



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

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

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FEWO • NUMBER 070 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

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**EVIDENCE**

**Tuesday, June 20, 2017**

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**Chair**

**Ms. Marilyn Gladu**



## Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Tuesday, June 20, 2017

● (0850)

[English]

**The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)):** All right, ladies and gentlemen. Here we are with our committee business. It's going to be sort of an interesting meeting today because, as you know, we're supposed to have votes. The bells are supposed to go at 10:05. It's unfortunate that our panel is in the second half, but we'll have as many of them give their opening remarks as we can before the bells go, and the bells could be delayed. You can never predict what's happening in the House.

For our committee business, there are a couple of things. First, we talked last week about the letter that's going to the justice minister on Bill C-337, and we have the final changes. Do any of you have any issue with the draft that was updated and sent to you? Okay, so that can go. Wonderful.

Today, our main topic of discussion is what we will study after the economic status of women. The clerk did email to you the list of all of the things that previously we had suggested. This was so that you could check off what we've already studied and we could look at the ones that are left. However, are there any that you would like to bring forward by way of a motion?

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.):** Sheila actually brought this forward a year ago: a study of indigenous women in corrections. I'm just looking at Sheila's original motion, number 11.

I'll tell you one of the advantages that we have in this status of women committee. We've talked about the indigenous population in corrections in the public safety committee, which I sit on. However, the issue isn't just in corrections. It is also in the justice system. The public safety committee can't look at the two, and the justice committee can look at the justice system but not corrections. The fastest growing population in our corrections right now is women, and of those women, it's indigenous women. I think in some of our corrections facilities it's 63% that are women.

The advantage that the status of women committee has is that we're not limited to only studying justice or only studying corrections. We can look at it fully from access to the justice system right through to corrections. We can also look at access to early release because indigenous offenders do not access early release at the same rate as other offenders. We can look at it with a particular

focus on women, obviously, but it's an issue that we can take a broader scope of than other committees in the House of Commons.

**The Chair:** Is the suggestion to study motion 11 with a specific focus on indigenous women?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Yes. I'm just reading it. It's not to study women's access and treatment in the justice system; it's to study indigenous women's access.

**The Chair:** Okay.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I want to make sure we're focused on the federal side of things. Let me just review it again here because we tend to wade into provincial....

Laura, could you help with the wording to make sure that we're focused on the federal side? Obviously, we were involved in writing the Criminal Code, but for things like legal aid and access to legal aid, which is—there is no doubt—an issue for indigenous women.... We need to put a federal spin on those so we don't end up with a report that has a whole bunch of things that are actually under provincial jurisdiction.

**The Chair:** All right. That would be one idea.

Ms. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC):** You just took the words out of my mouth because I was going to say that I've sat down with some indigenous groups. The other day I was at the London Abused Women's Centre, which does an outreach to all of the correction facilities and does different things, so I was going to say that I love that idea. I would like to see it broadened to indigenous women in the justice system, but we have to be very cautious of the difference between what's provincial and what's federal. I do like that idea.

If there is a way to expand it so that we can look at—I know we can't look at legal aid—anything that deals with those issues, any supports that they have in communities, and things like that as well....

●(0855)

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** We're not going to be starting this until the fall, but I'm wondering if, before we actually start the study, the analyst could do a bit of a summary of where the federal government can actually have an impact in terms of justice in particular. Corrections is fairly easy. We're running the corrections facilities. In terms of early release and the types of situations within corrections—whether there are healing circles or elders who have access to the corrections facilities—I think that one is a little easier. On the justice side, if you could look at where we can....

**The Chair:** Yes, it would be nice to get a summary of what has been done and what has been looked at already so that you see what the gaps are.

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** I appreciate the support for my motion, which was more than a year ago but which we didn't ever debate. I appreciate that we need an indigenous women's focus. I'm a little bit concerned about the optics of making it look as if it's only indigenous women who are having trouble with the law. I'm sure we can manage that, but there are systemic problems, which is why my motion, proposed back in March 2016, was about women's experience with the justice system.

My priority remains a study on domestic violence shelters. Because my previous motion to study women's access to domestic violence shelters was voted down by the committee, at the clerk's advice I have a slightly different motion that updates it. I can put that on the record. I provided it yesterday to the clerk, or my staff did.

I move:

That given the recent finding of gaps in shelter services by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities' 7th report, "Breaking the Cycle: A study on Poverty Reduction", the committee study the shelter and transition house system in Canada; that the study include an examination of the current gap between need and available beds and shelters and transition houses; that the study include an examination of current federal programs and funding in support of shelters and transition houses; that the study consider possible solutions to address the gap between need and supply; that the committee report its findings to the House; that the meetings be televised; and that the committee request a government response to its report.

**The Chair:** I really like the motion that Sheila has brought. One of the things that has become clear to me as I sit and listen in the House is the crisis situation that we're in with shelters, and it's clear that the government alone is not going to be able to fix the gap, so it would be very interesting to study and try to figure out what else could be done, what combination of things.

Are there other ideas?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** Could I just comment?

Sheila, you were talking about women in corrections versus indigenous women, recognizing that there is an issue with women going into our corrections. There is no doubt, but it's disproportionately indigenous women and they are the fastest growing segment. There is obviously an issue with women going into corrections, but the fact that even more of those women are indigenous women indicates that there is something wrong somewhere in terms of these women going to prison versus being released back into the

community. I don't know the reasons, and that's why I think it's important to do the study.

It certainly doesn't indicate in any way, shape, or form that it's only indigenous women going to prison, but the fact is that it is a crisis that more indigenous women are going into corrections. I think we should try to deal with that particular issue.

**The Chair:** Ms. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Just moving away from that, another motion I know we had discussed—and this would be almost like a sub-continuation of what we've just done—is to look at women on boards and whether there have actually been any changes after "It Starts with One – Be Her Champion" and a variety of other programs have gone on. It is a motion to study what impact these federal programs have had on any of the women on boards, and things of that sort.

Because we've been doing this economic study, we may want to age that for the next study afterwards, but that's an opportunity as well to look at boards and things of that sort.

Also, there was a discussion—and I will bring this forward on behalf of Stephanie—about looking at women in politics. That's another, and she can read the motion if you wish.

Go for it.

●(0900)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie (Calgary Midnapore, CPC):** Okay. This is a rough draft.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I have a point of order, Chair.

I have a motion on the floor, so how are we going to handle that?

**The Chair:** Certainly, we have the first motion. If you want, I can deal with them each as motions, and we can go on like that.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I didn't hear Pam's as a motion, so that's why I thought I was first in the queue, having said, "I move that".

**The Chair:** I think that if we checked the *Hansard*, you would be right, so before we go to this one we'll deal with your motion.

Sheila's motion is the reworded motion number 10, to study shelters.

Is there any discussion on that motion?

(Motion negated)

**The Chair:** Now, Pam, do you want to change yours to make yours a motion?

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'll make mine a motion.

**The Chair:** This one is motion 11, with the change that the focus is indigenous women.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** And with the proviso that it can be amended after seeing what the analyst comes back with in terms of federal jurisdiction.

**The Chair:** Correct.

Is there any discussion on the motion?

Ms. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** It's not so much a discussion on the motion, but it's on the discussion. Let's get everything on the table so that we know what our best study is going to be. It's great to have these motions, but we're voting and we may have had an excellent study that we've just turned down because of the process.

We should try to put everything in the pot and then decide what's going to be best for us as a study. We don't want to miss out on any of these opportunities. Tomorrow, I might actually come up with a brilliant idea—or not.

**Voices:** Oh, oh!

**The Chair:** Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I'm not saying necessarily that it's going to change, but if the analyst comes back and says this is strictly provincial, there's no sense in us spending a lot of time on it. I'm not saying this would necessarily change. I'm actually quite happy with the way Sheila worded this, but if there's something that's not worth spending our time on, I just don't want us calling witnesses. That's all.

**The Chair:** Right. The reality is that we can begin and halt studies if it's the will of the committee. If we vote for this one, and we go and do that analysis, and we have further discussion of other ones that we want to put in the public space, then if we decide not to act on that one, we could start another one of these. You can actually have multiple studies going on concurrently.

Mr. Fraser.

**Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.):** That's for sure.

On the justice theme study, I expect the answer will be that there is going to be meat there that we could look at. The short answer is going to be something like: if it's the day-to-day administration of the justice system, it will be the provinces. But there's a huge opportunity for the federal government to fund different kinds of programs. I think exploring the kinds of programs we could fund would be worthwhile. I don't anticipate a conclusion without prejudging or that says you shouldn't bother looking at it. There's going to be plenty to look at on this issue.

**The Chair:** The motion is before you, the reworded motion 10, with the request for the analyst.

Ms. Ludwig.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig (New Brunswick Southwest, Lib.):** I just wanted to raise the current news example of the young woman who was sexually assaulted. To get her to testify in court, they actually incarcerated her. It was an indigenous woman. It's a true example of why this system, in many respects, is broken. That's not putting someone in a safe space by any means, considering what she had been through. It is a current news topic. Those issues are certainly coming to the surface, as they should, because they're wrong.

**The Chair:** Are there any further comments?

Seeing none, you have the reworded motion 10, with the action for the analyst to provide a summary of what's been done.

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

**The Chair:** Good, so we'll do that.

What I would suggest we do, since we have some remaining time, is to bring forward other ideas that we can have in the pipeline, if that's okay with the committee.

Ms. Vecchio, if you want to continue with your reading of the...

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Okay. This is a rough draft. It is that the committee undertake a study on the role of women in Canadian politics and how the Canadian government can take further initiative in an effort to increase the number of women in this field, with a focus on, (a) initiatives and programs that seek to increase the number of women in politics; (b) the advantages, disadvantages and specific details surrounding various legislative tools used to increase the number of women in politics, such as targets and quotas, etc.; (c) international models used to increase women in politics, whether these models have proven successful or not; and (d) the roles of prominent female Canadian politicians in modern-day Canada.

● (0905)

**The Chair:** I like that one.

Are there any other topics that you want to put in the pipeline?

Ms. Malcolmson.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** This is also a notice of motion that I provided to the clerk:

That the Committee study the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, November 25, 2016, "Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Canada" recommendations; that the study includes, but is not limited to, a consideration of the following subject areas outlined by the report:

1. Access to Justice
2. Socio-economic Conditions of Indigenous Women and Girls
3. Poverty and Housing Strategies
4. Women in Detention; and

that the Committee report its findings to the House; that the Committee request a government response to its report; and that these meetings be televised.

**The Chair:** Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** I don't have this written, but when we've been doing some of these studies, they're quite large and we touch on a number of issues. One that I think comes up repeatedly is how better to engage men and boys in ending gender-based violence. If we can just put that as a similar situation, as a hold.... We have looked at it in the broader context, but it might be worth a couple of meetings just to really hone in on that.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I have a comment.

I have a memory of that being studied in the previous Parliament by status of women, so that might just need a check with the clerk or the analyst. I have a feeling that, although we weren't around the table, it's quite a fresh study that we need to spend some time on.

**Ms. Laura Munn-Rivard (Committee Researcher):** The committee did a study on violence against women, and there was a section on engaging men and boys, but it was not the focus of the study.

**The Chair:** Are there other ideas?

Ms. Kusie.

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** Sheila, is the UN study something we report back to them on, or is it comparative to other nations? Is it on Canada's role globally?

Can you expand upon that, please, and tell us whatever I wasn't able to grasp from your brief introduction of it? Thank you.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Fair enough, I didn't say anything about it.

Because Canada is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, every five years there's a report by that committee, looking at Canada's actions specifically around implementing its commitments. We only get that report every five years, and we got one in November. I can send you a link to it. It has all kinds of things. It will say congratulations to the government for doing this, or the government is still failing to do that.

It gives us a snapshot in time, but we only get that opportunity twice a decade, so it would be a great opportunity for us to dig into how we're doing as a country and what we could do better.

**The Chair:** Mr. Serré.

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

I just wanted to go back to having the men and boys study, a comprehensive.... We're hearing more and more that we're missing 50% of the population here and it's a big issue. We're not changing the mentality and the stereotypes and the thinking of teenaged boys and adolescents with a lot of the studies that we're doing. We're not reaching that area, which is vitally important to get to, to meet the objectives that we want to achieve. We're looking at women and girls, violence, empowerment, and the whole slew of issues that we're trying to address, but we really need to focus on men and boys, and that's something I wanted to ensure that we think about in subsequent studies.

**The Chair:** I thank you for those comments, Marc.

Sheila, I like your motion on the United Nations one. Of the specific bullet points there, I was envisioning fitting the access to justice one—which we just put as a motion—in there as one of our bullets. You know how we like to do these studies that have multiple bullet points in them—and you had something about the socio-economics, which we've sort of already covered—but I wondered if it might be good to have that broader context, and then to highlight these specific items, starting with the one we have, and if we can, bring in any of these other ones that are identified as gaps.

If you can send the link around to the committee, that would be really good. I liked that one.

Any other ideas that we want to put on the record?

Ms. Kusie.

• (0910)

**Mrs. Stephanie Kusie:** I just wanted to expand upon the one Karen brought forward in regard to women in politics. For so many reasons, given the Prime Minister's initiative, it's just a fascinating time to look at women in politics in terms of the objectives of gender parity. Also, in this period in humanity, we've had so many incredible female leaders coming out of the fabric of the greater

society of the world, including the U.K., Germany, and Chile. We recently had the head of state from that country as well.

It's really a fascinating time, and I'm also a big believer that certainly all of the problems that we examine here have some.... I believe Marc touched on this in terms of his recognition of men and boys. As our last witness said, men haven't gotten the message. These things ultimately come from some great systemic place at the beginning, and if I go back, where do our roles start? They start with legislators.

If we as women can get more women into power and into these roles, it should be for the benefit of humanity, so I think it merits taking a look at, given this point in history.

Thank you.

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

I was fascinated by the last bunch of witnesses with the discussion of quotas and targets. I know this is not always what you would expect to hear from a Conservative, but it seems there are a number of examples in the world where quotas and targets were effective, and that was certainly an area where I thought to myself it may be time for an intervention, if I look at the 40 years that we have really not been making much progress. Perhaps there's time to get a fact- and evidence-based view of these things and how they best worked, and to consider that. I would just put that out there as another opportunity if it slides into any of the studies that we're doing.

All right, with that, the clerk has got her instructions on what she's going to prepare on the motion that we voted on, and then the rest of these we will keep, and if we decide we're not moving forward on the existing study that's been proposed, then we'll go back to these other ones. Sheila, you'll send that UN thing around so we can take a look at that.

Now just a reminder of what's happening over the summer. We don't want you to forget all the great testimony that has been heard, so over the summer our dear analysts will be working very hard to put a summary of evidence together on everything we've heard up until today. You will receive that in late August, so that will give you the opportunity to start thinking about whether that is the way we want the report presented.

**Ms. Karen Ludwig:** I think, Chair, it should just be a CD we listen to in our car.

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

**The Chair:** I'm on the LIAI subcommittee now that's looking at how Parliament can change and do their different media things, so perhaps I can influence them and help you make a CD. I did make a CD myself.

Anyway, when we come back in the fall it will be September 18 and there are four meetings in September. The idea would be that, the first day we come back, we remind you to read the summary of evidence, if you haven't read it, and we revisit this motion of the next study with the information that's come from the clerk to make sure that really is what we want to study. Otherwise, we amend it so that it represents what we want to do, so that the clerk can then start planning the meetings and the work plan, and we'll have a subcommittee meeting to do that, where we can bring forward witness names.

Then the other three meetings in September would be the finishing of the economic status of women study. With the witnesses that are left to be called, it's about three full meetings. That would mean we would start writing our report on the economic status of women the week of October 2, and following until it's done, and meanwhile, interspersed, we would start studying our next study topic. That would be how we move forward.

The idea would be that for sure we'll have an economic status report in the House, probably in November, but it gives us the possibility, depending on how long this study is that we're talking about with the indigenous women and the justice system, we might have two reports that would go in before Christmas.

Do you have any ideas to improve the plan or any problem with that plan?

Ms. Malcolmson.

• (0915)

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** I have one tidy-up that we talked about just informally after the last meeting. I propose that we extend the public submission deadline, which I think closed May 15. If you want that in the form of a motion—

**The Chair:** Yes, I would make that in the form of a motion that we extend the deadline for submissions on the economic status of women study to August 15.

**Ms. Sheila Malcolmson:** Also we would send a press release to update stakeholders to advertising.

**The Chair:** That's great. Is there discussion on that motion?

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

**The Chair:** Good.

That is the committee business that I had. Is there any other committee business?

Ms. Damoff.

**Ms. Pam Damoff:** This is likely our last meeting. I just want to thank all our colleagues, but especially you, Chair, for steering the ship. We've done some pretty impressive work. I think status of women, back in the day, used to be considered the backwater of committees, and we've done work that's pushed the government in legislation. It's made the front page of *The Globe and Mail*. We passed a private member's bill on sexual assault. I think very few committees work as well together as this one does. I commend everyone, but in particular our chair for her leadership, so thank you, as well as our analysts and clerk.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**The Chair:** Thank you. I am very proud of the work this committee has done. I think it is a credit to all of you, including all the great support we have from our staff. I see that this committee has been able to work collaboratively to do things that are right for Canada.

I have heard commentary from various and sundry who have subbed in on this committee that they find the tone of this committee and the way this committee works together to be different from that of other parliamentary committees, so I would set this up as an example of how it can be done. I'm really pleased to see some quick follow-up on many of the recommendations that have come out of the GBA+ and the taking action to eliminate violence against women report.

Thanks to you, I think we can be proud of the work we've done. I look forward to continuing, although anything can happen. I don't even know if I will be a chair in the fall, so we'll wait and see how we go.

Mrs. Vecchio.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Thanks very much.

I just want to bring this to your attention because, Pam, you talked about the bill that we put forward. As parliamentarians, we don't really have that much influence on the Senate, but as any of you may have read, as of Thursday and Friday of last week, Rona's bill has now stalled in the Senate and it is extremely unfortunate.

I don't want it to become political, because the bill was never about politics. This was about good policy. Rona called me on Friday morning to let me know that right now they are doing a tit for tat, and they are not willing to pass this bill through without other things. They are using this as leverage, saying, "Okay if you guys do this, then we'll do that," which is absolutely ridiculous.

• (0920)

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.):** Who is?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** The senators are.

I'm not trying to say it's partisan. It's somewhat partisan. The issue is that they are not willing to pass this motion through. They are waiting until after July 5, because as of July 5 this bill is dead because Rona will be retired. This is why I wanted to bring it to your attention. Right now, they are delaying it, and it has become a little bit more personal than it should be.

We started a few tweets and things like that on Friday. She had interviews with *CBC* yesterday. I think we are trying to push from the fact that unanimously it was passed in the House twice, not only on second reading but on third reading as well. It's just one of those things. I know the Senate is independent from us. I get that. At the same time, if there's any public opinion that might be out there, or even our saying, "This bill has stalled out"....

It has been absolutely ludicrous. Rona has been advised that right now... It's really crazy, and I don't want to pull down anybody else. I was just at something actually with Mauril Bélanger's widow on Saturday, and she's a wonderful lady, but they are saying that unless the national anthem gets changed, they are not going to allow this to go through. That's what Rona was told.

I'm just giving you the gossip, since we're in camera.

**The Chair:** We're not in camera.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** I thought we were in camera.

Regardless, at the end of the day, I think what's really important is that we, as parliamentarians, worked very hard on this study. We did a really good job. When we did the violence against women study, we heard a lot of stuff there. We've heard a lot of stuff about this bill and what a great job it was going to do. We heard from our witnesses, and now it's stalled in the Senate. I'm very concerned.

Rona has been working very hard on this. I've been working on this. I'm not sure what you all would like to do, but as a committee, we worked. As a Parliament, we worked, so I would really like the Senate to just say, "This is what's good for Canadians. It doesn't matter about politics. This is about Canadians."

I just wanted to bring that to your attention. It would even be worth retweeting something just saying that this is good legislation, such as, "The JUST Act is good legislation. Let's push this through." It will die in the Senate on July 5 if it does not go through.

**The Chair:** Is there any protocol to transfer bills to other people?

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** Because it's in the Senate and because she's retiring, it's a little different. It's not as simple as sponsoring it in the House. Once it's sponsored in the House, then it has to go through unanimously, and unanimously again, but it's a little bit more difficult on this one.

I talked to Rona and Candice about it yesterday to ask what options we have, because as of July 5 it dies. Someone has to bring it back in the House. It has to go through a portion of the process again. Then, it can go back to the Senate after that.

**Ms. Anita Vandenberg:** I think we may want to look at some procedural rules in the Senate, because my understanding is that once there's a sponsor in the Senate, it no longer...

Mauril's bill is in the Senate, and he's sadly also not here.

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** But if they return it back to the House... It's the process when it gets returned back to the House.

**The Chair:** I think it needs unanimous consent when it comes back to the House to have a different member of the House represent...

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** But it dies in the Senate July 5 if it has not passed. That's what we've been advised.

**The Chair:** Only if there are amendments, right? It wouldn't come back to the House....

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** No, we've been told a few other things. It's because of a retirement. I recognize Mauril's case is a little different. This is a retirement issue. Maybe you guys can look into it as well. I think it's a really big concern.

**Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.):** Do we have a say? How can we as MPs—

**Mrs. Karen Vecchio:** As MPs, we don't have a say, but the public can put pressure just like they do on us. I just wanted to bring that to your attention.

**The Chair:** We'll check and follow up.

Ms. Nassif.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Eva Nassif:** I would like to thank not only all the members of this committee for a job well done, but also the wonderful men who have worked hard and have demonstrated real leadership in this area. We are counting on you. Thank you for all your work and your support for our committee.

My thanks to you as well, Madam Chair.

[*English*]

**The Chair:** The question is whether we want the next study to be a long overarching study or a short one. We don't really know until we hear what's been done previously and what the gaps are. Then we'll be able to assess. I like the long overarching ones because you don't know what you don't know at the beginning, and as you start to hear witnesses, it brings out things that we didn't know about, areas that we can help in. We'll see how we go on that one.

We have our next panel coming at 9:45 a.m. I don't know whether you just want to suspend until then, or if there are other topics that you want to discuss.

All right. Let's suspend and I'll see you at 9:45 a.m.

● (0920)

(Pause)

● (0940)

[*Translation*]

**The Chair:** Good morning.

We are continuing our study on the economic security of women in Canada.

[*English*]

Welcome to all our witnesses today.

We have with us, from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Pierre Charest, Serge Villemure, and Anne Webb. We have, from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Dominique Bérubé, Claudie Gosselin, and Danika Goosney. We have, from the department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Sheilagh Murphy, Melanie Reid, and Kevin Murchie.

I know our Department of Foreign Affairs person is en route. I don't see him yet.

We're going to begin. Each of you will have five minutes for your comments.

We'll begin with NSERC.

[*Translation*]

**Dr. Pierre Charest (Vice-President, Research Grants and Scholarships Directorate, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada):** Madam Chair, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today.



With regard to the focus of the committee's study on the economic security of women in Canada and equal participation of women in the Canadian economy, we can provide some specific examples in the natural sciences and engineering regarding problems affecting women's equity in these fields, and what the lack of equity means for women's income, occupational segregation, and access to key growth sectors.

As an agency, NSERC seeks to invest in the best research to create world firsts in knowledge. And we seek to collaborate with industry so that they can use and take this knowledge to market.

To be successful in these goals, we know we need to increase diversity and gender equity in science and engineering.

I can assure you that we are not only concerned about this issue, but that we have been taking action, collaborating at the tri-agency level with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and working with other stakeholders, to tackle this challenge.

[*English*]

First, I will give some background on the current state of women in science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM fields.

At the time of graduation from secondary school, the number of girls in STEM fields is slightly higher than the number of boys. However, starting at the bachelor's level, the enrolment of women is lower than that of men. In 2014-15, it was 38% for females and 62% for males for bachelor's programs. This difference increases at the master's and doctoral levels.

This under-representation of women studying in STEM fields at university is reflected in their representation at the career stage, where women comprise between 18% and 23% of the STEM labour force. In the academic sector, the highest proportion of women is among those who hold lecturer and instructor, non-tenure track positions. This means that the majority of women academics in these fields hold lower-rank positions, and their salaries are correspondingly lower.

Under-representation in STEM fields also means occupational segregation, barriers and obstacles experienced by under-represented groups in terms of the work culture, unconscious biases, micro-aggressions, gendered language, and so forth. It contributes to hiring and promotion biases, salary differences, and women leaving these fields or making other choices of where to work. It also means that fewer women access key growth sectors, such as IT and artificial intelligence.

Under-representation of women in STEM fields means that fewer women are eligible to apply for NSE grants. This means that fewer women are in a position to conduct cutting-edge research and to define and influence research priorities, policy, social development, and knowledge that benefit all individuals in our society, across all genders and other diversity factors.

The expectation that the under-representation of women in STEM will change over time due to a gradual increase in the enrolment of women in some disciplines is not a well-founded assumption. The achievement of equity will take decades unless we make equity,

diversity, and inclusion priorities in our policy development and change how we understand scientific excellence.

Diversity and gender equity are key priorities in our current strategic plan, NSERC 2020. They are also highlighted in the strategic goal, "Building a diversified and competitive research base". This commitment is operationalized primarily through actions outlined in NSERC's framework on diversity and gender equity.

This framework implements a tri-agency response to the 2012 Council of Canadian Academies' report, "Strengthening Canada's Research Capacity: The Gender Dimension". It also comprises the implementation of NSERC's 2015 commitment to Status of Women Canada's departmental action plan on gender-based analysis.

We have taken a number of measures that you have described there, in terms of looking at our programs and ensuring the integration of team members and people participating.

● (0945)

[*Translation*]

We have also updated NSERC's guidelines and indicators of research excellence to counter the gender-bias associated with taking career leaves for family responsibilities.

We also have programs that help improve the situation.

NSERC's PromoScience program offers financial support for organizations working with young Canadians to promote an understanding of STEM fields, with a particular focus on reaching girls, young women and other underrepresented groups.

Additionally, the Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering program (CWSE) aims to increase and retain the participation of women in science and engineering, and to provide role models, mentoring and outreach for women active in, and considering, careers in these fields. The CWSE program is regional—with one chair for each of the Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies, and British Columbia/Yukon regions, and each chair is appointed for a five-year term.

In closing, I would like to formally invite all of the members of this committee to the upcoming Gender Summit in Montreal that is co-hosted by NSERC and the Fonds de recherche du Québec. The summit takes place from November 6 to 8, under the overarching theme of "Embracing pluralism and thriving through diversity—shaping science and innovation." The aim of the summit is twofold: to make gender equality in research and innovation the norm and to embed gender equality as a primary dimension of quality. I hope that you will be able to attend.

Thank you for your attention. We would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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

Ms. Bérubé, you have five minutes.

**Ms. Dominique Bérubé (Vice-President, Research Programs, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada):** Thank you very much.

• (0950)

[English]

Good morning, Madam Chair.

On behalf of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and of course our president Ted Hewitt, thank you for the opportunity to appear today in support of your work on the economic security of women in Canada.

I think this work is particularly important in light of increasing scrutiny on gender equity across all sectors of Canadian society, including in higher education institutions, in research teams and labs, as well as in the boardroom and other leadership positions.

As vice-president of research programs at SSHRC, I am particularly pleased to be here. I am an engineer by training with a degree from École polytechnique de Montréal—I was there in 1989—and a doctorate from Université du Québec à Montréal, while having two kids.

Prior to coming to SSHRC, I worked in universities, holding a number of leadership positions at Université de Montréal, including acting as vice-president of research, giving me both perspectives in this world. I hope that I may bring a personal perspective, in addition to providing you with all the information required for the deliberations today or as a follow-up to this meeting.

[Translation]

May I remind you that the social sciences and humanities comprise a wide spectrum of disciplines including psychology, sociology, education, economics, fine arts, linguistics, gender and indigenous studies, geography, business administration, and communications. They touch on almost every aspect of Canadians' lives, thereby contributing to the Canadian economy.

SSHRC awards grants, scholarships and fellowships in three core program areas. Each of these programs brings benefits to Canada's economy in different ways.

[English]

The first program, our talent program, obviously, supports graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, to develop the next generation of researchers and leaders in all sectors. It's about 44% of our program expenditures. It's very important within our own agency. This training provides Canada's women and men with the critical analytical and communications skills required by a new economy.

Our insight program supports individuals and teams of researchers to advance knowledge and build understanding, and accounts for about 45% of our program expenditures. New research insights, for instance, about new business models, corporate social responsibility,

and the integration of people with disabilities into the labour market can help Canada's businesses gain a competitive edge and contribute to improving the well-being of Canadians in general.

[Translation]

The third program, the Connection program, represents 11% of our expenditures. It supports the exchange of research knowledge within and beyond academe to maximize its impacts. Connecting research knowledge to the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors that can use it is another way that SSHRC contributes to the economy.

[English]

Through its programs, SSHRC has funded many of the researchers in Canada who are examining the very issues you are studying. I think you have met some of them during your different meetings.

For example, we have funded research projects on the gender aspects of poverty alleviation, employment standards protections for precarious job workers, child care policies, gender income inequalities, and much more. What is important is that the leadership of women in these fields of research is very strong.

Indigenous research is also a strategic priority for SSHRC. Now up to 10% of our budget is invested in that area and indigenous and non-indigenous women researchers are central to our efforts. Women are leaders in that area of research. In the spirit of reconciliation, it is always important for SSHRC to consider this perspective in our thinking.

With regard to women's participation in our programs more generally, we are obviously in a very positive situation. About 50% of our applicants are women, and the success rates of women and men are equivalent. In our scholarship and fellowship programs we are seeing women applicants and awardees at a rate of over 60%. Last year, women made up 50% of our adjudication members also. However, we continue to track the situation and monitor the leadership opportunities for women within our programs.

While it is true that women are pursuing post-secondary education in increasing numbers, the participation of women is greater than that of men in the social sciences and humanities at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. However, men still occupy more senior academic positions. We are looking forward to new data from StatsCan's recently reinstated survey for university and college faculty to see if this trend is lessening with time.

[Translation]

We also administer, on behalf of the three granting councils, five major programs, including the Canada Research Chairs Program and the Canada Excellence Research Chairs Program.

[English]

We know we have some progress to make in these cases. Recent evaluations concluded that efforts toward achieving equality by universities have not been sufficient, so we took action. We have just launched an equity, diversity, and inclusiveness action plan, and we will be happy to answer your questions regarding that plan.

Thank you.

● (0955)

[Translation]

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

[English]

Now we'll hear from the Department of Indian Affairs with Sheilagh Murphy. You have five minutes.

**Ms. Sheilagh Murphy (Assistant Deputy Minister, Lands and Economic Development, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development):** Good morning. Thank you, Madam Chair, for the opportunity to provide an overview of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada's programming that supports indigenous women entrepreneurs and businesses.

Before I begin, I'd like to recognize that we're on the traditional territory of the Algonquin nation.

[Translation]

In the context of the fast-growing indigenous business sector, I would like to tell you about INAC's lands and economic development services program as an integrated whole. The purpose of this program is to directly and indirectly support indigenous business women, specifically through access to business capital, support services, business opportunities and procurement.

[English]

INAC is committed to strengthening indigenous women's access to business and economic opportunities and recognizes the importance of positioning indigenous women to be in leadership and decision-making roles.

This commitment can be attested to with the representation of indigenous women on the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board. Of the board's 13 positions, five are filled, four of them by indigenous women.

The board advises both INAC and the federal government more broadly on its policy and program direction related to indigenous economic opportunities. In addition, the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board secretariat is in the process of establishing a collaborative partnership with the Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership at Carleton University on the topic of indigenous women entrepreneurs and innovation.

INAC's indigenous entrepreneurship and business development program supports indigenous women by increasing their access to developmental debt and equity capital to fill a financing gap, as well as providing project-based funding to improve access to business and procurement opportunities. It does so in close partnership with the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association and the

network of aboriginal financial institutions that administers and delivers the program.

[Translation]

INAC helps indigenous entrepreneurs by giving them access to start-up or expansion capital for their own businesses. Almost 25% of the program's business recipients are indigenous women.

[English]

Another important element of the indigenous entrepreneurship and business development program is its project-based support. Since 2010 INAC has worked in partnership with national and regional indigenous women's organizations and has funded 27 indigenous women's projects totaling \$3.7 million. These projects have provided indigenous women entrepreneurs with financial literacy training, access to business development tools, business and training networks, and access to capital to help them establish, expand, and run viable and sustainable businesses. These organizations included the Native Women's Association of Canada and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada.

Another support coordinated by INAC on behalf of all the government departments is the procurement strategy for aboriginal business. Through this initiative, participating federal government departments and agencies support indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs through mandatory set asides, voluntary set asides, joint ventures, and partnerships linked to federal contracting opportunities.

Recognizing the value of entrepreneurship and the needs and aspirations of indigenous women and increasing their employability and self-reliance through entrepreneurship will provide the skills and opportunities they require to become self-sufficient. INAC is committed to closing the gaps that exist between indigenous and non-indigenous people when it comes to employment opportunities, income, and housing.

Housing is a fundamental need, and all Canadians should have access to a secure home. Investments in housing are crucial to begin addressing some of the root causes of poverty, for promoting opportunity and inclusive growth, and to help lay the foundation for community development.

No one fleeing domestic violence should be left without a place to turn, including those in first nation communities. Women and children fleeing violence need a safe place to live while they plan their future and turn the page on violence. In collaboration with the CMHC, INAC is investing in safe shelters. Through budget 2016 Canada invested \$10.4 million over three years to support the renovation of existing shelters and the construction of five new shelters in first nation communities. Canada also invested \$33.6 million over five years and up to \$8.3 million ongoing in additional funding to better support the existing network of 41 shelters and operations in first nation communities.

● (1000)

[Translation]

Housing is the starting point for better social, economic and environmental results. It is important to work together on this fundamental aspect to improve the lives of indigenous women.

[English]

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to speak. I look forward to your questions.

[Translation]

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

[English]

Now we're going to John Gartke from the Department of Foreign Affairs for five minutes.

**Mr. John Gartke (Director, Trade Missions, Consultations and Outreach, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development):** Thank you very much, Madam Chair and honourable members, for the opportunity to discuss the important topic of Canadian businesswomen in international trade. This is very timely, as Canada is committed to advancing a progressive and inclusive trade agenda that addresses such issues as gender equality by ensuring that all segments of society can take advantage of the opportunities that flow from international trade and investment.

In my remarks today, I will highlight the landscape of Canadian women entrepreneurs and provide an overview of our business women in international trade program—or BWIT, as we like to call it—and outline the work being done by the BWIT program to increase opportunities for Canadian businesses on the global stage.

To begin with just an economic context, Statistics Canada's 2014 survey found that, overall, women-owned small and medium-sized enterprises represented 15.7% of all SMEs but that only 11.1% of exporting SMEs are owned by women. There is lots of room, then, to grow on many fronts.

[Translation]

Canadian business women are expected to play a significant role in driving Canada's economic future. A Royal Bank of Canada study predicts a 10% increase in the number of women-owned firms over the next 10 years would lead to a \$50 billion injection into the Canadian economy.

At Global Affairs Canada, this potential has long been recognized.

[English]

The BWIT program was established in 1997 and is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. It is fully integrated as a program in the Canadian trade commissioner service, and the program is dedicated to assisting, promoting, and advocating for women-owned businesses in the area of international trade. The main objectives of the program are to provide export advice, guidance, and access to information and services specifically for women entrepreneurs, including support networks, government resources and events, and opportunities for women-owned businesses to participate in women-focused trade missions abroad.

To achieve these objectives, BWIT has a wealth of tools, information, and products that could be leveraged by Canadian women exporters. We have an annual BWIT newsletter—I believe copies have been distributed—which showcases successful women exporters, promotes the benefits of international trade, and disseminates information regarding key government-wide international business development programs and services. The newsletter

is widely distributed to more than 2,500 entrepreneurs and stakeholders in Canada and through our missions abroad, and is available to download on the BWIT website and the trade commissioner website as well.

We maintain a BWIT website as part of the trade commissioner website, with approximately 70,000 visitors annually. It provides resources and access to a range of educational and funding programs; links to key contacts in government support agencies, financial institutions, and a variety of regional, national, international associations; as well as expert advice geared to improve competitiveness in international markets.

By looking at ways to connect entrepreneurs across Canada and keep them informed, we launched a LinkedIn group back in 2012, creating an interactive venue for businesswomen to share ideas and successes with other like-minded entrepreneurs. With almost 2,300 members and growing, this LinkedIn group is a two-way conversation and a rich source of intelligence and practical information for entrepreneurs.

[Translation]

Articles that highlight the achievements of successful Canadian women entrepreneurs are regularly included in *CanadExport*, the department's bimonthly electronic trade newsletter which has almost 27,000 subscribers. Annually, a special edition commemorating International Women's Day on March 8 is published, which features the many successes, realized by Canadian business women.

With the collaboration of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, a specialized women-owned sub-directory in the department's Canadian Companies Capabilities database was created in 2014. The specialized directory is a searchable database that helps business women identify and promote their products and services to potential customers, as well as to partner with other women-owned businesses. It also provides corporations that have supplier diversity initiatives access to a dedicated listing of women-owned businesses across Canada.

•(1005)

[English]

Our flagship event, without a doubt, is the BWIT-led trade missions, a major component of the program. There are anywhere from two to four missions annually for women-owned enterprises. In fact, there's a trade mission happening this week. A delegation of 86 Canadians, of which 62 are representatives of women-owned business enterprises, are currently in Las Vegas, Nevada, at the largest supplier diversity conference and business development fair. Fortune 500 companies have sent their procurement officers to this conference with the express purpose to diversify their supply chains by contracting with minority-owned companies. Through engagement in this conference, our program provides Canadian business-women access to supplier diversity programs, connects them with many of America's leading corporations that are committed to doing business with women-owned enterprises, and provides insight into the U.S. market.

A good example of the success we have encountered there is a businesswoman from Manitoba who owns a company that sells pies in a jar. On a recent women's trade mission to Orlando, she presented her product to purchasing officers from Disney, and they're pursuing contracting opportunities to have her product available in the Magic Kingdom. Another example is a businesswoman from Prince Edward Island who is now supplying her abrasive products in several major hardware store chains across the United States, all based on attending our trade missions program. In the BWIT newsletter, there are many other examples like this.

A permanent feature of our program is the ability to develop strong partnerships at the national, regional, and international levels. An example of this is the establishment of WEConnect International in Canada, a non-profit organization that certifies Canadian women-majority-owned businesses. WEConnect International's certification

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

**Mr. John Gartke:** Perfect. Okay, I'll just say that, if there are questions, I'd be happy to entertain them. Thank you.

**The Chair:** No problem. We'll cover the rest in questions. Thanks so much.

We're going to start our first round of questioning with my colleague Mr. Fraser, for seven minutes.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** That's great. I'll start with the NSERC and SSHRC representatives who are here with us today.

I have a small university in my riding in Nova Scotia, StFX. It's primarily an undergraduate institution. One thing I hear is that, oftentimes, the federal government strives to fund the next biggest, groundbreaking research. When we look at research careers, as I think our witness from NSERC pointed out, there tend to be more men at senior levels in their careers today.

Is this focus on the next big thing perpetuating this inequity? Should we be shifting to support an increase in the number of undergraduate researchers in order to get more women involved in research at the junior level of their careers?

I'd like to hear from both organizations.

**Dr. Pierre Charest:** On this question, in our main program, the discovery program, there are three criteria: the excellence of the researcher, the training provided by the researcher, and the excellence of the proposal submitted to the evaluation groups, the peers who look at that.

In our eight-point framework, we're looking to ensure there's no unconscious biases. We strongly suggest to reviewers that they get training before they look at proposals to make sure we don't have biases in the way decisions are taken. Because the excellence of the proposal and the excellence of the researchers are two of the main criteria, there will definitely be an emphasis on groundbreaking research. But we are trying to counteract that. One of the measures we've taken for small universities now is that we have discovery development grants for those who are on the margin of obtaining a grant. We go one rank lower, and we give them grants.

We also have increased the number of summer stipends that we give in small universities. We recognize that there is a difference in small universities. The success rates for women and men in small universities versus other types of universities is the same. That's one thing I would like to mention. At NSERC, for scholarship fellowships or for grants, the success rates for men and women are about the same.

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Okay.

Ms. Bérubé.

**Ms. Dominique Bérubé:** Thank you for the question.

Of course, for SSHRC, 60% or 70% of students at the undergraduate level are women. To promote emerging researchers and research in smaller institutions, we are the only agency that has an institutional grant that is devoted to small institutions so that they can support research. We have a special program for emerging researchers, professors, an insight development grant that has about a 40% success rate and supports young researchers.

At this point, it's also important to develop a mechanism to support the careers of women within their institutions and to ensure their leadership is recognized in the institution throughout their careers. That's the challenge we face most at this point. That's why we're working on the CRC equity action plan to help promote this. I do agree with you that it is important to support undergraduate research at all levels. For the moment, within SSHRC it's supported through our grants program, where undergraduate students are integrated into research.

•(1010)

**Mr. Sean Fraser:** Again, to both of you, in terms of how we can support women within their institutions to ensure they progress throughout their careers and obtain leadership positions, what recommendations could we, as a committee, make to the federal government that they could adopt that would help turn this into a reality?

**The Chair:** Excuse me. I'm sorry to interrupt.

Unfortunately, there's a vote call. You can see the bells are going off. This is not good for our committee work. Would it be acceptable for the members of the committee to forward their questions to the clerk and have the clerk send them to you for a written response?

I do apologize. I thank all the witnesses for coming today. I'm sorry that we have to break this off to go vote in the House but that's what they pay us to do.

The meeting is adjourned.

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