



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 004

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

Chair: Mrs. Salma Zahid



Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

• (1110)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Good morning, everyone. This is meeting number four of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration.

With the ongoing pandemic situation and in light of the recommendations from health authorities, as well as the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on October 19, 2021, to remain healthy and safe, all those attending the meeting in person are to maintain two-metre physical distancing. They must wear a non-medical mask when circulating in the room, and it is highly recommended that the mask be worn at all times, including when seated. They must also maintain proper hand hygiene by using the hand sanitizer provided at the room entrance.

As the chair, I will be enforcing these measures for the duration of the meeting, and I want to thank members in advance for their co-operation.

To ensure an orderly meeting, I would like to outline a few rules to follow.

Members and witnesses may speak in the official language of their choice. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice, at the bottom of your screen, of floor, English or French. If interpretation is lost, please inform me immediately and we will ensure that interpretation is properly restored before resuming the proceedings. The “raise hand” feature at the bottom of the screen can be used at any time if you wish to speak or alert the chair.

For members participating in person, proceed as you usually would when the whole committee is meeting in person in a committee room. Keep in mind the Board of Internal Economy's guidelines for mask use and health protocols.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. For those in the room, your microphone will be controlled as usual by the proceedings and verification officer. When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

I would remind you that all comments by members and witnesses should be addressed through the chair. With regard to a speaking list, the committee clerk and I will do our best to maintain a consol-

idated order of speaking for all members, whether they are participating virtually or in person.

We are having some issues with both witnesses for this first panel. The technical team is working with them.

I want to take a few minutes for some committee business and ask for members' approval.

As you know, the minister will be appearing before the committee on February 17 in regard to the study we are going through. I want direction from the committee on whether they would like to finish the study on that day.

I will read the motion that was approved by the committee. The motion said to have five meetings. As of now, we have had one panel, on February 1, 2022, and two panels have been scheduled for February 3, February 8, February 10 and February 17. This brings us to four full meetings and one meeting of one hour.

Do you want to have an additional panel on March 1, or are members in favour of completing this study on February 17?

The motion we passed was for five meetings. We will have had four full meetings by February 17, after the minister's appearance, and one additional panel; in the first meeting, we used the first hour for committee business.

I would like to see which way the members would like to go. If you want to add an additional panel to make it five complete meetings, we can schedule it for March 1, and then we can work around the witnesses.

Go ahead, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

• (1115)

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe (Lac-Saint-Jean, BQ): I would stick to the original motion, which is five meetings in total, and that means 10 hours of meeting time. It would take an additional hour on March 1 to reach 10 hours of study.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Are there any other suggestions?

Go ahead, Mr. Seeback.

Mr. Kyle Seeback (Dufferin—Caledon, CPC): Madam Chair, I'm confused. Are you saying that the minister is coming on the 17th as part of this study? I thought the minister was coming on the 17th for backlogs.

If he's not coming on the 17th for backlogs, then when is the minister coming for backlogs?

The Chair: Madam Clerk, could you clarify in regard to the minister's appearances for the two meetings?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Stephanie Bond): Yes, I can. He is confirmed for the 15th on backlogs and the 17th for this study.

The Chair: Mr. Seeback, he's coming on the 15th for backlogs and the 17th is the panel we will have with him on the foreign students acceptance rates.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Okay.

The Chair: Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp (Saskatoon West, CPC): Given the technical difficulties we seem to be having, it looks like we're probably not going to get much of this panel today. I would suggest that maybe we reschedule this panel for another time. Given that, I suppose you could put the other half together along with this one to make another meeting. It's just a thought.

The Chair: That seems reasonable.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Yes, we are partway into this hour now, and we could postpone it until March 1. That way, we can devote the full two-hour session to that panel. Is that right? Yes? No? I'm a little confused.

The objective is 10 hours of study time. If that works, if we do two hours on March 1, and we only do one hour today, that puts us at 10 hours, by my calculation. That said, I haven't done math in a long time.

[English]

The Chair: Yes, you are correct, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. If this panel doesn't happen because of technical difficulties, because both the witnesses who were scheduled for this hour are not able to log in, we would not be able to hear from them.

The Clerk: Madam Chair, we have both now.

The Chair: Okay, we have both.

Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan (Vancouver East, NDP): I'm going to pass, thanks.

The Chair: Based on the discussion, it seems that members would like to have an additional one hour for the meeting on March 1. If we can have this panel, then we can work around the calendar and add that one hour. Maybe we can have that one hour and then add drafting instructions for this study to that.

We will schedule that. I will work with the clerk to work on the witness list.

Madam Lalonde.

• (1120)

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde (Orléans, Lib.): I'm sorry, Madam Chair. I just want to understand from the clerk the calendar going forward.

Are we saying to our witnesses currently that they will not speak today and they will come back on March 1, or are we welcoming our witnesses who seem to have resolved the technical difficulties and possibly take the other hour of individuals who are scheduled for the second hour to come back?

The Chair: Earlier when we started talking about this, both the witnesses were not able to log in. Now we have both the witnesses. I think we should hear from them and have this panel. Then we will have one additional panel for March 1. I think we can discuss the other committee business in the other meeting. Already we have lost 20 minutes, so I would request that we start the meeting now and then we can work around the calendar.

I will try to adjust this panel and the second panel so that we can be fair with the witnesses for both the panels.

Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: All right, that's fine.

That said, will we be able to make up the time today that we just spent on committee business and technical issues? Are we going to add those 20 minutes so that we have our full hour with our two witnesses?

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, I will try to adjust the time. Meanwhile, I will check with the clerk to see if we have the interpretation and the room services available after 1 p.m., and I will adjust it accordingly.

I would like to begin the meeting.

Today the committee is continuing its study on the recruitment and acceptance rates of foreign students.

It is my pleasure to welcome both our witnesses who are appearing before the committee today. I would like to welcome Dr. Christian, president, African Scholars Initiative, and also His Excellency Dr. Khalilur Rahman, High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Welcome to both of you. I'm sorry for those technical difficulties. Both of you will have five minutes for your opening remarks, and then we will go into a round of questioning.

I will start with Dr. Christian, president of African Scholars Initiative.

Mr. Gideon Christian (President, African Scholars Initiative): Thank you, Madam Chair and honourable members of this committee, for the privilege to appear before you once again to discuss a very important issue relating to the growing difficulty faced by foreign students from Africa to secure study visas for post-secondary education in Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I have a point of order, Madam Chair. Unfortunately, I can't hear the interpretation.

[English]

The Chair: Is there no interpretation?

The Clerk: The interpretation is back, Madam Chair.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: It's working, thank you. No problem, it's coming through.

[English]

Mr. Gideon Christian: On November 10, 2020, I appeared before a sitting of this committee. I raised some concerns with regard to high study visa refusal rates for applicants from Africa, especially at the Canadian visa office in Nairobi, Kenya.

Madam Chair, I'm privileged to appear before this committee again, 10 months later, to report that things have changed—sadly, not for the better. In illustrating the growing difficulty faced by African students to secure study visas to study in Canada, I'm going to use Nigeria as a case study.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. It is among the top 10 source countries for Canada's study visas—specifically, number three after China and India. It is the only African country on the top 10 list. It also has the lowest Canada study visa approval rate on that list. For example, Korea and Japan are on the top 10 list. At a point in time when Korea and Japan had 95% and 97% study visa approval rates, Nigeria had a dismal 11.8% study visa approval rate.

For many years, scholars and academics of African descent in Canada, as well as stakeholders, have sought reasons for the high study visa refusal rate from Canadian visa offices in Africa. That answer seemed to emerge in October 2021, when the IRCC Anti-Racism Employee Focus Groups report was released.

Among other points, that report noted the following: racism in IRCC had impacts on processing of immigration applications in seven countries; widespread reference to African countries as “dirty” by IRCC agents; and stereotyping of Nigerians as particularly corrupt and untrustworthy by IRCC agents. The report specifically noted the additional financial document requirements for applicants from Nigeria as part of the discriminatory rules reflected in the racism in IRCC. This fact was evident in a recent Federal Court judicial review case relating to a study visa application from Nigeria. I refer the committee to the case of *Onyeka v. Canada* (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration).

Further evidence of the discriminatory policy relating to a study visa application can be seen by comparing two IRCC study visa programs: the student direct stream, SDS, and a similar program known as the Nigeria student express, NSE. The financial requirements under the SDS requires the applicant to show that they “have a Guaranteed Investment Certificate of \$10,000” in Canadian dollars.

Compare this to the financial requirements in the Nigeria student express, which is a similar program by IRCC for study visa applica-

tion in Nigeria. Under the Nigeria student express, the applicant is required to produce a bank statement showing the existence of “the equivalent of 30,000 Canadian dollars for at least 6 months”. The applicant from Nigeria is required to show proof of funds that are three times more than those of the applicant from the SDS countries, and yet, when this applicant overcomes this high burden of proof, most of the study visa applications from Nigeria are still refused.

Madam Chair, I recommend the IRCC Anti-Racism Employee Focus Groups report to this committee. I have submitted as my exhibit to the committee both the final copy as well as the draft copy of this report. That study will greatly help or assist this committee in contextualizing the real reason for the [Technical difficulty—Editor] high study visa refusal rates by IRCC visa offices in Africa. That reason, Madam Chair, is the elephant in the room. It is racism.

I know that my time is up, so I'm not going to spend more time. Also, I'm going to stop here and then welcome further questions on the issues I have raised, as well as other issues such as Chinook and the use of artificial intelligence technology by the IRCC visa offices and the impact these technologies are actually having on study visa applications.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

• (1125)

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Christian, for your opening remarks.

We will now proceed to His Excellency, Dr. Khalilur Rahman, High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Dr. Rahman, you have five minutes for your opening remarks. You can begin, please.

We can't hear you.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey—Newton, Lib.): Madam Chair, I think he can't hear because the message I got from him is that he's there only as an observer.

The Chair: Dr. Rahman, can you hear me? We are not able to hear you.

Madam Clerk, was the sound check done with him?

The Clerk: Please suspend.

The Chair: Okay, we'll suspend the meeting for a minute and check with Mr. Rahman.

• (1125)

(Pause)

• (1130)

The Chair: High Commissioner, you will have five minutes for your opening remarks. Please start.

His Excellency Khalilur Rahman (High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh): Thank you so much, honourable Chair, vice-chairs, members of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, other witnesses, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure and honour to be able to speak before you. I will be brief because I have shared my business case with you, so I'm sure you have had some time to look at it. I'll just highlight certain aspects of it.

I was listening to my colleague from Nigeria, Mr. Christian.

This is the first time I'm appearing before the committee. I would like to say only a few things. Bangladesh has excellent relationship with Canada. We have no problem whatsoever with this great country. We are going to observe 50 years of diplomatic relations this February 14, on Valentine's Day, and we acknowledge Canada's contribution to our socio-economic development.

Bangladesh has graduated as a middle-income country, and as you know Bangladesh is now known as a development miracle. Our GDP is over \$409 billion U.S. Currently, Bangladesh is the 37th-largest economy of the world and we expect to be 24th-largest economy by 2030.

The quality of life, the affordability and the overall socio-economic development in the country we have achieved have enabled our young students to study abroad in big numbers. I am very happy to inform you that Canada is the number one destination for our Bangladeshi students. Every year around 40,000 to 50,000 young students are eligible, qualify and have all the admission requirements to study at Canadian universities.

Unfortunately, for some reason the rejection rate of student visas is huge. Since the Canadian visa centre is not in Bangladesh, we really don't have the exact number, the rate. The distribution centre has not informed us, but as far as we are aware the number is very high and that's why we have been working with our Canadian colleagues to transfer the visa centre to Dhaka. But the fact remains that compared to the number of applications, compared to the rate of eligibility, the rate of acceptance by Canadian universities and the rate of student visa approvals are very low, and the numbers are not growing because of the systemic obstacles.

That's why I'm appearing before you, to ask you to kindly consider Bangladesh for inclusion in the student direct stream. As I have said, a huge number of students can afford this GIC of \$10,000 Canadian. Not only that but one good thing for us, we are also very happy to inform you, is that parents in Bangladesh also think that Canada is the safest country in the world to which to send their children to study. That's why the number has overtaken those for the U.K. and the U.S.A. in recent years. But, unfortunately, because of the systemic restrictions and obstacles they are unable to come to study there.

One thing I'd like to highlight is that Canada has two main areas of support in association with development. These are women's economic empowerment and skills development for youth. As I said, 40,000 to 50,000 young students every year are willing and can afford to study in countries like Canada. They are not able to come because of this issue.

Most importantly we are also very pleased to see that our female students are outsmarting their male counterparts in grades and in quality of education in Bangladesh. That's why the majority of these 40,000 to 50,000 students are women. So basically, Canada is not helping women's economic empowerment, at least in this area. So, we would like Canada to open its doors so that these young talented females, capable [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] to study.

Lastly, I'd just like to—

• (1135)

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, High Commissioner, but your time is up. You will get an opportunity to talk further in the rounds of questioning.

We will now proceed to our first round of questioning.

We started a bit late, but I will make sure that we complete this first round of questions of six minutes each.

We will start with Mr. Redekopp.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before I begin, I just want to confirm. Are we going to add 20 minutes to this panel so we have the full hour as we talked about?

The Chair: We will have this first round of questioning to complete, and a few members have to leave, so I'll try to adjust the panels so that we get an opportunity to hear from both panels.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Okay.

Dr. Rahman, thank you so much for being with us here today. Welcome to the committee and thank you for your testimony.

Last week I asked some witnesses about the student direct stream acceptance rates. Specifically I asked about how those related to some countries they mentioned, Senegal and Morocco, which are both French-speaking countries. Surprisingly, these experts didn't know a whole lot about SDS. It was disappointing to me, but hopefully your testimony today will help us to know more about it so we can craft some strong recommendations in this area.

The ties between Saskatchewan and Bangladesh are very strong, as you know. Our post-secondary schools, like the U of S and Sask Polytech really benefit from students coming from Bangladesh.

Your Excellency, you are familiar with the economy of Saskatchewan and the trade we do with Bangladesh. Can you please tell me the direct benefit that including Bangladesh in the student direct stream would have for my constituents in Saskatoon West?

• (1140)

H.E. Khalilur Rahman: I'm very happy to inform you that Bangladesh has very good relations with the province of Saskatchewan. The largest Canadian exports are from your province. Saskatchewan is the leading food exporter in Canada, and Bangladesh is one of the province's top 10 markets in the world with 2020 exports to the country alone valued at \$650 million U.S., and for 2022 it's already, I think, the same, at \$650 million U.S.

About 200 Bangladeshi Canadians live in Saskatoon West and they talk about it to their extended family members and neighbours in Bangladesh who want to come to Canada to study at U Sask. Bangladesh and Saskatchewan have robust economies. Saskatchewan can bring talent from Bangladesh and they can contribute to the Canadian economy and trade.

I know one person, Mr. Hasan Hamid, who studied [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] and is now working in the Global Institute for Food Security, GIFS. He was the bridge to concluding an MOU between GIFS and the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council for research collaboration. We are working in five thematic areas. This kind of person, if they have the opportunity to come to study, not only in Saskatchewan but also in other western provinces—and we also have a lot of agricultural imports from other provinces—I think the Canadian economy can benefit a lot. I am thinking in the area, for example, of IT, where many students can come to Saskatchewan and other western provinces, other provinces where our students want to go.

As the honourable MP has pointed out, Bangladeshi students can contribute in a big way to the economy of Saskatchewan, as basically the province is an agricultural-based province and we have a huge sector, and these kinds of students can contribute for both Saskatchewan and Bangladesh if they get the opportunity.

This is not limited to Saskatchewan. I think it applies to other provinces. I think in the areas of health care, nursing and, as I already said, IT, if our students get the opportunity, they can have the experience of the Canadian education system and can contribute to both Canada and Bangladesh. Especially once again I'd like to focus on how that will help our women students a lot because really our women students feel safe studying in Canada. That's why, honourable MP and other members of the committee, I'd like you all to seriously kindly consider our request.

One thing I'd like to add is that we are from South Asia, and two of our brother countries, India and Pakistan, are already in the program. Bangladesh not only belongs to SAARC but belongs to the Commonwealth, and Canada is a big promoter of Commonwealth countries, so this support would be very helpful for Bangladesh and for Canada and that which exists in the co-operation between Bangladesh and Canada.

That is a big gift for us.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: I know that you've been trying to engage with the Government of Canada on this. I understand that you met with officials from Global Affairs Canada in 2020 and in 2021, and you also met with the department of immigration during this period.

Can you comment on your conversations with the Canadian government and if any movement has been made to include Bangladesh in the student direct stream?

H.E. Khalilur Rahman: Yes, I can, because I have been talking to a number of politicians, including honourable members of Parliament.

In December when I came, I had approached [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] which brought me to the department of immigration. We have received a very positive response from them saying that our request has been considered in their examining committee. One thing I should quote, from a colleague from Global Affairs, is that he said that “this is something where we can assist easily”, and by including Bangladesh in the SDS, that will start the work between Bangladesh and Canada during my time as high commissioner.

The last letter we received was in December—

• (1145)

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, High Commissioner. Your time is up.

Before we go to the next member, please make sure that you keep an eye on me. I will try to give you a one-minute warning, a 30-second warning and then a red card to show that the time is up.

Mr. Dhaliwal, please go ahead. You have six minutes for your round of questioning.

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Madam Chair, recently I had the opportunity to meet with His Excellency Dr. Rahman. He brought up the SDS program.

In particular, I would like to ask Dr. Rahman about two things. How would it help the Bangladeshi students if we moved the office to Dhaka? The other one is about the SDS program.

H.E. Khalilur Rahman: That is a very good question. One thing, you know, is that it is not only about SDS. This will help Bangladeshis and Canada in a big way, because we are now operating between Dhaka and Toronto through direct flights. There is a joint working group between the two countries that was just set up.

The last meeting was yesterday, the seventh meeting, and there has been a lot of mobility, and I think not only for the SDS. The relocation of the visa centre from Singapore to Dhaka will be very helpful. At least we will come to know the reasons for the rejection of a visa despite the students having all the qualities needed to come to Canada. I think that in a big way it would be a huge boost for Bangladesh-Canada relations, because we really don't know why a visa is rejected for a student who has been accepted, who can afford the cost and who has met all the criteria for admission. Unfortunately, we are never told this. The applicant never knows why his or her application was rejected. That is a lack in transparency. I don't want to blame anybody. I think we can bring a lot of transparency by relocating the visa centre from Singapore to Dhaka.

One thing I'd like to say is that whenever we spoke with the Canadian [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] because of past [*Technical difficulty—Editor*]. But as you know, keeping an office in Singapore is more costly than it is in Dhaka, and Dhaka has all the facilities now. Dhaka can be the ideal centre for the Canadian visa centre. Bangladesh has a population of 170 million. There would be a lot of mobility with this direct agreement signed between the two countries, and I think our students will really have the information about why they are being rejected. We do not, being the [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] nation.... We have a wonderful relationship with Canada. Canada is known in Bangladesh as a fair and very non-discriminatory country, a safe country that is friendly and hospitable—

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Would the Bangladeshi students be willing to relocate or study in smaller towns in Canada? I see a lot of demand and a lot of opportunities in small and rural communities in Canada.

H.E. Khalilur Rahman: Yes, this is one thing we know about. We have a group of students who communicate with us. As we have mentioned in our business case, the process for visas...and the western provinces are receiving fewer Bangladeshi students. If you allowed Bangladeshi students in this stream, they would be willing to go to the farthest provinces—Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta—because those have flourishing energy sectors. In the province of Alberta, there is a lot of opportunity for collaboration in the energy sector.

I can guarantee that our students, especially the premier students, who want to pursue careers in the health care sciences, including nursing, would be very pleased to go there, so that they could also work as personal support workers.

• (1150)

Mr. Sukh Dhaliwal: Mr. Christian, you made a serious allegation that there is a discriminatory policy in IRCC. Could you tell us how the minister and the department should intervene to fix that situation?

Mr. Gideon Christian: I just want to state that I am not the one making the allegation. This is a fact. There was evidence from a report that was funded by IRCC itself, which is the IRCC Anti-Racism Employee Focus Groups report. That report established the fact that there is racism in IRCC and it cited examples. Nigeria is a country that was specifically cited as an example.

I may also refer you to page 2 of the draft copy—not the final copy—of the report. I cite that as part of the exhibit to my submission. One question there was, is there racism in IRCC? The simple answer given, throughout all groups, was a firm and clear yes, so I am not the one making the allegation. It's actually the facts from IRCC's own report.

Yes, we have contacted the minister about this. We are a group of Nigerian professors in Canadian universities. About 30 of them wrote a letter to the IRCC minister last November, raising concerns about the contents of this report.

A week ago, there was a clear denial from the minister's office, even though their report actually stated that was the case.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm extremely grateful to the witnesses with us today on this very important study we all care about.

I'm going to move quickly, because like you, unfortunately I don't have a lot of time.

I've spoken with some immigration lawyers. I was informed that [*Technical difficulty*] the high refusal rates, much more proof is required when filing an application for a chance at being accepted, especially with respect to financial capacity documents.

The witnesses brought this up in their remarks, and that's why I'm coming back to it. For example, if someone is applying from the Philippines or Bangladesh, they need to provide bank statements for the last six months as a minimum requirement. On the other hand, if an applicant is from Spain, for example, they simply need to show proof of financial resources.

I'd like to hear your opinion on this. Doesn't this prove that we're dealing with systemic discrimination and even a form of racism against study permit applicants?

I would like you all to answer me, starting with Mr. Christian.

[*English*]

Mr. Gideon Christian: Yes. The issue of financial requirements and documentation, if I may also refer to the IRCC report, was actually one of the issues raised in terms of discriminatory treatment of applicants.

In the case of SDS countries, all you need to show is that you have a guaranteed investment certificate of \$10,000 to meet the financial requirements. In the case of the requirements under the Nigerian student express, you are required to show that you have \$30,000 within a period of six months in one year's bank statement. Even if you prove that you have \$30,000 today in your account, you don't meet their requirements. That \$30,000 has to sit in your account for a period of six months. In the case of SDS countries, you just need to produce the GIC statement, or maybe, to make it easier, a certified cheque of \$10,000, to meet the requirement, whereas the other person has to wait for six months and show \$30,000 in a six-month period over 12 months. That is clearly discriminatory. I mean, asking one person to show \$10,000 and asking another person to show \$30,000—there is no justification for that.

We are asking that the requirements at least be harmonized. What's even worse is that when the person who has the higher burden of proof meets that proof, there is nothing to show for it in terms of the approval rate. They still have a worse approval rate than even the other countries with a lower standard of proof when it comes to the financial requirements.

• (1155)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Rahman, would you like to add something about this discrimination that many students, including those from Bangladesh, are facing when they want to study here?

[English]

H.E. Khalilur Rahman: I just heard it in French, but from what I understood—

The Chair: Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, I've stopped the clock. Could you repeat your question?

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I think we have an interpretation problem.

That's okay, I will continue with Mr. Christian.

You may not be well placed to answer my next question, but you do represent an association among others from Africa. We'll see what happens as we hear from you, but we feel that there is some sort of bias against study permit applicants from French-speaking Africa. We realized it when we saw the refusal rates in some West African countries, including Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon.

Could the location where applications are processed and the resources allocated to them also be fuelling this bias?

[English]

Mr. Gideon Christian: There are many problems [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] for the low approval rates. Some of the problems may be attributed to resources. For example, for most of these countries that have low approval rates, the study permit applications are not processed in those countries. They are processed in other countries. Of course, the IRCC has attributed that to resources. If the study permit application can be processed in the source country, individuals in those countries will have a better understanding of the unique circumstances of the applicants in their country to be able to make decision. That is a problem that could be taken care of by having the processing localized.

At the same time, we must also be conscious of the bigger problem. That is why I keep referring to the IRCC report. Even if you bring the processing to the local countries, and we still continue to have those problems that were highlighted in that anti-racism report, resources will not solve those problems. Issues of bias and discrimination are embedded, are systemic, based on that report. That is why it is very important, and we are recommending, that the minister take steps to address those fundamental issues raised in those reports, in addition to the one you have highlighted, which of course is resources.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you very much, Mr. Christian.

That means you would support creating an immigration ombudsperson position in Canada, among other things, to ensure that people are better protected. Can you answer quickly?

[English]

Mr. Gideon Christian: Absolutely. I agree 100% on the creation of an independent ombudsman to oversee activities of IRCC.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Mr. Christian.

[English]

The Chair: We will now proceed to Ms. Kwan, for six minutes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I thank the witnesses for their presentations, as well.

I am going to go to Mr. Christian first. It is very striking, especially when you highlight the differential treatment for SDS countries where the requirement is \$10,000 in terms of [*Technical difficulty—Editor*], and then with the Nigerian stream the government introduced the requirement of \$30,000, three times the requirement of other SDS countries.

Do you have any idea of why there would be such a differential treatment in terms of the dollar amount being applied?

Mr. Gideon Christian: I have no idea. I did an access to information request through IRCC, trying to get information with regard to the Nigerian student express program. I got the documentary disclosure from IRCC. I went through every page of those documents to find the justification. I found none.

● (1200)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Would you mind submitting those documents to the clerk, so all committee members could receive them as well?

Mr. Gideon Christian: Absolutely. I will do that.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

In your presentation, you were just about to talk about the artificial intelligence system, the Chinook system. Based on the Pollara report, the report you cited, where there were issues of discrimination, bias, and stereotype attitudes among IRCC officials, if IRCC officials then go to produce these artificial intelligence systems, what are your concerns?

Mr. Gideon Christian: Let me quickly state that in addition to being the president of African Scholars Initiative based in Canada, I am also an assistant professor in the faculty of law at the University of Calgary, and my field of specialization is artificial intelligence and law. This is one area in which I have a professional expertise.

I have researched the implication of race with artificial intelligence. That's the major focus of my research.

On what is artificial intelligence based? Artificial intelligence technology is trained with data, and the problem is with garbage in and garbage out, where a new user raises data to train an artificial intelligence technology. That technology simply regurgitates that racism or discrimination, and that is the concern I'm having with regard to the use of that technology by IRCC.

The data in statute six of the report has shown a low approval rate for African countries. The racism and discrimination is evident from a human review of this application. If we train artificial intelligence technology using this data, we're going to have a regurgitation of that same problem, this time not by humans but by technology.

The IRCC has not even made things easy, because the entire use of Chinook technology and artificial intelligence is embedded in secrecy and a black box. I have made access to information requests for these documents, and they have been pushed back. The last response I received was to provide a 160-day extension. I don't even have access to this to be able to tell you, MP Kwan, whether this technology is amazing or discriminatory. I can't do that, because I don't have access to the data.

It might also help if members of the committee...You probably have more access to that data than I do, as well as to those technologies, so take a look at it, and you will probably come to the same conclusion.

There is a very serious risk if those technologies are used by IRCC now, because of the problem with regard to this dismal approval rate, and, of course, the black box behind those technologies.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Perhaps we could get from you the access to information questions, forward them to the chair to submit them to the officials, so that we can get the response for this committee, because that information would be critical for the purpose of this study.

Related to this issue, we also had witnesses in the previous panel who raised concerns around the findings in the Pollara report, and what the implications were for artificial intelligence systems. They were proposing that the government halt the use of Chinook at this time, and that there be an independent assessment of the artificial intelligence system.

Would you support those suggestions, and do you have additional suggestions to add?

Mr. Gideon Christian: Based on my dealings with IRCC so far, and general information pertaining to IRCC, I would be in support of any third party oversight of activities by IRCC. This is where we have a problem, because there has not been that third party oversight. That is why this problem keeps getting worse and worse. The Federal Court is there to oversee a decision if, and only if, members bring a judiciary review of the application.

We have seen cases of study permit refusal. We have members who have gone to Federal Court and succeeded in over 20 decisions. The Federal Court consented to send the application back to the visa office, and the visa office refused the application again for the same reason or for some other bogus reason. The Federal Court doesn't have the capacity—or has a very limited capacity—to be able to make the kind of direct advantage, which they have been very reluctant to use, because of the principal of separation of judiciary and executive power.

If there is an independent third party, an ombudsman to oversee activities of IRCC, whether it is the use of Chinook.... That would be a very good way [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] IRCC is facing now.

As long as that independent oversight is not there, we will continue to have these problems. It is the same people who are making this error and who continue to make the mistake without any attempt to get out of it.

● (1205)

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Your time is up.

I've been able to check with the services and we can extend the meeting a bit.

We will have a shortened second round before we proceed to the second panel. We will have two minutes each for Mr. Hallan and Ms. Kayabaga, and then one minute each for Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and Ms. Kwan.

We will now proceed to Mr. Hallan for two minutes.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan (Calgary Forest Lawn, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Dr. Christian, thank you so much for everything that you've been contributing. Thanks to Your Excellency as well.

We've been having the same concerns, Dr. Christian, and a lot of the same frustrations that you mentioned, like when you have been reaching out to the minister's office and there have been no replies. This has been a very frustrating process, especially, to address such a serious concern of racism.

Can you please elaborate a bit more on the steps you have taken to address these issues and what kind of responses you have been getting?

Mr. Gideon Christian: We've taken many steps. In November of last year, a group of Canadian professors of Nigerian descent wrote a letter to the minister. That letter is part of the exhibit that I submitted to this committee. That was shortly after the IRCC report was released. We drew the attention of the minister to this report. We urged the minister's office to take steps to address this concern, especially as it relates to Nigeria. Specific references are made to endorse reports in Nigeria.

We got a response, after many months, from the minister's office. The response that we got was denial, denial, denial. Even things that were very clear from the report were met with denial in that letter—

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: These are not allegations. These are facts.

Mr. Gideon Christian: We are not making allegations. We are stating the facts on this report, as well as files from other access to information reports. We have the Nigerian student express and the requirement that the applicants have to write the English-language examination, even though the primary language of instruction in Nigeria is the English language.

We raised this concern. There has never been any serious response to the concern other than denial, which I will send in later to the committee on this matter.

The Chair: Thank you. Your time is up.

We will now proceed to Ms. Kayabaga for two minutes.

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga (London West, Lib.): Thank you so much, Madam Chair.

I want to thank both of our witnesses for being here today and for taking the time to indulge us in this discussion in our study.

I want to ask this question of Dr. Christian. Thank you so much for your information and expertise.

I also want to clarify that you are speaking on the IRCC report, specifically, on the discrimination and disapproval rates that African students receive.

You talked about the artificial intelligence one.

What kind of oversight would you suggest would be the best to make sure that... As we have the two reports from IRCC that have found discrimination and racism, what do you suggest would be the best oversight to this Chinook system, the artificial intelligence system, to remove the discrimination and racism against African students?

Mr. Gideon Christian: My ability to answer this question will be very limited, because I have zero idea about the artificial intelligence technology IRCC is using. I may not be able to provide a specific answer to the question, but in every case where the use of artificial intelligence technology is involved, it's often important to have an independent body of experts that oversees the technology and the algorithm. That body should be independent from the user or the organization using the system, the artificial intelligence system itself.

If we can have an independent body of experts that oversees the design of this technology and the development of the algorithm to ensure that this racism or the data used in training this technology does not feed bias, discrimination and racism on the algorithm, that would be very important.

Let me quickly go to the Chinook case, which is a very good example.

Okay. I see from the MP that my time is up.

• (1210)

Ms. Arielle Kayabaga: I appreciate your answer, I really do.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe for one minute.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for being with us.

This is the last time I will get to speak to you. You have been very eloquent and you have also shared your expertise with us.

I am coming back to you, Mr. Christian, because in the last set of questions I asked you, you said that you support creating an immigration ombudsperson position in Canada. How do you feel that would improve things for you?

[English]

Mr. Gideon Christian: I'm concerned already about the discrimination, the bias and discrimination, against African students when

it comes to study visa applications. My major concern is having those biases fed into technology. That is very serious, because as humans we tend to have this concern that once technology makes a decision, that decision is bias free. It is not.

When you use a biased technology [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] that has to train the technology, it regurgitates those biases. My concern now is that already these reports are showing bias. Let's make sure we don't transfer that bias to the AI technology that IRCC is going to be using.

The Chair: Thank you, Dr. Christian.

We will now end our round of questioning with a minute for Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Kwan, please go ahead.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

My question is for Dr. Christian.

Thank you so much for your expertise on this. There's no question that there needs to be both independent assessment for any artificial intelligence systems and then also an ombudsperson to review IRCC matters. Those are two separate issues.

With respect to applications, the government also has this thing called "dual intent". Are you familiar with that? What are your thoughts on it, and what needs to be done?

Mr. Gideon Christian: I am very familiar with dual intent. I'm a lawyer, and part of my practice, of course, includes immigration law.

"Dual intent" means that if somebody is coming to Canada to study and they also have the intent to become a permanent resident after that, it is perfect and fine under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, but I warn study permit applicants from Africa: "Do not ever bring up the issue of dual intent in your application—if you do, it's going to come back to haunt you."

With regard to dual intent, the problem we are having is that dual intent is being misinterpreted by IRCC decision-makers, and that is what is sad about it, because the law allows for it, but if you express that intent, you are likely going to be refused a study visa to Canada.

All I say—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Your time is up.

With this, I would like to thank both our witnesses, Dr. Christian and the High Commissioner for the People's Republic of Bangladesh, for appearing before this committee and providing us your important input.

With this, this panel comes to an end. I will suspend the meeting for two minutes so that the sound checks can be done for the second panel.

I have Ms. Kwan.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Before our witnesses leave this panel, I would like to invite them to submit additional documentation that they think would be relevant and useful for the committee members' consideration.

Because time was limited and you did not get to give the full answers you perhaps may have wished to, if you have any supplementary items to add to the questions that were put to you, please submit them to the clerk so that we can receive that info.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan. Please direct the questions through the chair.

Yes, for both witnesses, if there is something that you would like to bring to the committee's notice, please send your submission to the clerk of the committee. That will be distributed to all of the members, and we will take that into consideration as we continue this important study.

With that, thanks once again to both our witnesses.

I will suspend the meeting for two minutes to let the clerk do the sound checks for the second panel.

- (1215) _____ (Pause) _____
- (1215)

The Chair: I call the meeting to order.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our witnesses as we continue our study on the recruitment and acceptance rates of foreign students.

In this panel, I welcome Martin Basiri, chief executive officer and co-founder of ApplyBoard. Also, we have with us Madam Leah Nord, senior director, workforce strategies and inclusive growth, representing the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The third witness for this panel is Madam Denise Amyot, president and chief executive officer, and we also have been joined by Andrew Champagne, manager, mobility programs. Both are representing Colleges and Institutes Canada.

I would like to welcome all of you and thank you for appearing before this committee.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses.

Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. When you are ready to speak, you can click on the microphone icon to activate your mike. I remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair. Interpretation in this video conference will work very much like in a regular committee meeting. When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

All the witnesses will be given five minutes for their opening remarks. Then we will proceed to the rounds of questioning. For the benefit of all the witnesses and the members, I will give a one-minute warning, a 30-second warning and then a red card to show that your time is up, so please keep an eye on that.

With that, we will begin with Mr. Basiri, chief executive officer and co-founder of ApplyBoard.

You have five minutes for your opening remarks, Mr. Basiri. Please proceed.

Mr. Martin Basiri (Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder, ApplyBoard): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all members of the committee for engaging on this important topic.

My name is Martin Basiri. I came to Canada as an international student from Iran to study at the University of Waterloo for my master's in engineering. Six years ago, I co-founded one of the fastest-growing tech companies in the world with my brothers—who are also international students who came here with me—with a mission to educate the world. ApplyBoard is the largest platform for international students to discover and apply to educational institutions.

Thanks to IRCC, my brothers and I received our permanent residency through Canada's start-up visa program and we were able to stay here in Canada and grow our company. We now include team members in over 30 countries, with 1,000 here in Canada. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity that the Canadian education system has given me as an international student. I wish for future leaders of Canada to follow the same pathway.

We have insight from helping over 300,000 applicants to Canadian institutions from 125 countries in the world. As well, I studied the last six years of study permit applications for this committee and would be happy to answer any of your questions after my recommendations.

The first recommendation is on dual intent. Our institutions, immigration system and government all promote the post-graduation work permit pathway to stay and work in Canada legally after graduation. We motivate the world's best students to choose Canada over other countries because of our leading institutions and career opportunities after graduation. Then, at the time of application, we want them to tell us that they won't stay in Canada and will return to their home country.

Why are we doing this? Why are we discouraging applicants from being transparent and truthful about their intentions for coming to Canada, when in fact we want them to stay?

Madam Chair, you and this committee can create the political will to change this once and for all and to transform Canada's talent attraction pathway to enable a better future for all Canadians.

Second, we must evaluate students on their potential and value to Canadian institutions and communities, not their ties to their home countries. Asking students to show ties to their home countries, families and businesses is a huge disadvantage to so many of the top students. Think about the top student in a west African country who happens to be an orphan. They have no chance of showing family ties. That's not who Canadians are. That's not who we are and that needs to stop.

Third, IRCC is evaluating potential students from over 200 countries and fraud is one of the major challenges they have. They can't solve this alone. They need to shed light on the importance of eliminating fraud and push all stakeholders—especially universities, colleges and test providers—to help in ending fraud altogether, forever.

Fourth, in this hearing, you've heard from other witnesses testifying to different problems that IRCC is having with time, processing, transparency and everything else. That being said, I have to say that IRCC has accomplished a lot during the pandemic. They have made policies in weeks that would normally take years, in a fast-changing pandemic environment.

Data suggests that there are persistent correlations between study permit acceptance rates and students' countries of origin, school attending, age and a number of other factors. To build efficiency, there is no better approach than for IRCC to create an AI-driven dynamic visa application system with dynamic requirements based on Canada's needs, academic credentials of the application, intended institutions and other factors. This would not only increase the transparency of the system, but it would also end confusion.

Sector stakeholders want to be a part of the solution and have the expertise to help, so please continue to ask. We are willing to help build a better future for all Canadians.

Thank you very much, Madam Chair, for having me here.

• (1220)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Basiri.

We will now proceed to Ms. Nord, representing the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Nord, you will have five minutes for your opening remarks.

Ms. Leah Nord (Senior Director, Workforce Strategies and Inclusive Growth, Canadian Chamber of Commerce): Good afternoon, and thank you, Madam Chair, vice-chair, committee members and fellow speakers here. I am speaking to you today from Ottawa, the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people. I go by the pronouns she, her and *elle*. Today I am still remotely working from my home office.

I'm speaking to you today on behalf of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which is the voice of Canadian business. We represent 200,000 businesses across the country, across sectors and across sizes, including our network of 450 local chambers and boards of trade from coast to coast to coast.

Immigrants play an important role in the inclusive growth and diversity of the Canadian workforce in communities. The chamber has a series of recommendations that promote innovative and effective policies and programming to support new Canadians with labour market and community integration. This includes international students.

Before going into detail on these recommendations, I will take a step back and underscore the current labour shortage crisis. We have an unprecedented and I dare say unfathomable one million job vacancies in Canada. Vacancies in health care, construction, manufacturing, accommodation and food services along with retail trade

are currently leading the way, yet we have shortages across sectors, communities and regions affecting every size of business. Businesses, including small businesses, are citing labour shortages as often one of their most significant barriers to economic growth.

As the chamber indicated in a release last week, this problem is not new and is structural in nature. In early 2020, before the pandemic, we were speaking of record job vacancies and record low unemployment rates. Two years later I am saying the same thing to you here today.

Addressing the structural issues and building sustained, inclusive talent pipelines will be key to our economic recovery and growth. And international students have an important role to play. They are qualified, credentialed, acclimatized, and many—more than half of them—are wanting to stay. My fellow witness Ms. Amyot will likely cite that every Canadian is within 50 kilometres of one of her member colleges, CEGEPs or polytechnic institutes. I would add that at each of these, there are international students, including in our small, rural, remote and under-serviced communities. Although that does not guarantee anything per se, it does give these communities a proverbial fighting chance.

At the chamber's 2021 AGM, a policy resolution was passed specific to international students that made the following recommendations to the federal government.

One, allow international students attending institutions that are designated on the DIL list, the designated institution list, to: (a) qualify for Canada Summer Jobs and student work placement programs; (b) participate in voluntary co-op terms and internships without obtaining a separate work permit; and (c) count all time spent in Canada as international students towards citizenship eligibility.

Two, permanently remove the sectoral industry restrictions for the temporary pandemic-related measure that allows international students to work more than 20 hours a week off campus.

Three, make permanent the temporary pandemic-related measure to count studies towards hours needed to be eligible for post-graduate work permits.

Four, allow part-time studies to count towards the post-graduate work permit eligibility.

The Canadian chamber has also long supported pathways to permanent residency for temporary permit holders, and welcomed one of the Government of Canada's 2021 temporary public policies, the temporary resident to permanent resident pathway initiative that included 40,000 international students. We strongly encourage the Government of Canada to build on this, with a few caveats and additions.

The first is that these pathways serve to complement existing immigration programs and streams creating an and/or approach and not an either-or dichotomy.

The second is that consideration be given to providing international students on their pathways to permanent residency access to employment and settlement services that are currently only available to those with PR, permanent residency status.

The third is to provide funding for capacity building and concierge-type service to businesses, particularly SMEs to recruit and onboard international students.

• (1225)

Thank you for your time. I look forward to answering any questions.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Nord.

We will now proceed to our third witness. We will hear from Colleges and Institutes Canada represented by Ms. Amyot and Mr. Champagne.

Ms. Amyot, you will have five minutes. I think you will be sharing your time with Mr. Champagne. Please proceed.

• (1230)

Ms. Denise Amyot (President and Chief Executive Officer, Colleges and Institutes Canada): Thank you very much, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I'm here on behalf of our 140 member institutions, colleges, CEGEPs, institutes and polytechnics.

For 50 years, Colleges and Institutes Canada has championed education, training and innovation on a global scale.

Canada's college systems are demand-driven systems. This means programs are designed in consultation with industry to ensure that students gain in-demand skills that respond to current and emerging labour market needs.

[Translation]

With 95% of the Canadian population living within 50 km of a college or institute, our members play a key role in international education and immigration by offering their programs to all communities in Canada, including rural and francophone minority communities.

We're hearing more and more stories of qualified students waiting several months for a decision on their study permit only to have it rejected, often for unclear and unfounded reasons. This is particularly true for CEGEPs and francophone establishments outside of Quebec, whose primary source markets are in French-speaking Africa.

[English]

Refusals for reasons related to dual intent are particularly difficult to explain. On one hand, the Canadian government acknowledges and promotes study as a desirable pathway toward permanent residency but refuses applicants who openly express their desire to stay. Many students who have previously completed a university degree in their home country are also being refused for reasons re-

lated to what an officer might describe as a questionable education pathway, even though here at home Canadian university graduates are increasingly turning to colleges and institutes to help them up-scale and transition to the labour market.

Another common reason for refusal relates to a student's inability to demonstrate financial sufficiency. Banking systems in certain countries are not as well developed, and students rely more heavily on family networks in ways that may seem atypical from a Canadian cultural lens.

[Translation]

For several years, Colleges and Institutes Canada has been advocating for a practical approach to resolving these issues by joining forces with IRCC. Innovative teamwork between our association and visa officers in the field has resulted in such things as the designated learning institution portal, a guaranteed investment certificate to demonstrate financial sufficiency and the student direct stream.

A pilot program with the Dakar visa office has shown that sharing information between designated learning institutions and visa officers can improve transparency and mutual understanding and bring up acceptance rates.

Our association wants to continue working with IRCC to find other innovative solutions to streamline application processes and facilitate recruitment of the students who best meet the needs of our labour market. For example, IRCC should consider implementing a demand driven study permit stream that would give priority to applicants who have a job offer conditional on graduation. The stream would promote communication between our members and local employers, and would likely increase the number of students in rural and remote areas, where labour shortages are more acute.

[English]

In conclusion, modernizations to the study permit applications process are needed such as an expansion of the study direct stream to more francophone countries, increased transparency and better two-way information sharing, greater connections between DLIs and employers, a review of policies and definitions related to the international student program, and approved and stable approval rates.

• (1235)

Those measures are needed for our member institutions to remain competitive and for Canada to be a destination of choice.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Amyot.

We will now proceed to our round of questioning.

Mr. Redekopp, you have six minutes for your round of questioning. You can please proceed.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses for your testimony here today. It's been very enlightening.

I'm going to start with Mr. Basiri.

I come from Saskatoon. We're a smaller city in Canada, although we have a world-class university and a great polytechnic school as well, and so international students are very important to us.

In your experience, do international students go to the smaller centres like Saskatoon as much? What are some of the reasons why they might or might not do that?

Mr. Martin Basiri: It's a great question.

The way international student recruitment works, a lot of it is based on the way the universities and colleges, and to some extent some of the district boards, do advertisements and do their positioning. We've seen, not only in a city the size of Saskatoon, some universities, like Algoma University, in a smaller area in northern Ontario, be very successful by positioning itself correctly.

It's all about how to position it. There are a lot of opportunities, and remote work, especially in the STEM fields is a new norm of the world. There are a lot of people who would love to go from big cities and have big homes in areas where real estate is not as expensive.

I don't think there is a place in Canada that doesn't have an opportunity to take a lot of international students. All it takes is the right sales and marketing and positioning our good institutions. Some of our least popular schools here are much better than some of the best schools overseas, so there is always a very good demand for higher education.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Of course, the ones in Saskatoon are the best in Canada, I just have to say.

Following along with that, the student direct stream is something we heard about in the previous panel from the high commissioner of Bangladesh. In your experience, has the student direct stream helped students from certain countries get to Canada? Is this something that should be expanded into other countries like Bangladesh?

Mr. Martin Basiri: SDS was the first step to create more transparency and the IRCC asking the students what they want. Absolutely, I think we should have a global SDS, but I would also design it per that country and the universities or colleges the students are coming to. For example, we know that even for students of countries that have very low visa rates, if they're accepted at the University of Waterloo or the University of Toronto, they have a very high chance of a visa.

We just have to make it more dynamic and something that serves our needs; I am very much in favour of that. You could say that also IRCC did that with express entry, when people want to get their permanent residency to make the point system.... That was a very clever move and made Canada one of the best immigration destinations for skilled workers. I'm 100% confident that making a very good SDS can create a lot of transparency and also make it very good for universities and colleges to position themselves globally.

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Thanks.

Ms. Amyot, I'll ask you the same question. What are your thoughts on the student direct stream? What could be changed? What could be improved, and what would you say to someone like

the high commissioner of Bangladesh, who really wants to get his country into that stream?

Ms. Denise Amyot: I agree with you that SDS is essential. In fact, we put in place the first concept. Before it was called SDS, we did a pilot project with IRCC. At the time it was called by another name. What is interesting is that afterwards, we saw more and more countries having an SDS process.

I think it's important that whenever IRCC wants to add new countries to the SDS, they talk with us. For us, what is important is the diversification of countries. It's extremely important, no matter which member we talk to. Whether it's Saskatchewan, Polytechnique, or other colleges or CEGEPs across the country, this is always what we hear. For the SDS process, please do not surprise us by suddenly having five new countries without us having discussed them before.

• (1240)

Mr. Brad Redekopp: Mr. Basiri, you mentioned artificial intelligence. We've heard from different witnesses some concerns with that, with the different key words that are used and things like that.

Could you expand a little bit more on that? Is there opportunity for artificial intelligence in decision-making to actually hurt the system—to penalize, to introduce racism and things like that? What have you seen that way?

Mr. Martin Basiri: From what I read about the case, we don't have that much information about the Chinook system. It seems like it's an Excel file and I don't think it's a real AI. AI can be extremely useful. For something like a student visa, it must be a very good AI. It can be transparent. I don't see any harm.

Of course, it's a computer, so you need to program it correctly, but if transparency is the intention, it can be done very well. We are doing it on every subject, like in health care. It works across the world, so I don't know why it shouldn't work here.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to Mr. El-Khoury.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury (Laval—Les Îles, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses.

My first question is for Mr. Basiri.

Mr. Basiri, based on your experience, which I consider to be exemplary, can you tell us what role institutions play in detecting and preventing all types of fraud? Also, how can institutions combat fraud in order to improve how we manage international study permit application processing and bring up acceptance rates?

[English]

Mr. Martin Basiri: The relationship between the students, the universities and IRCC is like a triangle. All of the material should be somehow shared between them, so what the students share with the university is the same story they are sharing for a visa and vice versa. When the university shares a document with the students, it should be verifiable by the IRCC

Right now we can see that things like letters of acceptance or the receipts for tuition fee payment are being created fraudulently in different markets. Universities and colleges can stop this literally immediately. I think that in the market, universities are saying it's not their problem; it's IRCC's problem. Then IRCC probably has so many other things on its shoulders that it has to address that this might not be the thing.

I think something like that can be just a push from IRCC. It could literally be just a tweet that says that by 2024 we want it one hundred per cent eliminated, so the whole industry then goes after eliminating the fraud. There are so many products out there that can serve this, but universities normally have a lack of will because they say it's not their problem; it's IRCC's problem. If IRCC doesn't do anything about it, why should they do anything about it?

Not every single problem has to be solved by IRCC. Sometimes they have to come out and just state the vision, so the whole industry will go after that.

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: My second question is for both Ms. Amyot and Ms. Nord.

Can you speak to factors that may lead applicants to provide fraudulent documents? How can we address this issue? Do institutions have a responsibility to ensure that they work with consultants who are not facilitating fraud in this student permit application process?

Ms. Denise Amyot: In fact, we did a pilot project in Dakar. The key to ensuring there's no fraudulent behaviour is to ensure that there's constant communications between both the IRCC and the institutions. The pilot was live; it was in real time. This allowed us to ensure that there were no fraudulent acts identified. It was quite successful, but it was a pilot and that's the problem.

We need to ensure that there are more mechanisms by which the sharing of information is important, as well as transparency. This is very key. We have seen in the past that when we work together hand in hand, not only do we not have fraudulent activities, but the level of approval for students is greater, which is one of the issues that we have right now in the system.

Chinook is another problem. We could talk about it after.

• (1245)

[Translation]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Ms. Nord, does the Canadian Chamber of Commerce play a role? When students come here, do you have a responsibility to help them? Can you speak to that, please?

[English]

Ms. Leah Nord: There is no direct role. I'm not intimately familiar with the Chinook system. As to the other comments that have

been made, I do appreciate the concerns with AI and AI bias, but we've got plenty of examples from the business community, and even examples with immigration programs throughout the world, that when the algorithm and the process is done right, it actually eliminates the bias. It does involve getting it right, and there are examples out there, but I would encourage harnessing AI for good.

[Translation]

Mr. Fayçal El-Khoury: Mr. Basiri, you mentioned that Canada played a key role during the pandemic and that production was pretty good. What do you think of the program for international students and how the process is managed?

[English]

Mr. Martin Basiri: Madam Chair, do I have time to respond?

The Chair: No, time is up. We will have to proceed to our next member.

We will now proceed to Monsieur Brunelle-Duceppe, for six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm so grateful to the witnesses who are with us today for this important study that is very near and dear to all of our hearts. I really enjoyed your opening remarks, particularly Mr. Basiri, who told us about the dual intent criterion.

Ms. Amyot, you went a little further, even suggesting a program that would tie study permits in with the labour market once the student graduates. You're saying that it's completely absurd to deny a study permit to a foreign student simply because they may not return to their country after graduation. Is that what you're saying?

Ms. Denise Amyot: Absolutely. We can't say that international students are our best immigrants because they have studied in Canada and gained Canadian work experience, and then deny them a study permit on the grounds that they may not return to their country after they finish their studies because they aren't married. That simply makes no sense.

As Ms. Nord pointed out, we know that Canada is dealing with a significant labour shortage right now in all sectors and across all regions of the country. International students are part of the solution. So it's urgent that we rectify this issue.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: You represent a number of post-secondary institutions in Quebec and Canada. I don't know if you've had the opportunity to hear what was said last week at a meeting of this committee, when a witness representing students outside Quebec explained to us that francophone international students were told that their studies in French outside Quebec weren't valid. Were you flabbergasted like I was?

• (1250)

Ms. Denise Amyot: Yes, absolutely. That's unacceptable, much like when international students with a university degree who want to come and study at one of our colleges or CEGEPs are told it's strange that they would want to study at a college when they have already studied at a university.

We know that Canadians are even doing it, and increasingly so, to make sure that what they study is relevant to the job market.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Exactly. In that case, is Quebec not being penalized because of its post-secondary education system, which is different from the rest of Canada? I understand that you represent institutions across the country, but I see that Quebec may be at a disadvantage because of the CEGEP system. It may be misunderstood by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. Would you agree?

Ms. Denise Amyot: Actually, students don't experience discrimination because the system is different in Quebec, for we mustn't forget that CEGEPs offer both qualified pre-university programs and vocational and technical training. International students who come to study in Quebec often do vocational and technical training.

I will give you an example. In Matane, were it not for international students, who make up about 50% of the student body, the programs could not be offered to local students who have lived there for generations.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: That is akin to what we're currently experiencing in Saint-Félicien too. In fact, the situation is quite commonplace in the region.

Ms. Denise Amyot: Exactly.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you very much, Ms. Amyot. I hope I will have the opportunity to ask you more questions.

Ms. Denise Amyot: Thank you.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Mr. Basiri, you appear to be a computer whiz. I heard you talk about the Chinook program earlier. Could a bias against francophone students from Africa predate Chinook, and could the program have helped crystallize this inequality?

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Basiri: I studied the last six years of visas. I did this from 2016 to 2018 and 2019 to 2021. It showed that the francophone Africa visa rate went from 29.5% to 26.6% during this time, after the IRCC adopted this, and the rest of Africa went from 26% to 25%. Francophone countries during the last three years compared with the three years prior grew 64% in terms of the total number of applicants. The rest of Africa grew only 32%. Both of them are better than when you look at the total world data.

I'm a technologist. I'm not a politician. The data doesn't suggest any discrimination against francophone Africa versus other African countries. In fact, if you want to find it in terms of other countries, you should look at the Middle East. Their visa rates really came down and their growth is really lagging, even though in Middle Eastern countries their development and GDP growth are going up.

I didn't find any particular data about francophone versus the rest of Africa that can say there's discrimination. That being said, a 26% visa rate is very bad.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: However, countries like Cameroon and Senegal have seen refusal rates as high as 88%. We may not have the same numbers, but if Iran's refusal rate is 48% and Senegal's is 88%, I find that's a big difference between the two.

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe. Your time is up.

Ms. Kwan, you have six minutes. Please proceed.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all of the witnesses.

With regard to the data, just based on that last answer, I wonder whether the comparison ought to be not so much about African francophone students with other African student applications but with other countries. I think that's where you see the discrepancies. But I'll leave that for a minute, because we explored that quite a lot with the other witnesses.

Ms. Amyot, there was an issue that was brought up by some of the previous witnesses. The Canadian government during the COVID period allowed for international students to start their study even though they could not be physically here in Canada. Of course, some of the students ended up not getting their visa permit to come and study, but they could not get a refund. They cannot continue their studies and they are already out-of-pocket.

I'm wondering what your thoughts are on that. Should the students actually be out-of-pocket or should they be refunded their tuition?

• (1255)

Ms. Denise Amyot: I'm not familiar with those specific cases. I can tell you, and I'll ask my colleague to add to this, that IRCC worked really hard to ensure that all the students who were making a request to have a student visa could have it in a timely fashion. But we know that it's not enough, especially for those coming in....

Andrew, do you want to address the specific questions from Ms. Kwan?

Ms. Jenny Kwan: My specific question is on the students who paid, followed the instructions from IRCC, started their studies and later had their visas rejected. They could not get a refund. Would the institutes be in support of students being refunded their tuition in those circumstances?

Mr. Andrew Champagne (Manager, Mobility Programs, Colleges and Institutes Canada): Over the course of the pandemic, there have been a lot of accommodations to the application process and the admission process for the institutions, and there were great efforts to align some of the timelines. There are typically periods where international students and all students can receive a full refund on their program. In some cases, there were absolutely challenges with students waiting a very long time to receive the second stage of their visa application process and, in some cases, they had already completed a full program from an academic perspective and had received that credential, so this certainly was an issue. Students were able to complete a good part of those programs online, in some cases entirely, and we worked with IRCC to try to push as much as we could on faster processing times and approvals on those applications.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you. I don't think you answered the question, though. Pushing IRCC moving forward and whether or not students [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] difference, and I think that's a major issue.

I wonder, Mr. Basiri, if you have anything to add to that.

Mr. Martin Basiri: Yes, there are some schools that didn't refund students, and their claim was that students came for education, not to come to Canada, and they did not refund. That being said, there were many schools that were accommodating, as Mr. Champagne talked about, and they did refund.

We see that it's not black and white among all the schools, and that's something that the schools themselves have to have oversight on. There are some cases that you've seen, like recently in Quebec where 2,000 students got their visas, came here, and there was no school, so their money is gone. It's a very big problem, and we are concerned, especially with private to public agreements that are happening, like public universities working with private universities, where many students can be hurt. We raised our concerns a lot with the schools and tried to stand on behalf of our students to get the best result. The majority of the schools are doing an amazing job and working from their hearts, but you can see cases where schools are not accommodating.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you very much.

I hear that a lot from Vancouver East with students who end up being out of pocket, and it's a huge hit, because it's a huge cost. In the end, they did not end up getting their degree or the course they wanted to complete.

I want to turn to the issue around dual intent for a minute, because the contradiction in that is significant. On the one hand, IRCC is saying to people that there's dual intent, and on the other hand, they're saying they're going to recheck your application because they think you want to stay.

What is your recommendation for the government to address this dual intent contradiction?

Go ahead, Ms. Amyot.

Ms. Denise Amyot: We should just drop it; it doesn't make sense. On the one hand, you spend money to market Canada as a country to come to study and to immigrate, and on the other hand, you refuse them if it's not obvious that they will go back. We

should drop it. Our members have expressed frustration with recurring incidents like that, and it's confusing. We are a country that has a good reputation for its education and, unfortunately, this is not helping us to be competitive with other markets.

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you.

We will proceed to our second round. We will have four minutes each for Mr. Hallan and Mr. Ali, then two minutes each for Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe and Ms. Kwan. We will start with Mr. Hallan.

Mr. Hallan, you have four minutes. Please proceed.

Mr. Jasraj Singh Hallan: Madam Chair, Mr. Seeback will take my time.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Seeback.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Thank you very much.

One of the things that we heard in our committee hearing on Tuesday, with respect to the underperforming approval numbers in various offices, is that a blind review in order to determine why the rejection rates are so high would be important.

I'm wondering if any of our panellists today would agree with that call to action, because I think it's a significant call to action and one that the government should take very seriously.

I'm opening that up to everyone on the panel today. Please let me know what your thoughts are.

Ms. Denise Amyot: For any process, it's important to do some audits to look at how it's going, and to do them in different parts of the world to assess the process and see if there is discrimination or bias, whether you use artificial intelligence or not.

I'll share a story with you very quickly. At one point, we had post-grad certificates that were very popular in our country for international students, and we began to see the numbers go down. It was refusal after refusal. We went to meet the agents in China and we asked them why. They were saying, "Why would someone who went to a university now go to a college?" We explained what the post-grad certificate was. In fact, Stats Canada issued a report a couple of months ago on how popular it is both with Canadian and international students and it's increasing. They just did not know, and what had happened was there was a change of staff during the summer, so the new group had not been apprised of this program that was so popular with international students.

What I get from that is that it's very important to share as much information as possible to establish good links between post-secondary institutions and IRCC to identify any of those irritants or things that don't make sense.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: Thank you.

Go ahead, Mr. Basiri.

Mr. Martin Basiri: It was also mentioned that the entire.... For example, in Africa, the visa rate is only 25% on average. It's not that we need to know why for questioning. We need to know what a student should do so the visa rate gets closer to 50% or 60%, which is closer to the rest of the world. It's crucial to have transparency, because then the students can do a better job.

The lack of transparency is hurting our universities and colleges, because they can't invest money, recruit people in Africa, travel to Africa and find students, and then all of a sudden students don't get the visa. We are wasting our own money in the majority of universities and colleges in Canada. We are losing taxpayers' money somewhere else because of non-transparency.

Without any doubt, especially for Africa and the Middle East, I highly recommend you come and say, "These are the additional things we want from these students," not for the matter of checking and auditing, but for education; if students provide this, their visa chances will be higher.

Mr. Kyle Seeback: These numbers have been getting worse in Africa since 2015. Were you aware that the rejection rate has been going up significantly since 2015?

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, Mr. Seeback. Your time is up.

We will now proceed to Mr. Ali. You will have four minutes for your round of questioning.

• (1305)

Mr. Shafqat Ali (Brampton Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all witnesses.

My question is to Mr. Basiri. Canada offers the student direct stream in several countries. Its objective is a faster processing time. It has financial requirements, such as having paid the first year of tuition fees and having a GIC of \$10,000 that will provide funds during the period of study.

How useful has this expedited stream been for students wanting to study in Canada? That's number one. I have a couple more questions, which you can answer all at once.

In your opinion, has it facilitated the entry of students from certain parts of the world over others?

Third, does Australia have a similar dedicated immigration system for some, if not all, of its international students?

Can you elaborate on that, please?

Mr. Martin Basiri: Whoever came up with the idea of SDS was a genius and I thank them. They definitely helped those countries where SDS was implemented. That was a very good start. We need to make it better for everywhere to have a more dynamic SDS, rather than just certain states.

The only country that SDS impacted negatively was Vietnam. The reason was the majority of students coming from Vietnam were coming to our ESL classes because they didn't have their IELTS 6.0 or 6.5 band score, and after introducing SDS, the visa rates went

from 90% to 40-some per cent. Besides Vietnam, I think everywhere else has a very good implementation of it.

As Ms. Amyot said, the training of the staff who are doing it is crucial. It all comes back to transparency. If the IRCC visa for the countries is transparent, not only does everyone know what they should upload, but the staff will know how to assess the students without any doubt.

I'm highly in favour of making the system more transparent and systematically better. To be honest, among all of the problems that humanity has, this is not a very hard problem. Technology can solve it very easily. I'm not saying it's an easy job, but human beings solve very large problems. If there is a will, we can do it.

Mr. Shafqat Ali: Thank you.

Mr. Martin Basiri: For example, for all intents and purposes, it has been an issue for years. Once and for all, we all have to shake hands, hug each other, and finish this. It just requires—

Mr. Shafqat Ali: Mr. Basiri, I'm running out of time.

My next question is to Ms. Nord.

The policy resolution adopted by the Chamber of Commerce suggests removal of any restriction on the number of hours an international student can work off campus.

Isn't there a concern that studies will suffer, because of the student working too many hours?

Ms. Leah Nord: Is that a concern for domestic students? That would be my response.

Domestic students aren't restricted to hours they can work off campus, so I'm not sure why international students would have that restriction upon them.

I would argue in the bigger picture, as well, it helps them network and acclimatize. It helps them financially support themselves, as is done by Canadian students. Appreciating the concern, it would have to be for all students, and not just international students.

Mr. Shafqat Ali: Thank you.

The Chair: We will now proceed to Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe, for two minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Quickly, Mr. Basiri, do you deal with many francophone students and establishments?

[*English*]

Mr. Martin Basiri: Not that much, but almost with a majority of—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: All right, thank you very much, Mr. Basiri. It's just that I don't have a lot of time.

Ms. Amyot, I was looking at the numbers we got. Algeria, Senegal and Cameroon are among the six countries of origin of international students in Quebec. Their rates were over 39% in 2020–21. In the other provinces of Canada, foreign students from India and China, who represent a large chunk of foreign student pool, had refusal rates of 30% and 15% respectively. Looking at those numbers, how do the francophone establishments you represent feel about the situation? They must be thinking that obviously discrimination is occurring and that they are stuck dealing with these issues.

● (1310)

Ms. Denise Amyot: The problem is, the pool for recruiting foreign students is not as big for French-speaking countries. The countries in which francophone establishments can recruit francophone students are often less affluent countries where students have little financial means.

The whole issue of financial self-sufficiency is becoming a problem, because those students may not have the \$10,000 on hand right away, but their extended family, the aunts and uncles, will chip in to fund the student who is going to study in Canada. Plus, the student can work while they study. People often forget that.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: They often get scholarships from Quebec. I believe Quebec puts \$15 million into scholarships. That's more than the rest of Canada combined.

Ms. Denise Amyot: Yes, they do get scholarships. However, two years ago, we saw a case where IRCC and Quebec CEGEPs neglected to mention that the scholarships were available. We've seen the problem with our own eyes.

Mr. Alexis Brunelle-Duceppe: I'd like to thank all the witnesses very much. Have a great day.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Brunelle-Duceppe.

We will now end our round of questioning with Ms. Kwan, for two minutes.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Ms. Nord, you mentioned, in your presentation, that we have a labour skill shortage in Canada. As it stands right now in Canada, there are about 500,000 people who are already here. Some of them have lost their status, because of COVID, because they lost employment. [*Technical difficulty—Editor*] very dedicated specific work permits, they cannot therefore apply for employment elsewhere.

Given this reality, would you support the call for the government to regularize these individuals, who are out of status, in order to allow for those with specific work permits to apply for employment elsewhere, and to receive landed status, so that we can actually fill this labour skill shortage gap?

Ms. Leah Nord: Before the pandemic, back in January 2020, we had unprecedented labour vacancies at that time. It was almost half a million vacancies. We used to say there were 600,000 international students here in the country. It's not unequivocal, because of labour market integration, but we do have a population here that we would encourage integrating, regardless of all statuses. It's not an either-or.

We shouldn't be looking only at those here, only those from abroad, and only under-represented and unrepresented domestic populations here. It's an all-in approach. We'd be very much open to those who are already here in the country.

Ms. Jenny Kwan: Thank you.

The government, with the express entry stream—because it has introduced new measures—is now in the situation where it is pausing or halting the express entry stream. When you mentioned doing not one or the other but both, that's what I think the government needs to do, so I would agree with that.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Kwan.

With this our panel comes to an end.

On behalf of all of the members, I would like to thank all three witnesses for appearing before the committee.

Before we end, if there is something you would like to share with the committee and you were not able to discuss it because of the time, you can always send a written submission to the clerk of the committee and that will be communicated to all the members as we continue the study.

Before we end, I would like to ask members of the committee two quick questions.

In preparation for our next study on differential outcomes in IR-CC, I would first like to ask the committee to approve a budget of \$4,025. Are all members agreed on this?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

● (1315)

The Chair: That's good.

Also, is the committee in agreement with the Friday, February 18 submission deadline for witnesses for the study of differential outcomes? If by February 18 all of the parties could submit the names of the witnesses to the clerk, that would be really great.

The motion states that there will be no fewer than five meetings on the topic. In terms of party allocation, if we have five meetings on that motion and one meeting is with the minister and the officials, there will be four meetings with the other witnesses. Based on three witnesses per panel, the Liberals will have an allocation of 11 witnesses; the Conservative Party will have nine; the Bloc will have two; and the NDP will have two.

Are the members in agreement that the list of witnesses can be submitted by Friday, February 18?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The clerk will work once he receives the witness lists so we can start scheduling for our next study.

With that I thank all the witnesses once again. I am sorry the meeting went a little over time because there were some technical issues in our first panel.

I hope everyone will have a great day. Thank you.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of
the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité
du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>