women in employment insurance. I cannot raise all those arguments today, but one thing is very clear: the eligibility criteria for benefits, which are based on hours worked, are discriminatory. Someone who works 35 hours or less per week has much less access to the employment insurance program than people who work 40 hours a week or even, as in the case of male seasonal workers, 45 or 50 hours a week.

I hope that you will look at these documents to better understand the arguments.

When it comes to parental benefits, the Quebec parental insurance plan has been integrated into Canada's employment insurance system, but it is poorly adapted to parental insurance issues, mainly because there is a waiting period that should not exist.

● (0850)

So we recommend instead that the Quebec pension plan and the Canada pension plan models be adopted, so that we would have a federal parental insurance plan with criteria adapted to parental benefits.

Finally, we reiterate what you have already suggested: women should have better representation on federal boards of directors, as well as among candidates in federal elections.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

We'll go now to Beatrix Dart for seven minutes.

Dr. Beatrix Dart (Professor, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto, As an Individual): Thank you very much for having me here.

I must admit, I'm a little like a fish outside the water. I don't do politics, and I am a problem-solver by training. I had a long-standing career at McKinsey as a problem-solver, and I'm now at the University of Toronto as a professor of strategy, where I look at strategy problems. But I also have been involved with advancing women for the last 15 years. Even with my work at McKinsey, they asked me to do a task force to make sure we don't lose women when they become mothers, and that seems to be one of the challenging situations.

I'm coming at this from a bit of a different angle. I'm looking at this and I'm thinking, why has there been such a lack of progress? We've been at this for 20 to 30 years. If this had been any other business problem, the CEOs would have been fired for not making any progress on any of those indicators. How can we look at this problem differently? Clearly, we're just fixing symptoms. I don't think we fix the problem. You know the symptoms. I don't need to go back to the stagnation; women in senior roles have not been moving forward. We don't have more women on boards. What has happened over the last few years has been appalling. We still have hiring biases, and yes, we still have a gender pay gap. We've been at it for at least 20 years. Marilyn, you said this committee has been in existence for 24 years. What else can I say?

However, some progress has been made on more awareness. We have more discussion on this topic. We have more organizations involved in this topic, so there is some progress where we have moved from fixing the women because this is a women's issue, to this is a social issue. I see that as progress.

I believe we are not addressing the systemic issues underneath it. If I may be so blunt—and I apologize because I'm Swiss-German and I'm Canadian as a second choice and I love being in Canada—what stands out to me is the patriarchal mindset in Canada. Unless we change that mindset, and I think the government can play a role in that, I don't think we'll truly make any progress. We'll fix a few symptoms again, and we'll tweak a little bit here and there, but I

don't think there will be any real progress. I'm looking at other countries where true progress has been made. Is there something we can learn and take away from that?

The second point I would make around that is, although it's lovely that we have created more awareness and that there are more organizations involved now, it has become unproductive. We have too many fragmented approaches in trying to solve this issue. I don't know how many witnesses you're going to listen to during this standing committee's existence, but you have way too many organizations trying to make a couple of small impacts without an overarching strategy and goal.

I would propose two solutions to consider for discussion, and I set this out in my document. One would be to influence the mindset and the patriarchal attitude in Canada. That in my mind is a role that government can play. You have had exposure, I'm sure, to behavioural economics. I know about behavioural economics at the federal government level. Government can truly influence helping society to change behaviour.

A shock to the system would be required, and that shock in my mind at this point is a quota system. That is never popular in countries where it's not in existence, but if you go back to European countries who have introduced it, such as France—and I just came from a conference there—nobody liked it when it was discussed, but everybody loves it now that it's implemented. The same holds true for a lot of the Scandinavian countries.

As I said, I think you need a shock to the system to change the mindset of society. Ideally, you don't have to have it in place for very long. It can be staged, and it should have a sunset clause at some point, but you will need to have a drastic impact.

● (0855)

I also want to echo something that was just discussed by the two experts before me. There is also a change possible by introducing mandatory parental leave. This is to make it not optional, but mandatory, for all those new dads to stay at home for a minimum of three months. The European countries that have introduced this have seen a huge change in attitude in society because suddenly it is not considered odd that dad might take the baby to the doctor or be on the playground or run the household and clean the toilets. I think there's a huge benefit to making it mandatory. If you leave it optional, as it currently is in most places other than Quebec, where it is a bit more advanced, men will not take it because there's too much stigma attached to it, right?

The third point around changing the mindset and the attitudes is that there needs to be some more support in getting women back to the workforce once they have stepped out. A lot of women will take parental leave and they will be out for two or three years depending on how many children they choose to have. Sometimes they step out for elder care. Sometimes they step out because their partners are moving around and they are the ones who are holding up the household. Re-entering the workforce is increasingly difficult once you have been out two or three year or more, particularly for women who have advanced degrees. It sounds ridiculous to most ears, but it is actually quite challenging. Despite having a master's degree, whether it is from a recognized university in Canada or outside Canada, the re-entry has been very challenging for most women. We know that because we've been trying to help them for the last six or seven years. I believe you're missing a large economic impact. Particularly for women who are educated at a higher level, the economic impact is huge. So there is something that can be done.

Finally, I know I'm out of time, but I would encourage the federal government to create an umbrella organization. We have been running a pilot currently in Ontario called "the alliance". I would encourage you to create an umbrella organization to make better use of the funding and to have an overarching strategy for all these wonderful organizations trying to advance women.

Thank you.

● (0900)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[Translation]

We will begin with Mrs. Nassif.

You have seven minutes.

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for their presentations.

I would like to begin with a question for Ms. Goulet from the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail.

Can you talk to us about your recommendation to the federal government to enact legislation stipulating that at least 40% of the individuals on a federal political party's list of candidates be women, while maintaining the idea of open nominations?

Ms. Nathalie Goulet: That work must be done by the political parties. It is a long-term undertaking that must also be done on an ongoing basis by the political parties.

However, there is more and more talk in Quebec about tools. There is still no provincial legislation, but people are increasingly talking about a level of equality to be achieved—female candidates accounting for between 40% and 60% of all candidates in elections. That would be done while hoping, of course, that the women included in that gender equality initiative would be elected to Parliament.

I am very much in favour of adopting those kinds of measures and objectives, coupled with many other tools, as we know that we are fighting against systemic discrimination, once again. To reach a target whereby between 40% and 60% of candidates and elected representatives would be women, we need a set of tools.

However, having a very clear objective is very mobilizing, even with an objective of 50%, or parity. Some municipal and governmental political parties are now trying to reach a 50% target. However, this is not an issue that my organization, CIAFT, is working on. As we said, we are more focused on workplace rights and employment programs.

However, this issue is currently under a lot of discussion within Quebec's political parties. Applying gender parity measures is very strongly encouraged, but it still stems from voluntary measures and not coercive measures with real objectives to be achieved by the parties.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Ms. Dart, did you want to add anything?

[English]

Dr. Beatrix Dart: I believe, as I pointed out earlier, that we need to set some quota to make progress, and I believe, even at the federal level, that having an equal representation among various genders would be very desirable. The countries that have introduced that have a better balance, not only on the right committees but also in their culture, society, and mindset. I think the federal government has to be the role model, and I would highly encourage progressing with quota on this point.

[Translation]

Mrs. Eva Nassif: My question is for everyone. You can answer it first, Ms. Dart, if you like.

Given the country's aging population, could you talk about the demand for affordable housing and old age homes for women who are aging in financial insecurity?

[English]

Dr. Beatrix Dart: This is not necessarily my area of expertise, but with my economic training, let me just try to give you a couple of suggestions around that.

I think, again, it starts by building economic security earlier on in life. It is a challenge if you have been dependent on a partner—in many cases a male partner—and at some point, either the partner might step out because the economic union has not been successful, or other unfortunate tragic situations might happen. I think you find a lot of women single at an advanced age, which has impacted their economic security, and it has impacted, of course, what they can afford.

I find that in many of the other countries I've been working in, there has been a better social security net provided for the aging population. There has been more support provided, as well, in terms of the social insurance system around that. As I said, I'm no expert on social insurance policies, but I would imagine that looking at and taking some insights from those European countries might help.

● (0905)

[Translation]

Mrs. Eva Nassif: Would any other witnesses like to answer this question?

Ms. Ruth Rose-Lizée: Yes, I would like to talk about that.

Among seniors, the housing issue is especially common with women who find themselves alone late in life. I think that adapted and affordable housing would be a very good initiative by the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces.

I know that Scandinavian countries, especially Denmark, have a policy to provide bachelor apartments to all seniors who are losing their autonomy. Not only does this give seniors access to affordable housing, but it makes the provision of home support services much easier, since the personnel is on site. Services such as cafeterias or nurses on site may be provided. So it is more effective and cheaper to provide those services.

The Chair: Thank you.

[English]

I want to welcome to our committee today Bob Benzen and John Barlow.

We'll start with John Barlow for seven minutes.

Mr. John Barlow (Foothills, CPC): Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Ms. Dart, I want to speak with you initially, and just before I get into my main questions, you mentioned the need to have quota at the federal government level. Are you talking about elected officials as well? If that's the case, how do you see us working that in terms of elections and nominations? Is this something other countries have done, and how do they make it work?

Dr. Beatrix Dart: You would hope that a government is representative of the population. That is the main cause of having representation. If you have a government that is not very balanced... In particular, gender balance is the obvious one to me, because we can easily measure whether we are fifty-fifty in terms of where we need to be with our representation.

I do believe that there might be mechanisms possible. My assumption is that you are asking, quite practically, how does that look? First of all, you would have to encourage more women to be available to stand. I know there are some organizations, like Equal Voice, etc., that are trying to persuade more women to stand for election.

A bit more grassroots movement might be required first, but I do believe that if they see there is actually a need to fill those positions.... My experience has been that women are pretty good at standing up when there is a need, but maybe that has to be encouraged more than it currently is. Right now, most women see the challenges of becoming elected, the maybe-not-so-lovely path up to a position. More support would probably be required to make that a reality, but even having the statement out there that we are looking for a gender-balanced election as we go forward would hopefully get women more interested.

Mr. John Barlow: So it's not necessarily a hard quota—saying, “I'm sorry. You're a guy, so you can't run in this election. We're looking for...” It's just about being more proactive at the grassroots level and finding strong women, or women who would be interested, and encouraging them to run.

Dr. Beatrix Dart: You could put a hard quota in place, and, ideally, it would lead to every party being exactly gender-balanced. I

think the challenge is that you might not have enough current supply, so to speak. This is something that needs to be built over time.

Mr. John Barlow: We did a previous study similar to this when we were government. I remember that one of the statistics that came out of that was that more than 80% of the new businesses started in Canada were started by women, which I thought was an incredible number. I could be a bit wrong, but I think that the economic impact over the next decade of these small businesses started by women would be \$10 billion.

There were some barriers, obviously. Many women were going into starting these small businesses with a lack of experience, compared to their male counterparts, and were also having difficulty in accessing capital. Also, mentorship was a big one.

Are these still pretty significant barriers for women getting into business? What are some options for how we can try to address some of those barriers?

● (0910)

Dr. Beatrix Dart: John, before we go to that question, I think there's actually a deeper cause. Why are women starting businesses? If you look at the research around women entrepreneurs, you see that a lot of them leave the corporate environment, in many cases out of frustration. They say, “You know what? I've had enough of this. I'm going to do my own thing.”

Although 80% sounds like a large number, the problem is that you have a lot of women entrepreneurs who have no intention whatsoever of growing their business into a larger one. Most of these women entrepreneurs' organizations are very small. The vast majority are one-person shops. They started them for lifestyle reasons, not necessarily to contribute major revenue back to the economy. This is a mechanism to deal with the frustration they have encountered in their career progression, so you have a lot of very small businesses started by women, and they will never grow into the \$1-million range, for example, in terms of revenue.

Once we look at the motivation for starting these businesses and whether there truly is any interest in advancing them, and we segment out the group that really does it for lifestyle reasons, and start looking at the ones who do indeed have an intention to grow it into a major business—maybe even adding more personnel and going into the \$10-million range—then we can look at the barriers they are encountering. There is no doubt that there are some barriers. Again, a lot of research has been done that women don't get as much attention and access to capital.

Can something be done about it? Yes, I think most banks have woken up to the fact that these would be interesting customers. If they just put something in place that would be more attractive to women entrepreneurs, they might have a new customer base. I have a bit of faith that market forces will solve this one. I'm not too concerned about that. I know it might sound naive. I am more concerned about the women entrepreneurs who have stepped out and now do one-person shops because of the frustration that they couldn't progress in their previous careers.

Mr. John Barlow: I see that our witnesses who joined us by video conference are shaking their head. Is there something you wanted to add to that as well?

Voices: Oh, oh!

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Goulet: We agree with Ms. Dart on this issue.

Clearly, entrepreneurs who want to start a business need better access to credit, especially microcredit. There are many programs in terms of that, but as an organization, we do not prioritize that path toward economic self-sufficiency over other options.

On the contrary, we believe that structural changes need to be made to the labour market. In addition, we need proactive legislation on wage equity; a funded, accessible and universal daycare system; and equal employment access programs. Those are the structuring policies to really help improve the economic situation of women in Canada.

Ms. Ruth Rose-Lizée: I would also like to add that, in Quebec, self-employed workers are eligible for the Quebec parental insurance plan. At the federal level, over the past year or two, they have been able to buy into special employment insurance benefits, but it's very expensive and the conditions are very restrictive. We also have concerns when it comes to that. We want self-employed workers to have access to a good parental insurance plan with suitable conditions.

[English]

The Chair: Very good.

Now we'll go to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to all three witnesses.

I hear all my colleagues around the table going “right”.... These are not New Democrat witnesses, I'm pretty sure.

I'm loving what all three of you are saying. Thank you very much for being so clear.

I'm going to try to fit a lot into seven minutes.

This is for the witnesses from the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail. You talked about proactive pay equity legislation federally. An all-party committee of Parliament recommended that the government table legislation next month, because women in Canada have been waiting for 40 years since it was first promised. The government has told us it will be by “late 2018”. Can you think of any rationale to ask women to wait longer?

• (0915)

Ms. Ruth Rose-Lizée: No.

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Goulet: No.

[English]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you. I thought we might agree.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Ruth Rose-Lizée: One of the reasons why we adopted proactive legislation in Quebec and in Ontario is that the complaints-

based system, which is still in effect in Canada, has not given us any results.

Some of the cases have dragged on for 15 and 20 years. When Bell telephone operators got pay equity, what did Bell Canada do except get to rid of all its telephone operators? In Quebec, one of the problems we had was that although the employers had four years to implement pay equity, most of them did not, and the Quebec commission was not efficient in terms of enforcing the law.

Not only should it go into effect as soon as possible, but there should.... Employers don't need more than two or three years to implement pay equity.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: We have good models that can be followed. As we know from the case of the Canada Post employees, those women fought in court for 30 years. Some of them died in poverty before they ever got their settlement. It was shameful.

I want to move to all three witnesses on the question of gender parity in crown appointments to federal commissions and boards. Both panels of witnesses have said that we need to accelerate the rate of change, and that the status quo is just inching us forward in a way that is frustrating and not sustainable. I think both of you have recommended at least a 40% target to move toward and to have it on a quota basis.

The government is touting Bill C-25 as a comply or explain model, which is the same as that of the previous Conservative government. We've had many witnesses discredit comply or explain.

I have a private member's bill that says we should get to 50% within six years. It would be ramped up to 30% two years after the bill comes into effect and to 40% four years after. This would be just for crown corporation and federal commission appointments. Have you seen models like this in other places that have worked well? Does this feel like an approach that is consistent with your advice?

[Translation]

Ms. Nathalie Goulet: Some 10 years ago, the Charest government, in Quebec, passed regulations requiring the boards of directors of public organizations—about 25 large public organizations were affected—to reach parity in a few years. The time frame was very short. I believe that it was three years. We are talking about parity, so 50%. Yet, the target was reached.

With a clear and specific objective, organizations establish an internal diagnostic and choose the methods they will use. They all have a specific objective and tight deadlines to meet. That kind of an objective leads to real mobilization. However—and this is especially true for political parties—a set of incentives must be applied, as well as penalties if the objectives are not achieved.

Yes, these are quotas. People don't like to talk about this. That said, whether we call it “corrective actions” or something else, we need clear objectives.

[English]

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you.

Ms. Dart.

Dr. Beatrix Dart: To me, after so many years of pushing for more women on boards and senior roles, the Ontario government, the OSC, has introduced the comply or explain policy, which they have been monitoring now for the last two or three years. The excuses that companies put in their proxy filings are just hilarious. We actually researched them, and they say, well, it is merit-based and that's why there's no progress. Really? The excuses have been whitewashing everything that is currently status quo. So this is not happening.

The most disheartening part last year when we looked at public sector board appointments was that out of 521 board appointments, 76 went to women. That's 15%. Excuse me, after all the discussion and all the awareness, all the beautiful comply or explain and "shouldn't we be better by now?", and "we are Canadians, a beacon in the global society of gender parity", this is not happening without a quota. That's my point. Even after all the nudging, you do need a shock to the system. Without a quota, I don't think this will happen.

● (0920)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you.

Do I have any more time?

The Chair: You have one minute.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Great.

Do you have any words on some of the advice we've had from witnesses about parental leave? One way to break the pattern of patriarchy and get more men involved in taking more of the load of unpaid domestic care would be to offer "use it or lose it" parental leave for the non-childbearing partner, who is usually male. Do you have any observations on that?

Dr. Beatrix Dart: Yes. In looking at countries that have introduced that, there are currently about 70 countries in the world that have paid paternity leave or shared parental leave. However, the ones that are the most forward-thinking have mandatory parental leave. Finland, Norway, Germany, and even Portugal have a better system than Canada—not that I want to play down Portugal. It requires fathers to take paid parental leave after childbirth, and it offers bonus leave to couples where fathers are home alone.

Can I just emphasize the "home alone" part? This is not meant to be a family vacation for three. This is meant to help fathers to understand and be part of gender equity in terms of involvement.

The beautiful thing that also has come out of it, an unintended consequence, is that the hiring bias in companies has been almost eliminated. If you look at young men and young women who are seeking the same position, she might take maternity leave, but now, both of them have to take parental leave. So the hiring bias has been eliminated too.

[Translation]

The Chair: Mr. Serré, go ahead for seven minutes.

Mr. Marc Serré (Nickel Belt, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for making their presentations and preparing for today's meeting.

My question is for Ms. Dart.

We are talking about fairly firm quotas. Other witnesses, including the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada

and the Canada research chairs program, told us they have a 30% objective. Yet it seems that, for Canadian universities, the standard is 15%. That is an issue you brought up.

You have a great deal of expertise on the economy.

[English]

Ms. Baker, from the University of York, came to talk about microeconomics. I just want to get your sense on it. Sure, with or without quotas, we have to work towards changing some of the policies to get there. I just want to get your thoughts about the World Economic Forum she mentioned and consider the lens of microeconomics and how we can change as a government when we look at infrastructure programs and the question of investing in roads versus the social side.

Dr. Beatrix Dart: First, let me just comment on the quota and the actual number, because I do believe that you have to set a number that is high enough. The last thing you want is a woman eventually ending up wherever it might be, whether on the board or in senior roles, and she's the token quota woman. That is almost the worst outcome. The stigma around of would counter and negate any progress we're trying to make with it.

The reason why most countries actually have jumped on at least 40% is that, once you have 40% women around a table, it's kind of hard to stigmatize somebody. I think there is a magic in the number, because you do need to have a number that is high enough. Slowly phasing it in at 10%, 20%, or 30% will not do. It would create a huge disservice, in my opinion, for the women who are the poor 10%, 20%, or 30%, until that number of 40% has been reached. For that reason, I would say that you do need to jump in with a high enough number that this whole issue of being ostracized or being the quota woman is not present. That would be one part of that.

Is there something that can be done on a larger scale or in various sectors? We have been looking at that. You might have seen, Mr. Chair, the 30% Club campaign, to get a minimum of 30% women in various roles—although it does vary by sector. Of course it does. We have the professional services sectors and the banks. They're behaving beautifully. Their trends over the last five to 10 years are all very positive and they have done a beautiful job in advancing women on the larger scale.

It is not kicking in at all in some industries where, I would say, the CEOs in many cases have not bought into the idea. You can almost categorize it into CEOs who have been converted and are happy to do something; the CEOs who believe in the cause, but don't know what to do; and the CEOs who do not believe in this at all and for whom there is no sensible business case for advancing women. You find that last category predominantly in the natural resources sector and energy technology companies, unfortunately, and it is the hardest to break into those areas. Even with conversations, it's difficult to get to the right conversation and the right discussion.

• (0925)

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you for the last part, too.

[*Translation*]

That brings me to my second question, which is for Ms. Goulet and Ms. Rose-Lizée.

Thank you for the work you are currently doing with regard to the mining sector in Quebec.

Based on your success, can you make recommendations on other natural resource sectors across Canada?

Ms. Nathalie Goulet: Yes. Thank you for bringing that up.

We just completed a three-year project that was funded by Status of Women Canada under the women's program. That project had to do with Quebec's mining sector in two resource-rich regions—Abitibi-Témiscamingue and the Eeyou Istchee James Bay territory. That was a very worthwhile program, where we were asked to completely transform the industrial mining sector, in three years, on a voluntary basis. In fact, no coercive measures, employment access programs or contractual obligations were to be applied.

In three years, we did manage to complete the project—and we are proud of that—to establish an internal diagnostic with community partners consisting of certain industries or companies. We even established a multi-year action plan that set out measures to increase the presence of women in the mining industry, especially in areas where very few women are employed. Their proportion is only 4% in production trades. In the case of those trades, entry level positions often make it possible, through internal training, to access trade positions. So we developed an action plan, but mining companies preferred to undertake small targeted measures. Very few of those companies were willing to adopt the action plan as a whole.

There are some useful measures, but that is not how we will fight systemic discrimination. That said, we are proud of what we were able to produce thanks to that report. We even developed a good practices guide for the mining sector. It would be a real pleasure for me to send relevant links to the committee. The guide is housed on the website of Quebec's Comité sectoriel de main-d'oeuvre de l'industrie des mines. Since its launch last November, it has been consulted several hundred times. That means that a need exists.

Mr. Marc Serré: Thank you very much.

In 10 seconds, I would like to ask Ms. Dart to send us the documentation on the success of the model she talked to us about earlier. It was an umbrella organization.

• (0930)

[*English*]

Dr. Beatrix Dart: Thank you for the question.

A group of organizations have come together. All of them are pan-Canadian and have an impact across Canada. The ones I mentioned already are Catalyst, Women in Capital Markets, the ICD, the Clarkson Centre, the Canadian Coalition for Good Governance, and the 30% Club. We came together because, quite frankly, we believe that the efforts are too fragmented. We all have the same goal and that is to advance women, but we feel there are too many small parts.

We all have small budgets so the impact is very small, based on our budgets.

Also, by collaborating we believe there's an opportunity to have a larger strategy for Canada. We would like to create an appropriate Canadian solution. Recently we have had a couple of U.S. for-profit organizations telling us how to advance women. I'm thinking to myself "excuse me".

Why can't we create a Canada-wide solution instead of having all these smaller organizations out there? We are hoping to create an alliance or an umbrella organization, and we have been starting to do that. So far, the Ontario government loves it because it is using us as a think tank to run ideas or issues by this alliance and to ask for its recommendations.

We would hope to create a larger alliance Canada-wide, and ideally we would love to have the federal government's support for that. Quite frankly, you need to have a carrot, and the carrot is always our budgets.

The Chair: Excellent.

Thank you very much to all our witnesses this morning.

We have a brief bit of committee business to take care of that we're going to sandwich here in the middle—three quick items. The first one has to do with the follow up from Bill C-337, namely, a letter that I believe we agreed we would send to the justice minister so she could distribute it to the provinces. There are three comments about the draft, which I think you received. The first one has to do with paragraph 2, where it talks about—

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Do we want to excuse the witnesses, maybe?

The Chair: They don't have to leave, unless you want them to leave.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: No, no, I don't want them to.

The Chair: Okay. We would really appreciate you guys being here.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: You can stay if you like.

The Chair: This will be riveting.

Dr. Beatrix Dart: I'm just tuning you out.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: I just don't want to make you stay.

Voices: Oh, oh!

The Chair: Yes, you don't have to stay.

Anyway, there are three little corrections.

First, paragraph 2 says "decisions that are currently recorded and not reported". They want to strike everything after "decisions". They want to report "decisions", because otherwise it gets into the weeds about what those decisions are.

The second one is that this letter actually calls for all case decisions to be put online. I think the intent of the committee was just for the sexual assault cases to be put online.

The third one is that this draft recommends that they expand the available training to “judges in the provincial court”. There’s a recommendation that instead we refer to “provincially appointed judges” instead of the courts, because the courts are all named different things.

It’s mostly grammatical changes that are being suggested.

Is there any discussion?

Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I have some other questions and suggestions as well. I would suggest, partly because the bill is still in process, that we don’t need to rush this, but especially I want to make sure that the people who receive this letter really understand what it is we’re asking for and why. I would thus rather see an expansion of some of the rationale, because this is really an advocacy letter to catch the other ministers up on what they missed.

In the very first paragraph, then, I think some expansion of what the bill does—some bullet points that summarize the contents of the bill—could be added, so they will understand what Bill C-337 is.

In the second paragraph, I think we need some rationale. What’s the imperative for making transcripts widely available? If we simply give the ask without saying why, then I think it will have less impact.

We could, for example, select a piece of witness testimony, if we didn’t have anything else that described the imperative. I have one suggestion. Elaine Craig, from the Dalhousie faculty of law, had a quote that we could provide, if that’s helpful and if others agree that we need to have a bit of background.

Then, in the paragraph on training I think we should make sure that we are reflecting the vocabulary used in the bill. “Trauma-informed training” is an example: I’m not sure this is the language that ended up being in the bill. Again, if we were able to provide one example—maybe a sample line of testimony....

Finally, I just wasn’t clear from the draft to whom we are directing this; whether we’re aiming it to the justice minister and saying, “Can you, please, at a government-to-government level, on our behalf convey this to the provincial ministers?”; or whether we’re writing to the justice minister and cc’ing all the provincial and territorial ministers. I think we should just have clarity on that before we send the letter.

• (0935)

The Chair: My understanding was that we were going to direct the letter to the justice minister and let her disseminate the information to her provincial counterparts.

I think those changes are fine. Are there other changes?

Ms. Damoff.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): I agree with Sheila. I think it should be addressed to the justice minister, though, and say, “In your role, as federal justice minister, we want you to convey this to your counterparts.”

Everything that was said is fine, but there are two things. We have said “all courts”. I think we were very specific that it was only the cases that were overseen by a judge, not judge and jury.

The Chair: Yes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I don’t know whether we need different wording on that.

Also, I would suggest we expand the part in which we say “importance of training for all persons who play a role” to include some of the crown counsel and the police—specifically name them—and maybe pull something from the testimony that we heard on the crown counsel and say how critical those roles are in formulating the case that eventually goes to the judge, just expanding a little on that.

The Chair: I think there was a good list in the recommendation that we initially brought forward in *Taking Action to End Violence Against Young Women and Girls in Canada*. There was a good list of all the people who needed training in the process.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Yes, just so that it’s really clear what we’re asking.

The Chair: Are there any other comments? Good.

I agree with Sheila that we’re not in a hurry with this.

Sheila, if you want to send your stuff to the clerk, I’ll compare notes, and then we’ll send the draft around again. I want to make sure that it has the approval of the committee before it goes anywhere.

Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I’ll just follow up on Ms. Damoff’s comments, which I agree with. I don’t think we should pull testimony from the previous study into this. If we are to say who needs training, we should refer to some of the witnesses. I think they listed provincial judges, police forces, crown prosecutors, and lawyers, so it’s targeted.

The Chair: Can you send that? You’re very good with the quotes. Excellent.

Now the third piece of business is by Mr. Duguid.

Mr. Terry Duguid (Winnipeg South, Lib.): Madam Chair, thank you for this brief moment of the committee’s time.

We’ve had Kyna Boyce sitting with us since December 2015. She’s policy adviser to the Minister of Status of Women. She also assists the parliamentary secretaries, of which I am the second one. She will be taking a new position with Minister Duclos. I know, particularly on the government side, that she’s been an absolutely essential link between the minister and this committee. She worked very hard on Bill C-337 and helped us all get to a consensus on it.

In her new role, of course, she’ll be tackling issues such as EI, child care, and housing, some of the things that we know are so important to women. We wish her well in her new position and thank her for all of her service to this committee.

The Chair: Definitely.

Some hon. members: Here, here!

The Chair: I do hope that after all the testimony you've sat through, understanding the things that we want to see in child care, parental leave, and everything else, you can advise Minister Duclos aptly in that vein.

At this point in time, we're going to suspend and switch the panels.

• (0935)

(Pause)

• (0940)

The Chair: We are starting our second panel. We are continuing to study the economic security of women in Canada.

We have with us today, from Engineers Canada, Jeanette Southwood. From the Canadian Space Agency, we're pleased to have Marie-Claude Guérard and Dominique Breden.

We are looking forward to hearing what you ladies have to say.

We're going to begin with Jeanette for seven minutes.

Ms. Jeanette Southwood (Vice-President, Strategy and Partnerships, Engineers Canada): Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to appear here today.

As the vice-president of strategy and partnerships for Engineers Canada, I'm very pleased to be here to discuss Engineers Canada's involvement in protecting women's economic security while promoting the representation and retention of women within the engineering profession.

Engineers Canada is the national organization that represents the 12 provincial and territorial associations that regulate the practice of engineering in Canada and license the country's more than 290,000 professional engineers. Together, we work to advance the profession in the public interest.

Engineers Canada has long worked towards facilitating the entry and success of women in the engineering profession. The entry and retention of women into careers in engineering is a key opportunity to increase women's economic security. After all, engineering, along with business and health, is among Canada's best compensated professions. In addition, the E in STEM, engineering, is a career that brings together the accomplishments of the sciences, technology, and mathematics—the S, T, and M in STEM—to make a difference in the world and to help people. In fact, according to an international survey described in a Queen Elizabeth Prize for Engineering report, the number one role of engineering in the next 20 years is to solve the world's problems. Number two is to inspire new innovation, and number three is to improve the quality of people's lives.

Despite engineering being a key opportunity, women, who make up 50.4% of the total Canadian population, comprise only 12% of practising licensed engineers and only 19% of undergraduate engineering students. While women can benefit economically from a career in engineering, Canadian society is better served when the engineering profession is representative of the public interest it protects. We must work together to attract under-represented groups, specifically women, into engineering education programs, as well as the profession, in order to enhance their economic stability and promote their representation in male-dominated industries.

There are many factors that impact a woman's decision to enter into the engineering profession. Some of these factors may include the pay inequity that exists between men and women, inflexible maternity and parental leave benefits due to the current maternity leave system, and the stereotypes that engineering is a male-dominated industry. There are also several other factors that are not well known or are often anecdotal.

Although these are all important topics to address, the focus of my testimony today will revolve around the need for federally funded research that is specific to engineering. This research is necessary to gain a better understanding of why young females are staying away from the engineering profession and to understand the possible interventions that stakeholders and policy-makers can take in order to support women's entry into engineering. This research is also necessary to gain a better understanding of the barriers to retention that contribute to women leaving the field of engineering.

Engineers Canada, along with all of the regulators it represents, is working on raising the percentage of newly licensed engineers who are women to 30% by the year 2030, a goal known as “30 by 30”. The current percentage of licensed engineers who are women stands at 17%, a percentage that has not increased in the last three years.

In order to address the issues that are discouraging women from entering the profession, engineering stakeholders need to be supported by national, government-driven policies that encourage youth, especially girls, to consider a post-secondary engineering education, as well as a career in engineering. This support begins at the primary, secondary, and post-secondary school level.

Foundational skills in STEM will prepare Canadian youth for any future career path they choose to pursue, regardless of their gender. However, while the representation of women on university and college campuses across Canada has increased over the past decades, post-secondary enrolment rates for women in STEM subjects, and especially engineering, continues to remain extremely low.

According to a 2011 analysis conducted by Statistics Canada, among high school students with grades between 80% and 89%, approximately 52% of boys chose a STEM university program, but only 22% of girls chose the same. Among those students who had grades below 80% and attended university, approximately 30% of male students chose a STEM program, while only 10% of women with similar grades did the same. This demonstrates that there is a discrepancy between male and female students entering into STEM programs, even if they hold the same educational credentials.

The enrolment rate is even lower in engineering programs. Undergraduate enrolment and graduation rates of women in engineering programs continue to be significantly lower than in other disciplines. In 2011, women between the ages of 25 and 34 in the science and technical streams accounted for 59% of all science and technology graduates, a stark contrast to the 23% of graduates in engineering who were women that same year.

• (0945)

There is consensus that youth engagement in STEM subjects is a key vehicle to increasing a child's interest in engineering. Engineering stakeholders are involved in delivering outreach programs for this reason, with the goal of increasing enrolment in engineering programs. These programs are often specifically targeted to young women, as they are less likely to identify engineering as a possible career choice.

Understanding the core reasons for why girls are less likely than boys to pursue STEM subjects beyond high school would better prepare engineering stakeholders to deliver targeted youth engagement strategies and interventions to young women. This information would be extremely beneficial at a time when young girls could be taking the necessary steps to enter the engineering field, should they choose to do so.

In order to attract young women into engineering education programs, as well as the engineering profession, federal research funding is required to gain a better understanding of why young women are not pursuing engineering as an educational path. This research should focus on identifying and addressing the factors that are deterring young women from pursuing post-secondary education disciplines, even though they have the necessary qualifications and credentials. Having this knowledge will be critical in allowing stakeholders to implement the appropriate interventions for addressing what deters young women from engineering.

We also encourage the federal government to commit to incorporating research into its funding criteria for federal programs, such as PromoScience, so that these programs can also address these root causes. Too often when discussing STEM disciplines the emphasis is focused on science, technology, and mathematics, with a lack of focus on engineering. For this reason, programs being considered for PromoScience funding should also specifically target engineering.

The attrition of women within the profession is also a real threat for retaining women in the profession. As a professional engineer myself, I've personally witnessed women who leave the profession due to workplace barriers. I was fortunate to be able to overcome many of these barriers in my own career path. I've had a good career in engineering. Next month, I will be receiving an honorary doctorate in engineering. However, many women may not have the necessary support or opportunities to overcome such barriers. Often such barriers, such as inflexible maternity leave, pay and equity, or workplace culture, result in attrition for women in the engineering profession.

There's evidence from the United States and several other countries around the loss of women from the engineering profession. However, beyond anecdotal information, there is limited data available in Canada that illustrates the extent of this challenge. Engineering stakeholders cannot make informed choices on how best to retain women in the engineering profession without Canadian-specific data to guide their efforts.

For this reason, Engineers Canada encourages the federal government to invest in workforce research funding for the engineering profession in order to better understand and combat

the reasons that cause women to leave the profession and in order to increase opportunities for women in the profession. We want women to stay in a stable, well-paying profession to protect their economic security. As part of this investment, Engineers Canada also encourages the federal government to focus on research specific to indigenous women and women who are visible minorities.

Madam Chair, thank you for allowing me to present to the committee today on this important topic.

• (0950)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Guérard, you have seven minutes.

[English]

Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard (Chief Financial Officer, Canadian Space Agency): Thank you.

[Translation]

Madam Chair, honourable committee members, let me begin by thanking you for inviting us today.

As the chief financial officer, I am pleased to present an overview of the representation of women at the Canadian Space Agency.

The agency is working hard to ensure greater representation of women, not only in our workforce as a whole, but also in all the professions related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Access to a qualified, diverse and innovative workforce is a priority for us.

Before I continue, allow me to introduce my colleague, Dominique Breden, the agency's chief audit and evaluation executive. She is also our champion for employment equity and for the Women in Science, Technology and Management Committee.

I am proud to tell you that the Canadian Space Agency is meeting its targets in terms of representation of women in scientific fields.

[English]

The work done by the CSA women in science, technology, and management committee for the past 15 years has enabled us to increase the number of women in scientific, technical, and leadership positions in the organization. In 2002, women made up 13 of the agency's scientific employees. There were no women in senior management.

[Translation]

The representation of women in scientific, technical and engineering positions at the Canadian Space Agency meets workforce availability, which is 14.1% for engineers. The representation of women in middle management and senior management positions also meets workforce availability.

However, in management positions in science and technology sectors, they are still under-represented. For example, at the management level in engineering, the representation of women is approximately three times lower than their workforce availability. We are, therefore, pursuing our efforts, with a particular focus on these specific sectors of the organization.

At first, the committee's initiatives were primarily aimed at raising awareness among agency employees about the difficulties women face when trying to move into management and executive-level positions.

In 2014, the terms of reference, inspired by similar initiatives in other space agencies, notably NASA and the German and other European agencies, were written and endorsed by our executive committee, which recognizes and supports the importance of the efforts being made to improve representation of women in management positions.

Our committee members continue to monitor current and emerging issues at the Canadian Space Agency and best practices in government. They organize presentations for employees on gender-related challenges and opportunities, and participate in networking activities. Finally, they develop plans to support women's careers and provide regular updates and recommendations for action to the agency's executive committee.

• (0955)

[English]

The efforts undertaken over the years have borne fruit. Since 2009, the number of women in the scientific and professional category has met the employment equity objectives.

[Translation]

Our women in science, technology, and management committee is also investing a great deal of effort in creating a national women's committee to increase this group's visibility within the federal community. The proposal to create this national committee received support from 38 government departments and agencies, and in December 2016, it was submitted to the Treasury Board Secretariat for presentation to the Clerk of the Privy Council.

In all our recruiting processes, we do everything in our power to seek out talented women who work in the Canadian STEM community, that is, in professions related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The same is true when recruiting astronauts.

A national engagement strategy has been put in place to ensure that our astronaut recruitment campaign, which is currently under way, reaches the largest possible number of Canadians. In particular, we have reached out to women and indigenous people, including through the media and online social networks.

This strategy involves seeking help from various stakeholders, including universities, professional associations, and government partners like Status of Women Canada, to connect with these women and encourage them to apply.

These efforts have resulted in significant gains. During the last recruiting campaign, in 2008-09, 18.6% of the candidates who

submitted an application were women. This time, the proportion rose to 24%—which is still lower than the workforce availability of women in the targeted sectors, in other words, 32%. The recruiting process, itself, was also designed to ensure equity. The proportion of women still in the running is 29.4%, or five candidates out of a total of 17.

[English]

Our female astronaut candidates are also role models for young Canadians. Each female candidate has a unique STEM background, and all of them are ambassadors for the opportunities that exist for women in STEM fields.

[Translation]

We have also developed digital profiles that show the background, career, education, and exceptional skills of the 72 best astronaut candidates. Teachers and guidance counsellors even sent messages thanking us after using the profiles in class to put a human face on the possible careers open to young people in Canada.

Space has great power to inspire. When they are in Canada, our astronauts visit Canadians in various parts of the country to promote space, scientific discoveries, and the STEM fields.

Every year, spokeswomen from the agency—scientists, engineers, and so forth—participate in events intended for a variety of audiences, some specifically for women, such as *The Sky's No Limit - Girls Fly Too!* in British Columbia and *Les filles et les sciences* in Montreal.

We are continuing our communication and awareness activities in order to inspire, stimulate, encourage, and support the young scientists, explorers, and innovators of tomorrow.

Thanks to our efforts to increase the presence of women in key positions in our agency and to ensure greater availability of a qualified workforce, we are able not only to carry out the Canadian space program, but also to help Canada position itself strongly in a knowledge economy.

That concludes my opening statement.

Thank you for your attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[English]

We're now going to begin our round of questioning with my colleague, Ms. Damoff, for seven minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you. I want to thank all of you for being with us today. It's a real pleasure to have you here and to hear your testimony. With the Space Agency here, I can't resist this question. As a federal government, how can we boldly go where no one has gone before—

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Pam Damoff: —to ensure that, moving forward, we have pay equity and gender parity in jobs like engineering and in the Space Agency where women are under-represented? You've given us some examples, but are there any specific programs that the federal government could bring in to assist you in what you're already doing?

• (1000)

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard: Of course.

Ms. Breden, would you like to talk about our committee?

Ms. Dominique Breden (Chief Audit and Evaluation Executive, and Senior Officer Responsible for Disclosure of Wrongdoing, Audit and Evaluation Branch, Canadian Space Agency): To answer Ms. Damoff's question, I would say yes, definitely.

Over the past year, as Ms. Guérard mentioned, we took the initiative of creating a national women's committee. We saw that the other employment equity groups—indigenous people, visible minorities, and persons with disabilities—had formed their own national committees. Women, however, did not have a national committee.

In 2015, we asked then Clerk of the Privy Council Janice Charette a question when she was visiting the Canadian Space Agency. We asked whether it was possible to create a national women's committee, because it would help women make progress towards employment equity. We were told that, if the need existed, we could go ahead. We took the idea and ran with it, receiving the support of 38 departments. We developed a proposal for the creation of a committee because we truly believe in its power to help women government-wide, whether in science or other fields.

Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard: Perhaps I could add something about the new innovation program put forward by the Hon. Navdeep Bains.

A portion of the program is innovative and will encourage economic development opportunities for women and other under-represented groups. In connection with that, the Canadian Space Agency is developing a vision for the space sector. We know that accomplishments in the field of space have high visibility, so we will be able to keep promoting innovation and attracting women and young people to the sector. Those are the two areas we are focusing on right now.

[English]

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Regarding pay equity, we would encourage the federal government to consider instituting strategies, policies, practices, and programs that have encountered success elsewhere. Engineers Canada is encouraged to see that the federal government has committed to pay equity legislation in its 2017 federal budget. We encourage the government to consider instituting practices that have been established internationally, such as gender audits for businesses with more than 10 employees, and subsequent fines for non-compliance, such as seen in Denmark; publishing pay data, such as seen in Belgium, Finland, and the United Kingdom; gender equality programs as part of human resources policies, as seen in Iceland; and encouraging all Canadian provinces to adopt best practices around equal pay for equal work. The federal

government can use the existing model that already exists in some provinces, such as Ontario, which has requirements for both private and public employers to implement strategies to address pay equity.

Thank you.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Thank you.

Throughout this study we've heard about the importance of mentors to encourage young women especially to enter a career, but also to stay in that career. You've mentioned that retention is always an issue. I'm just wondering if there's anything we can do to assist that mentorship program.

I've certainly heard, in my own riding, of programs where they've partnered people together and had tremendous success in having those women who've just joined a company stay with the company and work through it. How can we assist in that type of mentorship?

[Translation]

Ms. Dominique Breden: The agency is part of the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada portfolio. In the last year, the department introduced the Dr. Roberta Bondar career development program for young women in science and technology. The program is similar to the Jeanne Sauvé career development program, which is aimed at career women, but is for young women. The program was created by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada and is currently offered in some departments.

It might be beneficial to increase the number of departments where the program is available. Young women working in science and communications, in either the private or federal public sector, are paired with leaders in those sectors, who serve as mentors. Generally, we try to have a mix of the two.

The Canadian Space Agency is participating in the program, which is a pilot project for the time being. It would be a good idea to continue and grow the program.

• (1005)

[English]

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: I see this question as connected to the earlier discussion about research into what attracts and retains women in the profession. Specifically, I see mentorship as a key part of that, in addition to sponsorship. We must not only provide mentoring and the coaching of young women to be able to work with them throughout their careers, but also actively to look for opportunities through sponsorship for women in that area. Through research I think we can identify the key levers that can attract and retain women. I'll use infrastructure as an example.

Within the disciplines of engineering, the discipline with the most women is civil engineering. One would think, when looking at the investments of the federal government in the infrastructure sector, that this should benefit women quite greatly. However, we've all seen the research showing that women benefit to a much lesser extent than men from infrastructure investments.

Part of that is because women are not going into the infrastructure field, where there are wonderful opportunities. We see this as just another indication of the need for research to better understand the attraction and retention piece, and how mentorship plays a part, how sponsorship plays a part, and how many other areas, such as workplace culture, play a part.

The Chair: Excellent.

I'm going to use my privilege to ask some questions because, as the first female engineer in the House of Commons, I have a passion to see some action happen here.

I'm disheartened to hear the testimony today. When I started in engineering in 1980, women in engineering made up 12% of the field, and to hear that that statistic has remain unchanged is really disheartening.

One of the things that I experienced, which was very common, was that guidance counsellors did not encourage women to go into engineering, because it was a male-dominated field. In terms of retention, the chronic harassment in the environment and the systemic discrimination in promotion and pay are some of the things that were factors at that time.

Jeanette, has that changed at all or are those things still the common contributors?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Certainly. Thanks very much, Marilyn.

We have anecdotal information that the kinds of factors you describe are among the key reasons many women are leaving engineering. We've seen some great strides in women enrolling in engineering. For example, this past year at the University of Toronto, more than 40% of the entering class were women.

But what happened to all of the women like you and me, the ones who surrounded us in our first year of class? Why aren't they represented now as women in the senior parts of their career, who could be role models and reasons for women entering the profession?

The factors that you describe, Marilyn, are all of the ones that we've seen and heard about. Because there is mainly anecdotal information about those factors, it can be a challenge to identify what, in the Canadian context, is the right thing to do.

In the United States, there have been studies on how women are retained in engineering. We can draw upon those studies and also share the links and the studies themselves with the committee. We know that the Canadian context is different, and we need to understand that context.

The Chair: My second question is for the Canadian Space Agency. I noticed that when you talked about the representation of women at different levels of management, you always expressed it in terms of how it related to the workforce availability. I really liked that because we hear a lot of conversation about quotas. Having a 50% target, where workforce availability is smaller, is not a good thing.

One of the successful tactics I saw when I was in industry was that when contracts were let, they would have a certain number of women who needed to be involved. Let's say it was instrument

technologists at the workplace availability rate of 30%. I'm interested to know if you would share more on that concept.

• (1010)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Dominique Breden: Yes, of course.

In the federal government, as you know, employment equity targets for the various groups are based on workforce availability. That means, then, that organizations try to achieve representation that reflects workforce availability.

Each department has to establish its own targets in relation to the available statistical data. Currently, though, all departments are using data from 2011. The numbers are updated every four years, so that means the next crop of data we will soon be using will be from 2016. We may see a change, depending on availability in the Canadian workforce. Nevertheless, at this point in time, the representation of women in management positions at the Canadian Space Agency is 36%, and workforce availability sits at 37%. The agency has worked incredibly hard in recent years to close the gaps in leadership positions across the board, and those efforts have been successful.

As Ms. Guérard mentioned earlier, a lot of work has also been done when it comes to scientific positions. As you said, in 1980, the rate stood at 12%. According to the data from 2011, current availability sits at 16%. That is the target departments are working towards, and we, at the agency, have met it, with a rate of 17%.

[*English*]

The Chair: That's excellent.

Both of you, what do you think the federal government can do to accelerate the number and retention of women in engineering or in the space environment?

Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard: I think we need to inspire young kids.

[*Translation*]

Through the innovation strategy, the Canadian Space Agency really wants to make a greater investment in inspiring young people and having a presence in various fields. That won't necessarily happen at the college or university level alone; we really need to trigger that shift in young boys and girls before they get to that stage. Obviously, the bigger the critical mass of young people who register for science programs sooner, the bigger our workforce.

One way the agency encourages participation is by giving university students funding to attend international conferences. We help them connect with space professionals around the world. We also provide them with networking support and offer internships to promote continued learning. The support and assistance we provide contributes to their development.

The support is rather targeted, though, so something the federal government could really help with is inspiring young people and getting them interested in these fields as early as possible.

[English]

The Chair: Jeanette.

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: I believe that inspiration is extremely important, in terms of role models and encouraging students and young people to go into all parts of STEM. For them to be prepared to take advantage of the economic security of a job in STEM is very important.

I also believe it's important for the federal government, and therefore all our stakeholders, to truly understand what is holding back women and young people from this. Here the investment in research is a key priority, and ideally should be undertaken very quickly, but then so is acting quickly on the recommendations of the research to be able to keep the momentum around this topic.

Thank you.

• (1015)

The Chair: That's excellent.

I want to thank Engineers Canada for bestowing the honour of fellow upon me. I will try to model and mentor well from there.

We go now to Ms. Malcolmson for seven minutes.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you, Chair.

I've got a series of questions for Engineers Canada about what we can do around infrastructure spending to make sure that we are using this opportunity to get more women into the workforce. I think we've heard testimony from other witnesses that there could be unintended consequences, that investments in traditional infrastructure might overly benefit men and not so much women, if we don't have women engineers and workers in the field.

We heard earlier at this committee from a Simon Fraser University professor about a success story in my backyard, which I'd forgotten about because it happened 25 years ago. The Vancouver Island highway was a success story in boosting the number of women employed in infrastructure projects, so I'll just read a couple of things that she said. The highway was going to "pass through first nations land, so they had to have equity initiatives there, and at the same time we had a government"—it happened to be New Democrats—"that was committed to equity." She continued, "What it required was a considerable degree of compulsion on the part of the government initially, because neither contractors nor unions wanted this. A specific clause in the agreement saying that employment equity hiring 'shall operate in priority' over other kinds of hiring is also extremely important, as is supportive leadership at the highest level." Furthermore, "Women went from being 2% of the labour force at the beginning to being 20% at a particular point in time." Finally, she added, "I do want to say that this is the kind of thing that was heard at the beginning of the Vancouver Island highway, and afterward the employers and the unions were both very, very happy with what had happened. The women got hired and the company was happy to hire them afterward".

That was testimony on February 9.

Do you have other examples of models like that, where government intervention pushed through and then created an opening for the next wave of women and where in the procurement

process they said, you're not going to get the contract unless you demonstrate that you have a certain percentage of spaces open to women, to indigenous people, to apprentices?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Yes, we do, and that information is mainly out of the European countries—Iceland and Belgium for example. We have reports that we can share.

In addition to that, in the reporting that I shared earlier, I mentioned anecdotally that in the United States there have been some studies on the types of things that could increase or decrease the retention of women in the field of engineering.

I'll refer specifically to a report that was done. It's called "The Athena Factor", which maintained that 52% of women leave science, engineering, and technology professions. It studied their career trajectories in many areas, including infrastructure, and looked at what would keep women in infrastructure.

Was it immediate actions like the ones you described, Sheila, or the ones that might require some kind of lead time, some kind of planning? It identified several key aspects whereby, no matter what kinds of compulsions were used to create roles for women, the women were still not retained. They call these "antigens". They identified five of them and they include women being marginalized by the workplace culture. Examples include being the sole woman on a team or at a site; career paths not being clear, and women therefore being stalled; and that systems of risks and rewards in those kinds of cultures can also disadvantage women.

We very strongly support the thinking and the idea of identifying the ways in which we can pilot this. How exactly do we do this? We also are aware of the fact that the piloting needs to acknowledge the challenges in the workplace culture and how that plays a part in the retention or attraction.

Thank you.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thanks. That's helpful. If you do have work that Engineers Canada has already done around procurement mechanisms, I think it would be helpful for us to get that included in our evidence collection. Thanks.

• (1020)

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Certainly, we'll definitely do that.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I have a second piece I want to follow up from your written brief to the committee. You said that women with children earn less than those without children, and that "This threatens women's ability to earn as much as men over the course of their career, and could be exacerbated by the recent announcement in the 2017 federal budget that maternity leave could be extended to 18 months."

Can you please describe a little bit more the unintended consequences of that budget 2017 announcement.

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Certainly.

When we look at the pay track of women, from the time they start work—which is typically before they would have taken maternity leave—to the time they're much more senior in their careers, we see a gap right from the very beginning. That gap—already in place when a woman takes maternity leave—is exacerbated when she is on maternity leave, because typically the structure is such that she's not able to partake in pay raises that might occur while she's away, and she's not able to acquire the kind of experience that's needed.

As we take a look at how that impacts the pay track for women, we need to be cognizant of all the different factors, but particularly of the fact that even before a woman takes maternity leave, she's typically behind the pay of a male.

Thank you.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Right.

Thanks.

We've heard some testimony following on this parental leave question—the “use it or lose it” parental leave, which is offered to the non-child-bearing partner, usually the man. It's something that can get men participating in child-rearing and also maybe lock them into a lifetime of sharing more domestic care responsibilities and unpaid care.

Is that something you've heard talked about within your profession?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Yes, we have. There is strong encouragement in our profession for men to take leave also, for men to have the opportunity to be with their young child, and also for men to be able to be part of the role modelling for our future generations.

The Chair: Excellent.

Now we go over to Ms. Ludwig for seven minutes.

Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.): Thank you very much for your presentations this morning, and thank you, Madam Chair.

I have a series of questions.

Our previous witness talked about quotas. In your industries and sectors, I'm wondering how you feel about the implementation of quotas for women to work in the STEM fields.

Maybe I can start with the aerospace engineering area.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Dominique Breden: We don't really talk about quotas; instead, we talk about targets. That's the language we use in the federal government.

In terms of the representation of women, as I said earlier, the targets are based on the statistics. In that sense, then, it would be helpful to rely on the latest data sooner as far as workforce availability rates are concerned. We realize that many things have shifted over the past few years, whether in terms of visible

minorities, indigenous people, women, or persons with disabilities. The statistics can vary greatly, so it would be helpful if the data were updated on a more regular basis.

That said, we don't want to limit our efforts to simply meeting the targets. In order to keep people in the profession, we need to exceed the targets. The activities we put in place and the programs where we want to attract—

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Sorry, could I just jump in? Maybe I wasn't clear on the difference between a target versus a quota. For example, our previous witness commented that we need to shock the system and put an actual quota in, so that's a “must do”. Let's say in the case of aerospace or engineering, we must have 50%, versus a target that we should work towards 50%. Do you support the notion of having an actual quota that has to be 50%?

[*Translation*]

Ms. Dominique Breden: You are talking about a 50% quota. Clearly, if we were to establish a quota of 50%, which is very different from the workforce availability rates, it would be really tough to meet that quota.

It is our view that the current rules and process—based on achieving targets that reflect representation in the workforce—make it possible to recruit women and ensure equity.

• (1025)

[*English*]

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Thank you.

Ms. Southwood.

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: We believe that the challenge with quotas is that they can often reinforce that someone is only there because of a numerical requirement, which then ties into the perceptions of women in the workplace. We feel that going in the direction of quotas and the investment that would be required by the federal government in such a system might possibly be better spent on taking action to address hostile, uncivil, and undermining behaviours in the profession, or incorporating career management into the way that women, but also others who are under-represented in the economy, are supported.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Thank you.

On May 15, a witness testified that there was a drop in participation in the STEM field by women between the ages of 29 and 34. The average child-bearing age of a women for their first child is 30. Do you see a correlation between the number of years necessary to gain experience to get to a position where there maybe are opportunities for leadership and—almost coinciding or crossing paths with—the prime child-rearing years now for women and their choices? And what kind of services or wraparound services can we as a federal government recommend for women to work to support them for re-entry?

I'll start with you, Ms. Southwood.

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Thank you.

There is U.S. based research on exactly this topic, and the finding that you described is echoed in that research, which indicates that “women experience a perfect storm in their mid- to late 30s. They hit serious career hurdles at the same time that family pressures ratchet up.”

One of the recommendations of the report is that companies that step in with targeted support at this time—and they call it a “fight or flight moment”—may be able to lower the female attrition rate significantly.

So there is some great work that's been done in the U.S. that could certainly assist in our better understanding what the challenges are, how this results, and then what actions might need to take place, understanding that it is from the U.S. context and that the research we encouraged earlier regarding Canada would be better able to reflect the Canadian context.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Great.

I'm just going to jump in with another question to add to this for the other witnesses here.

The examples that we've been given by different witnesses have been the long waiting times for child care spaces, and that many people are having to put a request in a year in advance and they're paying for certain spaces, which is very, very expensive.

In the case of aerospace engineering or engineering in general, the opportunity for labour mobility.... In other fields that I can compare it to, labour mobility often will lead to opportunities for leadership. If women and men are limited by waiting for child care space and knowing that it's prime time, could that perhaps limit their labour mobility within your sectors?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: I can start. Yes, it certain can. In fact, I remember even when I was a young mother, having that concern whether there would be a space and where the spaces were. I found it interesting, when I was a young person, a young engineer, thinking ahead and wondering what the situation would be like when my child was in university, when my child eventually became a parent himself. And it's very interesting that things, in that way, haven't really changed. So, yes, I would see it as a barrier, definitely.

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Okay, thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard: At the Canadian Space Agency, we are fortunate to have a day care at work. The number of child care spaces has doubled in the past few years. That means that younger professionals can reserve a spot as soon as they join the agency, allowing them to build a network in the scientific community. I think management has taken steps to give employees that labour mobility you mention.

[English]

Ms. Karen Ludwig: Is that common in the aerospace—

The Chair: Sorry, that's your time.

We're now going to Ms. Harder, for five minutes.

• (1030)

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thank you for giving us your time here today and being willing to chat with us about your industry.

My first question is for Ms. Breden. You talked about quotas, and I like what you had to say, that if we impose quotas on women it could be disconcerting to women and how they perceive it. One of the things that I've noticed about quotas is that they are somewhat demeaning, because they say that a women didn't earn that position based on her merit or her ability or her education or what she has to offer. Rather, rather it feels as if it were a bit of a patronizing appointment, if you will. Is it possible that women could perhaps feel demeaned by a quota system?

[Translation]

Ms. Dominique Breden: As I mentioned earlier, quotas and hiring targets are not the same thing.

With hiring targets, the first thing we look for is skill. We have assessment criteria, a statement of merit criteria; in short, we define the requirements of the position very clearly. We use tools to assess candidates in a way that is fair to everyone. We want to make sure that, at the end of the staffing process, no one feels that they were treated unfairly, man or woman. For each staffing process, we rely on neutral assessment tools that allow for merit-based assessment.

Once the assessment is complete, the skills of the candidates being equal, preference is given to women if hiring targets have not been met. That way, people won't feel that candidates were selected because they were women.

The Canadian Space Agency ensures that it follows appropriate processes. Having worked there a number of years, I can say that I haven't heard people claim that certain individuals were hired because they were women. We are mindful of that, and our approach is well received and clearly laid out.

I think it all depends on the level of communication, whether with all staff members or throughout the staffing process, as well as afterwards, once the process is complete. Making sure to communicate the approach and information clearly is also key.

Does that answer your question?

[English]

Ms. Rachael Harder: Yes, thank you very much.

My next question is for Ms. Southwood.

I believe that all of us around this table likely have the same goal, namely to protect the freedom of choice that women have within the marketplace, whether in the education they pursue, the job they pursue, or the career they enter into, or maybe even in leaving their career to raise a family, which is also a woman's choice.

In order to protect the freedom that a woman should enjoy, does it make sense that we would go toward a quota system wherein we would seek to put the same number of men and women in place, or would it be better to protect choice by going after the barriers that exist that prevent women from being able to access the education they desire, out of their choice, and the career advancement they desire within their freedom of choice as well?

Which one of these seems to make more sense to you: take down the barriers or impose quotas?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: This echoes back to the need for research that I described earlier. We know that there are levers. There are barriers that women are facing in workplace culture. In the Canadian context, we're not exactly sure what those levers are. Are those levers, for example, removing the barriers? Yes, I would say we can firmly state that we need to remove those barriers, but what are the key barriers?

Regarding quotas, do we truly understand, when we are advocating or holding back from saying that quotas need to be put into place, the implications of that?

Our feeling is that the challenge around quotas is that going ahead with quotas without understanding the impact on workplace culture, if it's a hostile culture, could actually disadvantage those who are the product of the quota. However, if the research uncovers that a quota system, along with creating a better and more supportive workplace culture, is a key way to go forward, then that's very important to understand.

I would say that within the Canadian context, we don't sufficiently understand the situation yet.

•(1035)

The Chair: Now we're going to Ms. Vandenberg for five minutes.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Thank you very much.

We've heard a lot in the committee and also today about the attraction, recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in STEM professions. One thing mentioned this morning by our witness was the re-entry. If a woman takes, say, two to three years or more for family reasons out of the workforce, we heard that educated women actually have a harder time getting back into the workforce.

I would like to hear from some of you, because we all know anecdotally. I heard, Ms. Southwood, what you said about the lack of Canadian-specific data, but have you perhaps seen, in your organizations, that women who leave for family reasons have difficulty getting back into it, even when they're actually seeking employment?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Yes, we have, and in fact we decided that there was a need for our profession nationally to put supports in place and to provide information for women transitioning out of and back into the profession, and supports for employers as well. We developed a document called "Managing Transitions: Before, During and After Leave", which is a planning and resource guide for both employers and employees. The guide is designed to assist engineers and geoscientists—we worked on this particular document together with geoscientists nationally—who are considering a maternity or parental leave. It's also designed to assist their employers.

Our experience has been that without some forethought, rejoining an organization or re-entering the workforce can be very frustrating, especially when expectations are not managed, and that's on both ends. The solution, we feel, is, very simply, to actively manage the transition, and to learn from the best practices developed in the guide.

Thank you.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Wonderful. Thank you.

Canadian Space Agency, go ahead, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Marie-Claude Guérard: We haven't observed any such issues at the Canadian Space Agency, and that may be due to the quality of our working conditions. Some people extend their maternity leave into parental leave in order to raise families. We also offer flexible work hours, flextime. We have good communication between management and employees, which facilitates the return to work after an extended period of leave. We are fortunate that way.

[*English*]

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Thank you very much.

Moving on to some of the comments about workplace culture, we've seen and heard from a number of witnesses that the workplace culture changes when you have a more diverse workforce.

With regard to the space agency, I know that you talked about the increase. Have you seen that kind of change in culture? In particular, I noticed that in the public awareness campaign to recruit staff, you mentioned indigenous women as well. Has there been an increase in other diverse groups—indigenous, women with disabilities, visible minority women—and in that case, do you also see a change in the culture?

We'll start with the space agency and then I'll go to you, Ms. Southwood.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Dominique Breden: We've made an effort in recent years to improve representation among indigenous women, persons with disabilities, and visible minorities. This morning, we were discussing women. We worked on organizing activities and setting up committees for the visible minority network, as well as a committee for all the groups. We are trying to foster that change in culture, to be more inclusive and to have diverse working groups.

The message goes out from the top, in other words, the executive committee. The emphasis is on the fact that diverse work teams represent added value. The change in culture is visible in terms of not just talk, but also actions. It is also visible in the involvement of the various executive committee members and employees in awareness-raising activities for the different groups.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Thank you.

Ms. Southwood, what about you?

[*English*]

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Yes, we've also seen changes in the culture. There's data out there indicating that when diverse teams do work together, they come to successful outcomes or successful solutions more frequently. We can share that with you also.

One of the keys to the diversity discussion is the inclusion aspect, and typically in this changing culture, successful outcomes have occurred when diversity has been accompanied by inclusion.

•(1040)

The Chair: Excellent.

The final five minutes go to John Barlow.

Mr. John Barlow: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thanks again to our witnesses. It's much appreciated. You've provided some great information and input.

Earlier this year I had an opportunity to speak at an event in Calgary called "The Employment Crisis for Canada's Energy Professionals—A Lost Opportunity for Canada." A lot of the participants were energy professionals, geophysicists, and engineers, and one of the topics that came up quite often was how female engineers are the ones who are laid off first when there is an economic downturn as we are experiencing in Alberta right now. However, they were really struggling to find any data that could back that up. They really want to try to have some hard evidence this is the case.

Ms. Southwood, does Engineers Canada do anything to keep track of employment levels on an annual or a monthly basis that would provide some of that data?

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Yes, we do have data on employment from across Canada—also separated by discipline. We can very happily share that with the committee.

Thinking about the observation you made about the energy field, the economic downturn and women being laid off first, we see that as linked to that whole discussion around workplace culture. There are direct ties between the advancement of women and opportunities for women and who gets laid off first. We see this as part of a comprehensive conversation that is happening but that also needs to be had much more holistically.

So long story short, yes, we do have data that we can very happily share.

Mr. John Barlow: I appreciate that.

We've heard a lot today about the need for government to invest in or get involved in this to try to retain more women in the industry.

I'd like to start with Ms. Southwood. I'm always of the opinion that people who are closest to the issues are the best to deal with these types of things, not just to help us to deal with the consequences, but also to deal with the root cause of the problem, whether it's barriers or whatnot.

It's one thing for government to try to solve some of these things, but as many of us have said today, I'm sure we've done many of these studies before in the status of women committee.

On your part, what is Engineers Canada doing in terms of grassroots policy and programs to try to get more women involved in the STEM programs and to try to retain them?

As you said earlier in your testimony, you had a large group of women in your university class and you wondered where they all went. What sorts of programs are Engineers Canada trying to do to address some of these things? Maybe it isn't all just for government; maybe there are some things you can do.

Ms. Jeanette Southwood: Certainly. I'll start with our ask, which was around the research piece. Our feeling is that, specific to engineering, there has not been this kind of research done in the past, but it is essential. It's essential not just because E is part of STEM, but also because it's the E that brings together the ST and the M. We need the E if STEM is to truly benefit Canada.

Going back to your question about what Engineers Canada has done, we do a labour market survey every year. It indicates what is happening out there in the labour market and where the opportunities are. We have a portal on which we make this information publicly available, not only within Canada but also for those who are immigrating to Canada so they can better understand where the opportunities are, and, if they are looking for an opportunity in a specific type of engineering, where the best place is to take advantage of that.

We also have our 30 by 30 program, which is our work to increase the percentage of women who are licensed in engineering to 30% of the total by 2030.

We have our Future City program that works with grades 6, 7, and 8 to open up the world of engineering to them within the classroom curriculum so that even students who don't necessarily have the opportunity to go to an after-school program or go only to school can experience what it's like to be an engineer. That was a very successful pilot earlier this year, and it will be expanded.

Managing Transitions is another initiative of Engineers Canada. That's the document I described a little bit earlier on how we assist both employers and women—parents—who are moving out of the workforce for parental and maternity leave and then moving back in.

There are a number of others, and we can put together a summary and share it with the committee.

Thank you very much for that question.

•(1045)

Mr. John Barlow: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Very good, and that's our time for today.

[*Translation*]

Thank you to all the witnesses for being here today.

[*English*]

Thanks to everyone, and we will see you again after the break. Thank you.

This meeting is adjourned.

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