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Chair

Ms. Marilyn Gladu

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Marilyn Gladu (Sarnia—Lambton, CPC)): As it's 3:30, I will call the meeting to order.

We have a lot of exciting guests here today, so it's going to be lively. I want to welcome, from the Treasury Board Secretariat, Renée LaFontaine, the assistant secretary, corporate services, and chief financial officer. We also have, from the Privy Council Office, François Daigle, the assistant secretary to the cabinet, social development policy. From the Department of Justice, we have Stan Lipinski, the director general of the policy integration and coordination section.

I want to welcome our guests. We appreciate your testimony to us today. I understand that each of you has a 10-minute speech.

We'll begin with Ms. LaFontaine.

Ms. Renée LaFontaine (Assistant Secretary, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer, Treasury Board Secretariat): Madam Chair, if it would be all right with you, could we start with PCO? You'll see the link in the progression of our discussion. Would that be all right?

The Chair: We are flexible here.

[Translation]

Mr. Daigle, you may begin.

[English]

Mr. François Daigle (Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet, Social Development Policy, Privy Council Office): My presentation is the shortest, so I get to go first.

[Translation]

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee.

I am pleased to be here today to speak with you about gender-based analysis, GBA, and how it can help the government to make decisions on policies, programs, and legislation that benefit all Canadians, in order to support diversity in Canada. I know that you met last week with our colleagues at Status of Women Canada, who have begun to outline the overarching framework under which we will work together, and with all federal departments and agencies, to improve the implementation of gender-based analysis across government.

As my colleagues noted, we are seeing a renewed commitment by the federal government to gender-based analysis. This is in large part due to the Prime Minister's direction in his mandate letter to

Ms. Hajdu, Minister of Status of Women, concerning gender-based analysis. Her department and the Privy Council Office will work together to ensure that gender-based analysis is applied to proposals for cabinet decision-making. That will help to ensure that this is really made a priority in our discussions and everyday interactions with our colleagues in the departments, so their ministers are able to make proposals to cabinet.

In the face of this renewed commitment, the recommendations of the Auditor General's report have come at an opportune time to encourage all departments and agencies to work on the progress we have made, where efforts have fallen short—as we see in his report—and how we can take concrete actions to address the barriers to fully implementing our GBA commitments in government. The Privy Council Office, as you know, supports cabinet decision-making through providing coordination of proposals by the various departments, leadership, advice, and analysis on policy, program, and legislative proposals. We are therefore in an excellent position to support the use of GBA within the government.

[English]

To put it simply, PCO supports the stage in the policy and program cycle that responds to the question of what to do on a given issue.

In answering that question, it's vital that decision-makers, the members of cabinet around the table, have all of the necessary information to fully understand the impacts and the consequences of their decisions on Canadians and their interests. That's why PCO plays a critical challenge function in ensuring that departments and agencies, when they bring proposals forward, take into account all relevant factors, including sex and gender, in the development of proposals to cabinet. This is done to ensure that the impacts on diverse groups of women and men across the country are given due consideration in decision-making.

It's the ministers who bring these proposals forward. At PCO, our analysts in our department work with the departments closely to make sure their proposals identify all of the relevant factors, whether they're economic factors, social factors, environmental factors, legal factors, or jurisdictional factors. Within that, GBA has a significant role to play. Official languages consideration is another example of what is taken into account.

The recent audit found that PCO and other central agencies have made efforts recently to promote and support GBA and to clarify our guidance to departments and agencies in this respect. It also found that the implementation of gender-based analysis has been uneven and insufficient across the government.

This provides us with an opportunity to reflect on how we at PCO and others can better support departments and agencies. We've shared already the joint action plan that we've provided to the committee, and that's jointly with Treasury Board and Status of Women. I won't go through all of that, because I know you have it already. What I thought I would do is to focus on the PCO-specific proposals and actions that we're moving on.

Areas for new action respond to three things: enhanced training, guidance, and tools. We think this responds to the OAG report. It's going to help us identify and address barriers that have been identified and other barriers that we're trying to identify as we work with our colleagues at Status of Women. It will better support monitoring and reporting.

• (1535)

[*Translation*]

Recognizing the need to build our internal capacity at Privy Council Office, we have made GBA training mandatory for all Privy Council Office employees who are tasked with playing a challenge function on policy and program proposals, as well as for executives.

[*English*]

All PCO employees who are tasked with playing that challenge function on proposals, and all of our executives are now required to take the GBA+ training. I know that you've taken that, and it's on the Status of Women website. We've set as a target for ourselves, as of April 1, a 90% achievement of that by September. That represents just over one third of all the employees at the Privy Council Office.

[*Translation*]

This will ensure that PCO employees are able to meaningfully engage with departments and agencies on GBA. We hope that this will make sure that the gender and diversity impacts of proposals are clear, that these inform policy options, and that any appropriate mitigation strategies are identified.

To support this work, we have also committed to further strengthening our guidance to departments and agencies. We will ensure that they are linked to existing relevant tools from Status of Women, and we will encourage even greater use of them.

At the same time, the Auditor General's audit made clear to us that we could strengthen our engagement with departments. That is what we will endeavour to do even earlier in the process—before the review of final proposals. Privy Council Office receives draft proposals from departments. We are trying, using our new tools, to make sure that analysts in the departments and agencies do the work even before we receive the proposals and begin doing their gender-based analysis from the outset.

[*English*]

We're developing a policy considerations' checklist at the Privy Council Office, which will include GBA as a mandatory section. Rather than simply having a checking-of-box exercise, we hope that this tool will help departments walk through the key considerations and gather the information and evidence required before they start drafting policy or program proposals. We hope that by asking departments to show their work, so to speak, this tool will help us

provide a stronger basis for discussions between our analysts at PCO and departments and agencies, when they exchange on proposals.

Finally, we're also committed to continuing to work very closely with Status of Women Canada to identify good practices in GBA, so that when we see a cabinet proposal that comes in and has a good analysis, a good report, we can showcase that and use it to identify best practices and lessons learned. We'll continue to engage with them at all levels and to link them with the support required—for example, through reaching out to Status of Women on key initiatives—as well as to advocate for high level attention and accountability for the full implementation of GBA commitments.

Those are my comments and I now turn it over to my colleague, Ms. LaFontaine.

• (1540)

Ms. Renée LaFontaine: Thank you very much for the invitation. Before I start, I will say that I think you'll find there are a lot of similarities.

First, I just want to set levels. What departments do when they go to PCO is to get their cabinet approvals, but they often come to Treasury Board if they need authorities, money, or special exemptions to policies, to implement their programs.

I'm going to come at it from the perspective of implementing government programs. As I mentioned, I'm delighted to speak with you today about the role Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat plays in supporting the use of GBA. I'm also pleased to be here with my colleague from the Privy Council Office, and my colleague from the Department of Justice.

[*Translation*]

Gender-based analysis is not the same as employment equity, where employers are required to ensure that working conditions are free of barriers that may disadvantage certain groups, including women, from obtaining employment opportunities.

Rather, GBA+ is the analytical tool that helps us understand why certain groups of Canadians are not able to access or benefit from government programs or services in the same way other groups are.

[*English*]

GBA starts with gender, but it also considers other layers of the diverse Canadian populations we serve, such as their education level, their income level, and their age. It's only by knowing why certain groups of men and women are being left out of the benefits of our programs that we begin to understand the gender issues and learn how to fix them.

What has been the progress to date at TBS?

[*Translation*]

The Auditor General appeared before the committee on February 25 to discuss his findings on implementing gender-based analysis across federal departments and agencies. He observed that Treasury Board Secretariat has been supporting federal organizations to implement GBA+. We have achieved this through our efforts, in collaboration with our colleagues at Status of Women Canada and Privy Council Office, to promote the use of GBA+ across government.

[*English*]

Training is provided to TBS analysts, similar to what François was discussing. We provide our training to analysts because it's their job to actually guide departments through the development of the Treasury Board submission as it goes for approval of the Treasury Board. Throughout this process, program analysts challenge departments to determine if there could be a different impact on women and men, considering the target group of recipients who are supposed to benefit from the proposed new program or service.

Should a potential gender issue be identified, analysts advocate for the completion of a GBA+ at the departmental level. They advise the departments to consider the findings and to adjust the programs as necessary to make sure there is no gender inequality.

TBS has published our expectations as detailed guidance on our website, and through a series of questions similar to the checklist that François talked about, we help departments and agencies determine where there's a potential gender issue. If a gender issue exists, as I said, we expect departments to undertake a thorough GBA and tailor their program proposal before it gets to Treasury Board to sufficiently address the gender issues that come up.

We refresh our training with Treasury Board program analysts every year, and every year we add new case studies, good practices, better ideals, and better ideas of assessing gender issues, as we learn more through the departments that we work with every day. We're also working closely with Status of Women Canada and the Privy Council Office to promote the value of GBA+ where applicable, during meetings with senior executive committees, in conferences and workshops with departments, and the GBA champions that are embedded in each department across this government.

In 2011, Treasury Board Secretariat conducted a baseline survey of the extent to which gender-related issues were identified and actually addressed in all of the proposals that went to Treasury Board. As with the Auditor General in his last examination, we found evidence that the level of adoption was uneven across departments.

• (1545)

First, and to understand that a bit better, we're encouraged to see that in a lot of cases the departments that focus on providing services in the social sector of our economy and the cultural-type programs that are provided across Canada, more GBAs were evident, and the results of the GBA actually tailored the program design to meet Canadians' needs.

We also found that GBA was being conducted more often in departments whose which programs and services have a direct

impact on a Canadian, especially when they had the gender-disaggregated data to measure the performance of their programs. I'm mentioning this to point out that it's not as easy as it might look at first sight.

The need for and the benefit of GBA, though, was less obvious in departments where programs are indirectly supporting Canadians. For example, take a fisheries program, a mining program, or something to do with national security of this government, or science-based, or infrastructure programs. Oftentimes those programs are complex. The federal role might be to set regulations, or it might be to fund other intermediaries or levels of government to actually achieve something for Canadian or the parts of Canada that are supposed to benefit from these programs.

Getting at the root causes of gender issues in those circumstances is particularly difficult. The sponsoring department, in those cases, has to think through the program design and work through intermediaries to collect the gender-disaggregated data and do the analysis required to get at the issues they're trying to address.

Finally, I'm not sure if this happens at PCO, but it does happen at Treasury Board quite often. Many new policies, programs, and initiatives considered by the Treasury Board are very time sensitive, and we often need to address them immediately to meet specific government commitments and timelines. If the sponsoring department in that case discovers a gender issue, there may not be time to do a full analysis, especially if they don't maintain that ongoing gender-disaggregated data about the performance of their programs.

As a result of that, we at TBS feel we have to help departments more in the specific areas where it is a little more complex and tougher.

[*Translation*]

Based on our experience to date, we know we need a better way to support departments to follow up after they have their Treasury Board approval, and throughout implementation as programs mature.

We need to help departments to continue to identify and address gender issues as they arise, to ensure that the different needs, priorities, interests, roles, and responsibilities of diverse groups of women and men are being addressed and integrated appropriately.

[*English*]

What are our plans going forward?

As I have just explained, barriers remain in the consistent application of GBA across federal departments and agencies. Going forward, TBS is committed to working with Status of Women Canada, the Privy Council Office, and federal departments and agencies to better identify, understand, and eliminate barriers and build capacity across the public service. Doing this will ensure that GBA is solidly embedded as a sustainable practice across government. We will engage deputy heads to discuss progress towards public service-wide implementation, including any barriers they may encounter.

We will also review our guidance and, if necessary, adapt it to the needs of federal departments and agencies so that it is more helpful in achieving better gender outcomes. We will continue to train our program analysts and their executive directors to challenge departments and agencies to conduct GBA where applicable in the TB submission process.

If departments are not able to effectively assess and address the gender implications of new proposals at the policy research stage, at the PCO memorandum to cabinet stage, or at the Treasury Board submission stage in the program/policy life cycle, we are going to challenge departments to follow up through program implementation, up to and including doing an evaluation of the program before it actually gets renewed.

Program evaluations are an effective means of assessing the performance and results achieved of government policies, programs, and services. This is something new for us. Program evaluations are required before programs get renewed by either cabinet or Treasury Board. This is another opportunity to assess and correct any gender implications of our programs. The secretariat will assist Status of Women Canada to develop guidance and tools to help the program evaluators working in all departments across this government to identify gender impacts when evaluating the performance of federal programs, policies, and services.

Since January, we have new ministers at the Treasury Board, and we will orient them. Because we know that federal regulations impact both genders of Canadian society, we will train our regulatory analysts at TBS to also challenge departments and agencies to conduct GBA where applicable in the federal regulation development process.

• (1550)

[Translation]

To measure our progress, Treasury Board Secretariat will conduct another review, by the fall of 2017, of the extent to which GBA+ findings influenced decision-making by the Treasury Board between September 2016 and June 2017, and will communicate them to departments and Status of Women Canada.

Madam Chair, Treasury Board Secretariat is committed to working with our partners to strengthen the development of informed, evidence-based, and gender-equitable policy and program options for decision-makers, in order to provide better results for Canadians.

[English]

We welcome your input.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: It is over to you, Mr. Lipinski.

Mr. Stan Lipinski (Director General, Policy Integration and Coordination Section, Policy Sector, Department of Justice): Good afternoon, and thank you all for the opportunity to appear before you and to discuss Justice Canada's work regarding the implementation of gender-based analysis. My two colleagues here have sort of put the mannequins in the window, and I'm hopefully going to share with you how we dress these mannequins, with all its failings and successes.

Justice Canada has a history of promoting the integration of GBA in its policy and work dating back to 1990, but like many histories, it can be spotty at times; it has hill and dale, and it's not necessarily always consistently positive or negative. But by 1995, Justice had developed a gender-equity analysis policy in a guidance document to help officials with their analysis. What we did at that time was to look to integrate GBA activities into all of the department sectors, and employees were then expected to be responsible for ensuring that the gender impacts were taken into account as part of the work they were doing, whether it was policy, programs, litigation, or legal advice.

That was the situation at Justice for some time until about 2010, when Justice Canada created a GBA unit, which now plays a role in providing tools and resources to help our officials better understand and effectively integrate GBA into Justice's policy and program work and to try to fulfill the obligations created for us and to follow the road map of TBS and PCO.

For us at Justice, our GBA unit in the policy sector is really the first point of contact for GBA. It plays a key role in providing advice and guidance to officials on incorporating GBA+ into specific initiatives, and it works to increase the department's capacity for GBA by offering these tools, information sessions, and resources.

Also, we have a fairly active research and statistics division, which plays a key role in supporting the department's GBA information and analysis needs through the development of various reports that contain gender-based analysis and as a centre of expertise in providing and designing gender-disaggregated data to help inform the development and design of Justice's programs and policies.

Over the past several years, Justice has continued to try to enhance the integration of GBA in policy and program work through different tools, promotional exercises, and activities. We're fairly consistent and fairly active at promoting GBA+ awareness week, led by our colleagues at Status of Women, promoting, of course, the Status of Women's on-line GBA training course. We promote the uptake of that. That's the introduction to GBA course that my colleagues also referred to. Also, we participate actively in Justice's annual submission of the GBA progress report to Status of Women Canada to showcase the department's work in this area in the application of GBA.

As well as this, the GBA unit in our department also provides advice and guidance on the application of GBA on a number of memos to cabinet and initiatives. For example, in the past year, it's been on sustainable development goal indicators, genetic discrimination, medical assistance in dying, the framework on marijuana, and the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women. There's where we are called upon to offer some insight and some input on the GBA front.

As well, a key piece of work for us has been our senior-level policy committee, an assistant deputy minister committee, that developed and adopted a checklist of common policy considerations. My colleague from PCO mentioned a checklist, and that's one that we've shared with other departments. It's a key tool used across Justice to help officials consider and integrate a range of considerations important to policy and program work. For us, it's really a key instrument that we think is a good tool. It's designed to help Justice officials fulfill the requirements of a range of acts, directives, and other high-level instructions stemming from government and central agencies. It is intended to facilitate the consideration of those common factors including, but not limited to, gender, legal risks, diversity, privacy impacts, official languages, provincial-territorial relations, and a few other things, all of which are broadly applicable to programs and policy development in the federal government.

We've also then formalized these tools to the point where Justice has, like most departments, a cabinet affairs unit that deals with memos to cabinet. All MCs going to that unit now require a common policy consideration checklist in which officials are expected to have fulfilled a whole range of considerations, of which gender and a series of others that I mentioned are included as being checked off, including any thinking that goes around it. As I mentioned, over the past couple of years, we have shared that checklist with some other departments that had an interest.

• (1555)

In addition to this common policy consideration checklist, we also have a range of other tools that are made available. They include things like pamphlets with general information on GBA, which inform our colleagues of the importance of the tool, a step-by-step process document for GBA that provides visual depictions and guides of various steps in the process, and a flash training module some of our younger folks have created—I don't even necessarily always understand what it means—that provides five things officials need to know about GBA.

All these tools are found on our GCPEDIA page that was created for the department's GBA unit. That's a way of trying to upload it and share it with colleagues throughout the federal government and with other people in the Department of Justice across the country.

As I mentioned, we have a fairly active research and statistics division. The department contributes, along with other departments, to the publication "Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report". That is led by Status of Women Canada, but it's undertaken by Statistics Canada. It's a popular report that provides high quality gender-disaggregated data that helps the Government of Canada meet its commitment to GBA and to the development of gender responsive policies, programs, and legislation. A new edition is released every five years. Our department regularly contributes to it. I think every department contributes about \$50,000 each for that report and the data to be collected and disseminated. We've also provided support in the development of a chapter on women in the criminal justice system for the seventh edition of that report, because that is the department's expertise.

Justice Canada also carries out considerable social science research on a wide range of policy issues, as well as providing

litigation support. We use a lot disaggregated data on gender, as well as other variables, such as race, aboriginal status, marital status, and other parts of the GBA+ framework. All of our social science research has to go through a research review committee, chaired by our director of research and statistics. This is where they talk about the methodological rigour of things like gender identification variables and frameworks. It's a fairly robust discussion at the methodology stage.

In addition, that group has many reports that contain a gender-based analysis. Some examples include "A Profile of Legal Aid Studies and Family Law Matters in Canada", "Inuit Women and the Nunavut Justice System", and "Drug Importation in Ontario: Profile of Accused, Cases, and Recidivism". These are the ones that have gender breakdowns and analyses along gender lines.

In terms of our next steps, we're planning to update the department's gender equality policy to better reflect and modernize the language to make it more current. We will be applying new requirements set out by our colleagues, which they refer to in PCO and Treasury Board, in terms of changes to the practices that are carried out.

We're also going to explore the development of some new GBA tools, including tools to support Justice counsels who work in departmental legal service units across federal departments, and who provide legal advice and services to those client departments, as well as those who work in litigation and represent the Attorney General of Canada.

We're always looking to do other things like enhance GBA+ information, materials, and orientation packages for new employees. A number of these are pushing information down the pipe. As was mentioned, it has met with various levels of success and various levels of uptake, but the efforts continue to promote that.

• (1600)

With that, I want to say thank you very much. We appreciate the work of this committee and know that we will benefit from the work undertaken by it to inform a whole-of-government approach to GBA, as well as the work being undertaken by Status of Women Canada, the Privy Council Office, and Treasury Board Canada, given their responsibilities in this area.

The Chair: Thanks to each of you for your excellent input.

We're going to begin our first round of questioning with my Liberal colleagues, beginning with Ms. Damoff for seven minutes.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you all for being here. It's encouraging to hear the good news about what various departments are doing with GBA.

One of the things that came up when the Department of Citizenship and Immigration was here was the need for champions within the departments. They spoke about how they appointed a champion who then recruits more. I'm just wondering if you could speak to whether or not you do that and whether you think that should be something that we should be requiring of departments as well—not just to do the analysis but to have champions within the department to speak to it.

Mr. Stan Lipinski: I agree that champions are important. At the Department of Justice, for example, we did have a champion. She retired a short while back. A new champion has not yet been appointed, but our senior assistant deputy minister of the policy sector, Donald Piragoff, has responsibility for the GBA unit, so in the interim he's taking on that role. I think it's very important to have a champion. I know that in letters from Status of Women Canada, from deputy to deputy, they're often highlighting the importance of having a champion and encouraging deputies to appoint champions of gender.

• (1605)

Ms. Renée LaFontaine: If my colleague from Status of Women Canada were here, she'd tell you that we actually get together with our champions all across government. That's where we're sharing our best practices. It's really starting to help us raise awareness, share good ideas, and make it easier for departments to understand how to go about this. So that's working well.

I would say that the only caveat—and maybe François has some comments here as well—is that gender has to be mainstreamed in your program design. If you have a GBA champion over here but you have a program manager over there and they're not connecting well in a department, that's not what we're looking for. To find a way around that, we're actually going to work more with the deputy minister community. We are surveying them on what they think the barriers are, and how to mainstream better gender-based analysis as a proper analytical tool in our program design, development, and implementation. Champions are fabulous as long as they are part of the mainstream.

Mr. François Daigle: I agree completely that champions are important, and their network across departments is really key, because that's where they share best practices. They can also bring back the information they obtain and promote it within their departments.

At PCO we do have a champion. To address what Renée's talking about, our deputy secretary, who's the champion, is also the deputy secretary for operations, which sees maybe 80% of all the proposals that come to cabinet. He has huge oversight over this and is well situated to promote it. We also ask him to do little things like track down those executives who haven't done their training yet. So come September, if they haven't done their training they'll get a call from the champion.

Ms. Pam Damoff: You also spoke about how some departments are doing a good job implementing it and reaching out to Canadians whereas others are not. Could you maybe give us some thoughts as to how we could encourage all the departments to do it, not just the ones that are implementing it well, to make it mainstream within all of the departments?

Mr. François Daigle: I have a couple of reactions to that. Part of it is accountability, making sure that deputies understand that it's important and that they make it a priority in their departments. As I said in my opening remarks, the fact that the Prime Minister has put it in the minister's mandate letter makes it a priority and makes it easier for us to say to the departments that it is important. We're working closely with Status of Women Canada, who are the experts. They're the go-to resource for all departments when they need some advice or some guidance on how to do the analysis, how to do the research, how to check their assumptions. I think those kinds of activities are what we've proposed to do more of in our joint action plan, to try to encourage departments to have a more equal starting place.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I think it was you, Mr. Lipinski, who talked about how you had a really good tool that you didn't know how to use.

Are those tools being shared with all departments? You mentioned that you have the department champion meetings. When there are effective tools, is there a way to make sure they are shared with other groups, and if so, who takes the lead on that? Is it Status of Women? Where does that fall, to have the best practices?

Mr. Stan Lipinski: From our experience, it is a fairly active network led by Status of Women, in terms of having colleagues working in that area of endeavour who share quite broadly, so there is a degree of sharing. I can't really speak to how consistent it is, but there is a fair bit.

For example, because of that network, I know we get called to come to different departments to present our common policy consideration tool and some of the other things that are being done, so there is sharing going on. It probably could be a little more consistent, but it is happening at certain levels, not necessarily in the DM community. I don't know what is going on at that level or at other levels, but at the working level, a lot of sharing is going on.

• (1610)

Ms. Pam Damoff: When our colleagues from Immigration were here, they talked about how we need to use a lens so that everything we are doing is part of the process.

What are the barriers to getting people to think that way? It is not just gender; the example in the training was about fitness levels and applying not only gender but also age to the lens. What are the barriers to getting people to actually use that lens when they are looking at everything?

The Chair: You can answer that one in the next round.

We are going to go over to my Conservative colleagues, starting with Mrs. Vecchio.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC): Hi, and thank you very much for appearing here today.

I am going to start with the Treasury Board, if you don't mind. The expectations on the Treasury Board website say that each department or agency "should tailor TB submissions to sufficiently address all gender considerations". As noted in the 2015 AG report, the Treasury Board also includes a requirement that evidence of GBA is presented with the submission.

Does the TBS have any powers to fully reject the submissions that do not have GBA applied to them? If something comes in, you can return it to them, but at the end of the day, if they return it to you and say, "This is what we have; this is what we are moving forward", do you have the right to say, "No way"?

Ms. Renée LaFontaine: To answer that question, I have to explain our challenge function to you a little bit. When you develop a new program, there are a lot of things the department has to consider. First is the objective of the program and the timelines.

Maybe I will go back to answer your question with a few things I mentioned. Sometimes, our design around what we are looking for in gender-based analysis.... We set it up as an all-or-nothing kind of thing, where you have to do it before the Treasury Board approves your proposal, and we are finding that this is not working. That is where we think we need to change. It is not working if the government doesn't have time to do it, or we don't have the gender-disaggregated information because the program designs are so complex that you need to deal with two or three intermediaries before you actually get performance information about your program.

That is why, over the years of working on this, we have learned that we, at the Treasury Board, need to be a little more understanding of what it takes for departments to meet those requirements. We are looking at the program cycle, and if it is not done at the policy research stage, we have to get there earlier to make it better and to get our PCO colleagues involved so that it can be consistently talked about through cabinet and Treasury Board. Then if we still can't get it there, we have the end of the cycle, which is the evaluation. We are changing our Treasury Board policy to make that possible. We will be advising our department in that way.

I hope that answers your question.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: This is great. Thank you.

To Justice, the committee has heard that the justice department is a front-runner when it comes to implementing gender-based analysis. Since the victims of crime are predominantly women, how has the justice department taken this into account when it develops policy? Is there an example that is exemplary of the department's GBA system?

Mr. Stan Lipinski: Yes, there's quite a bit. In any of the legislative drafting and reform to the Criminal Code and programs, there's a fair bit of consideration that goes into discussing the gender-based aspects of it. A lot of it is by virtue of the work done by policy analysts, who are usually content-specific people. Many of them have a really deep experience of the work and understand the gender aspects of any sort of issue, whether it's prostitution or some of the other projects I had mentioned with regard to women in the north. These are the sorts of projects that often have a fairly strong gender element to them and a lot of discussion. I think it's just one of the

aspects of going through the common policy considerations that I mentioned in terms of that lens.

Gender is one lens among about 12 lenses. That's the only thing I would state. It is one aspect. Then there's the north, and then there's the matter of ethics, and then there are a few other lenses. There are multiple lenses that have to be considered, and they often are. I would say that a lot of the folks who are doing that kind of work are really steeped in it. It gets done, but the problem is that how they are doing it has to be conveyed or expressed so that everyone understands how they're doing it. That's perhaps where the challenge comes in.

• (1615)

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Excellent.

I have a question for the Privy Council Office. How does it expect that it will aid other departments to build internal capacity for GBA, and in what specific ways will it provide guidance on the inclusion of GBA in proposals to cabinet? The Privy Council Office is committed to updating its guidance for development of memoranda to cabinet to include more specific direction on GBA. What will this practice look like?

Mr. François Daigle: What we'll do at PCO is to require that GBA be done before proposals come in, and we'll work with Status of Women and the departments to make sure that the analysis is done before we get to see a first proposal.

If it comes in early enough and there are some obvious gender issues that have not been analyzed, we'll work with the department to give them some direction and guidance and make sure that the research and analysis can be done. Then it's reflected in the proposals that come forward.

As I said, we're also revising our checklist so that we have a more systematic way of keeping track of where there's good GBA being done and where it's not as good, so that we can follow up on those things.

Right now, we're also looking at our memorandum to cabinet template, which is still in the works. Right now it requires a number of things, like an environmental sustainability lens, an official languages lens, a charter lens, and a GBA lens. We will look at how we can improve that and make some parts of that mandatory.

Mrs. Karen Vecchio: Finally, throughout the action plan, the term "challenge function" is employed quite a bit in reference to the TBS and PCO. To what degree can this challenge function actually block policy that has not undergone, or has undergone inadequate, gender-based analysis?

It's similar to my question to you at the beginning.

Mr. François Daigle: It's very much the way my colleague at TBS explained it. We play a challenge function role. We're there to make sure that the policy proposals that come forward have gone through a thorough analysis and have been looked at not just through the GBA lens but with the various factors that need to come into play.

Early in the process, if we think that some of that analysis hasn't been done, we can ask the department to do it. If we don't think it's done and it's ready to go, we can recommend to the department that we push the item off to a later agenda. That gets the minister engaged and gets senior attention to the issue so that we can look at it.

The Chair: Excellent.

I will now turn it over to my NDP colleague, Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP): None of our witnesses last week seemed to know or could name a time when any of their budgetary proposals or proposals to cabinet had ever been turned back.

Could you talk a little more about how your two departments interact with proposals like that, on the ground?

If the Auditor General says that we're not doing a very good job of implementing GBA, I'm having trouble reconciling that with the really good news we're hearing from every department we've talked to that it's all fantastic. I'd love to know that it is, but it's only changed since December.

Mr. François Daigle: It's not all perfect. It is very uneven, I think, as the Auditor General's report points out.

We do push back. We do play a challenge function. On a weekly basis, we make decisions about whether proposals are ready to go to cabinet because they have done the necessary policy work for there to be a good conversation at cabinet.

The agendas of cabinet change on a weekly basis exactly because we play a challenge function and push items back. As Renée said earlier, depending on all of the issues that are in a proposal, sometimes the GBA will be important enough that we'll be able to push back. Sometimes it's one component of many others and the timing is such that the proposals need to come forward, so hopefully we have a chance to catch up on the GBA and some other things at the evaluation cycle of policies and programs.

Ms. Renée LaFontaine: The only thing I would add is that I want to take responsibility for our challenge function. We needed to adapt it and we needed to set better expectations with departments.

I want to reiterate my colleague's point. It isn't easy. It's not perfect out there. Gender...is hard to find. Sometimes programs don't mature in the first year of their implementation. It takes a while to have them be adopted by Canadians and to learn how they are going. One of the things we have to focus more on is tracking and following up on the information. With better sharing of what some departments are doing, it's going to have other departments thinking about it well in advance.

The other thing we're going to do is track and monitor. If you missed your one chance at Treasury Board and it didn't go through, we haven't been tracking or monitoring either. We can do a much better job of that. What is tracked gets attention, and what is

measured kind of gets even more attention. I think we, at the centre, have to do a lot better job of that to really help departments make this the priority it needs to be in the programs it's relevant to.

• (1620)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Can you talk a bit about how you interact with, I think, the 80 government agencies that have not actually committed to implementing the departmental action plan.

Do you see a significant difference between the agencies that have bought into this, and those that are still on the outside of that commitment?

Ms. Renée LaFontaine: With the departments and agencies we deal with in the area of health and a lot of the social programs at ESDC, gender-based analysis is an integral part of their program design, and we're finding that it's working very well. It isn't a struggle to get the data and information from them.

Where it's more obscure in the fundamental role of the program is if it's national security for Canada or it's dealing with the forestry sector writ large. It's setting regulations around that. It's very obscure. Those are the departments we have to spend more time and energy with.

Oftentimes, there can be gender issues. I'll give you a success story of sorts that we had at Treasury Board a couple of years ago. It was the border security agencies that were looking at the tools and equipment for the border services officers. They were focused on their job of securing Canadians and making sure that their job was well done. The type of equipment that we bought for the female and male border officers had to be adjusted quite a bit after a year of operations because of the effectiveness of that equipment and tools. It's those kinds of things. It was in the second year of the program operation that we learned of that, based on their feedback and their learning how they were going to deliver....

I don't want to make excuses, but there are some parts of the programming—and we do a lot at the federal level that doesn't directly touch Canadians—that are not as easy as you would imagine.

Mr. François Daigle: I don't think I have really anything to add.

It's very similar from PCO's perspective. It depends on the issue; it depends on the department. I don't think there's necessarily a correlation between signing on to the action plan and doing gender-based analysis. Just because the department hasn't signed on to the action plan—I think there are 29 or 30 that have signed on—it doesn't mean that they're not doing gender-based analysis. If the proposal calls for it, they would do it. They may not be as equipped as they need to be, but if it's relevant to their proposal, then they will do the research and do the analysis.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: We heard from some witnesses and departments that are producing annual reports on how well they're doing. Could you speak for a minute about how many departments and agencies are reporting to you on that and if that reporting will become mandatory?

Mr. François Daigle: They're not reporting to PCO, so maybe the question is better put to Status of Women, who is tracking that.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: All right. Very good.

Do I have time?

The Chair: You have 40 seconds.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thank you very much for your work, and we look forward to an even more positive Auditor General's report next time around.

The Chair: Excellent.

Over to you, Ms. Sahota, for seven minutes.

Ms. Ruby Sahota (Brampton North, Lib.): Thank you for your presentation.

I would like each of the departments to give me specific examples of programs where gender-based analysis was applied and to tell me how the outcome impacted the department, the policy, Canadians in general, or the people affected by the policy. It was very helpful to hear the Treasury Board about border security, because it gives just a little bit of insight into what it takes and what should be done going forward, so some examples would be good.

Also, perhaps you could give examples of programs that aren't at face value female-oriented programs, like violence against women or something like that, but nonetheless are enlightening because we've never thought about them with a gender lens applied.

• (1625)

Mr. François Daigle: Maybe one recent example I can give is the initiative to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees into Canada before February. Through that exercise, the department had not only the plan to help bring 25,000 people to Canada but also the follow-up with the provinces and all of the work that's going to be done for their resettlement and the integration.

A lot of gender-based analysis goes into that, and maybe IRCC talked to you about this when they were here, as well as a lot of research and disaggregated data that they pull together to understand what's going to happen when they bring these people to Canada. In these communities, what services will they have, what are they going to need, how will they be organized, and will they will get language training—all of those things. I think this is one recent example where there was a lot of analysis that was brought to the proposal.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: [*Inaudible—Editor*] impacts the policy itself or the Syrian refugees that did come here.

Mr. François Daigle: I think it helps plan for the settlement and the integration so that we can work more effectively with provinces on settlement and settlement services.

Ms. Ruby Sahota: Did you find that the needs were very different based on gender?

Mr. François Daigle: The needs are very different, and that's taken into account, I think, by the department as it's funding various settlement agencies in different places. It depends on the makeup of the families coming. What we saw, for example, is that a lot of these families are large, which has an impact on the level of services, where they get their services and where they're going to stay. All of those things were taken into account in the proposals we saw.

Mr. Stan Lipinski: The Department of Justice doesn't necessarily have a whole suite of programs for Canadians directly, but we do have a lot of transfer payments to the provinces and territories on the programming side.

For example, we have the aboriginal justice strategy, which has been very successful. It has funded a number of culturally relevant and gender-specific programs, such as healing circles, wellness programs for women or men, as well as family mediation services, all of which are gender specific. The evaluations have shown that through the aboriginal justice strategy, there has been a decline in recidivism and offending in a number of communities that have participated in the strategy.

Also, in youth criminal justice, a fair amount of money goes to the provinces and territories. There are lots of funding agreements that allow for the funding of gender-specific programs, services, and projects aimed at youth in conflict with the law.

Again, all of these are evaluated over time. You can't necessarily always speak to whether or not one or two of these programs have had an impact, but in their totality you get a sense of where there's been some movement.

Those are a couple of examples of the types of things that are gender-specific that are being done with some results we can point to through evaluations.

Ms. Renée LaFontaine: Maybe I can add one or two more.

I'll give you the not so obvious case. You might recall that in 2010, a boatload of Tamil refugees showed up on the B.C. coast. The border services agency needed urgent funding to take care of these people. There were over 500 of them. Intuitively, and without a lot of fuss, they understood that we needed different facilities for the women and the children, and for the single males. From the get go, they were gathering data and designing programs that were implemented within weeks, because of their intuitive understanding that there's a major difference in the way we treat these two groups of refugees.

The second point I want to highlight is in an easier area. A large department like ESDC, which has a very large research capacity and a good selection of disaggregated data about their programming, conducted a study on elder abuse. They were able to make some interesting findings about what's happening across Canada. They found that we don't have enough shelters for elderly men whose wives have died, who might not be being treated well by their families and needed to have places to go to. That's one of the ones I share in my training programs all the time.

The last thing I would say about Treasury Board Secretariat is that Treasury Board is the employer of the public service, and we do GBAs regularly on the types of our employees and what their needs are in terms of the benefits programs, the income support programs, the sick leave programs, and those sorts of things. Those needs are very different depending on the age, stage, ethnicity, and background of our employees. We find they have different needs in their programs, and we try to design our programs to meet their needs.

I hope —

• (1630)

The Chair: That's the end of our time.

I want to thank our witnesses for your excellent input and continued work to try to deepen the application of GBA and improve the way it works. Thank you very much.

We're going to suspend for two minutes while we change our witnesses.

• (1630)

(Pause)

• (1630)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

We are very lucky to have guests today from the Department of Finance, including Richard Botham, the assistant deputy minister for economic development and corporate finance. From the Department of Public Works and Government Services, we have Alfred MacLeod; and from StatsCan, we have François Nault and Tamara Hudon.

We welcome all of you.

We're going to begin with Richard, for 10 minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Botham (Assistant Deputy Minister, Economic Development and Corporate Finance Branch, Department of Finance): Thank you, Madam Chair, for inviting me to address you today.

I am the assistant deputy minister of the economic development and corporate finance branch at the Department of Finance Canada. I am also the gender-based analysis champion for the department.

The Department of Finance is the government's primary source of analysis and advice on Canada's economic and financial affairs.

In certain policy areas, the department is the lead within the Government of Canada. The department has lead responsibility for policy development on tax and tariff legislation, major federal transfers to provinces and territories, the legislative and regulatory

framework for the financial sector, and representing Canada within international financial institutions.

The department also provides analysis and advice on the economic merit and fiscal implications of policy and program proposals developed by other government departments. Departmental officials serve as members of a broader team of federal officials from the Privy Council Office and Treasury Board Secretariat that reviews options for, and the implications, including gender implications, of proposals that are presented to cabinet.

• (1635)

[*English*]

These two roles, as the lead on certain policy areas and as a central agency, have shaped the department's activities with respect to gender-based analysis.

Gender-based analysis is a key policy tool for evaluating the potential gender impacts of proposed policies, plans, and programs, and to support informed decision-making. The Department of Finance has committed to performing gender-based analysis on all new policy proposals, including tax and spending measures where appropriate, and where data exists.

Gender considerations are integrated into all aspects of the federal budget process. Our pre-budget consultations are undertaken on an annual basis and solicit the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including gender perspectives.

In our challenge function role, the Department of Finance reviews budget proposals put forth by other federal departments and agencies, and provides advice to the Minister of Finance on funding decisions. We require departments and agencies to consider all relevant factors, including gender, when developing a policy or program for budget consideration. When departments and agencies submit their budget proposals, we require their gender-based analysis as part of the proposal package. A summary of the results of the gender-based analysis are included in the budget advice to the Minister of Finance.

For new policies, plans, or programs that originate from the Department of Finance, analysts in the department perform a gender-based analysis to determine whether the proposal will result in important gender impacts. This analysis can be brief if an initial assessment finds that there are likely to be few or no important gender impacts, or the analysis can be extensive if an initial assessment indicates there may be significant gender impacts. The gender-based analysis can involve a statistical analysis or fiscal simulation of the gender impacts.

Outside of the budget process, Finance works with the departments and agencies to ensure that gender-based analysis has been fully considered during the development of memoranda to cabinet.

It is difficult to talk about specific examples where a gender-based analysis has had an impact, given that our advice on budget and policy proposals are cabinet confidences. I have chosen a couple of examples to give you a flavour of the information that a gender-based analysis at Finance could examine. These examples were selected because they have obvious important gender impacts.

The first example is the teacher and early childhood educator school supply tax credit that was introduced in budget 2016, which allows Canadian educators to claim a 15% refundable tax credit on up to \$1,000 in expenditures on eligible supplies. According to Statistics Canada's labour force survey, almost 80% of people employed as educators in primary and secondary schools or child care centres in fall 2015 were women. Given their higher level of employment in this sector, a gender-based analysis would likely find that working-age women would be expected to benefit more from this measure than men. The impact of the measure on other diverse groups of women and men could also be assessed through other data sources, looking at intersecting identity factors for this occupational group.

A second example is the budget measure of improving heart health for women. Heart disease and stroke are the leading causes of death for Canadian women, yet many women are not aware of heart attack or stroke and do not know how to recognize the symptoms until it is too late. From the "Women in Canada" report that was available last fall from Statistics Canada, we know that in 2009 in Canada, 3.9% of females over 12 years old had been diagnosed with heart disease. In a gender-based analysis we could expect that research results of a program that targets women's heart health would likely have greater benefit for women and that there would be benefits for both men and women with respect to those employed in heart research.

A different example that demonstrates our recent activities related to gender-based analysis is the latest budget decision for Status of Women Canada. Budget 2016 announced \$23.3 million over five years starting in 2016-17, and \$7 million per year ongoing to strengthen capacity at Status of Women Canada, including to ensure that gender-based analysis is performed more consistently across the federal government and to support the creation of a dedicated research and evaluation unit to provide evidence-based, innovative research with respect to women's issues.

We do several things at the Department of Finance to support our analysis in conducting GBAs and to ensure that our gender-based analyses are relevant and appropriately prioritized. We offer department-specific training for GBA so our analysts and economists are trained to conduct GBAs in the development of Finance-led proposals or when reviewing GBAs performed by other departments and agencies.

We have designed finance-specific tools to use to perform a GBA on all budget proposals. We revised these tools prior to the development of budget 2016 to also incorporate the identification of demographic characteristics of diverse groups of women and men, such as race, age, aboriginal identity, income level, ability, and sexual orientation, given departments and agencies are increasingly conducting broader GBAs to also include diversity implications.

We participate in interdepartmental GBA working groups, both at the ADM level and the working level, to ensure we are learning best practices from other departments and agencies. We also observe the government's annual gender-based analysis awareness week, which is coming up next week, with special communications and activities.

GBA commitments are integrated into the performance management agreements for all executives. Specifically, executives are required to meet the department's GBA commitments to allow for ministerial consideration of the potential gender-specific impacts of proposed policy initiatives.

My branch coordinates our departmental activities and annual reporting on our contributions to Status of Women Canada. In the past 12 months, the department completed more than 250 gender-based analyses. A total of 24 finance employees, largely new employees to the department, attended two GBA training sessions that were held in the fall of 2015.

The Department of Finance was not a part of the most recent audit on the implementation of gender-based analysis, but we were implicated in the previous audit in 2009. Since that time, we have been working to improve our GBA tools and processes to ensure we are fulfilling the GBA commitments we have made.

Our biggest barrier for performing gender-based analysis is gender-disaggregated data. Our colleagues at Statistics Canada produce the "Women in Canada" report that provides some of the best gender-disaggregated data on a number of topics like women's health, women in the labour market, and family and living arrangements that can provide evidence to use in our analyses. Many departments and agencies also share our concern regarding data, and we understand that we are going to be exploring collectively how data collection can be improved and better accessed.

For tax-related proposals developed within the Department of Finance, our tax policy branch analysts use a variety of data sources, including data that are linked to information allowing detailed gender analysis.

• (1640)

Another barrier we have faced is that departments and agencies are responsible for implementing their own GBAs. As we know from the Auditor General's reports, it has been implemented unevenly and without consistency. From a challenge function perspective, this means that we receive input in different formats, styles, and depths from each federal organization, which can make it challenging to incorporate that information into our advice in a meaningful way.

We have taken note of the new tools being developed by the Privy Council Office, such as the policy considerations checklist. As central agencies, we will be working together to try to align how we will ask departments and agencies to report on the GBAs, given that we all use this information in a similar fashion to provide advice to ministers.

• (1645)

The Chair: Thank you. That's your time.

All right, we'll go over to Mr. MacLeod for 10 minutes.

Mr. Alfred MacLeod (Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy, Planning and Communications Branch, Department of Public Works and Government Services): Thank you for the invitation to appear before the committee today.

As the Public Services and Procurement Canada's co-champion on gender-based analysis, and the assistant deputy minister with the responsibility for the gender-based analysis function within the department, it's an honour to be here today.

PSPC's mandate is to be a common service agency to the Government of Canada and various departments, agencies, and boards. We have a strong focus on service and identifying the various needs of our client group. Most of our clients are internal to government, but because of some of our functions, we do reach out and touch Canadians beyond our department. We try to ensure optimum value by enabling other government departments and agencies to provide their programs and services to Canadians.

Some of our main business lines would include, starting geographically, a responsibility for the parliamentary precinct; procurement, in the order of \$16 billion to \$18 billion a year in purchasing on behalf of the Government of Canada such things as office accommodations and linguistic services; as well as the Receiver General, the treasury of Canada, and accounts administration; industrial security and screening; and specialized programs related to back office services provided to government departments. It's a diverse set of services offered.

Further to a 2008 audit, PSPC was one of the first departments to start implementing GBA as part of a federal action plan. In our department, we've named a champion. We have a bit of a tag team effort now. This position has been bolstered by a co-champion. The GBA function has been enveloped within the larger diversity champion, but it has a specific focus as well in our department. We've implemented a GBA statement of intent. We've created a responsibility centre, which exists within the policy, planning, and communications branch. We've developed a one-day, PSPC-adapted GBA course. We've reported annually to Status of Women on the departmental GBA practices. We've created a GBA network in the spirit of trying to disperse ownership for this function and not have it invested in just one person or one group. We have a network of individuals across the branches of the department and across the regions of the country. This network focuses on increasing awareness, increasing capacity, and increasing engagement in our work on GBA.

As an operational department, what we do has practical impacts. I'd like to share with the committee four examples of recent gender-based analysis projects we've done. One had to do with the major

implementation of a direct deposit initiative, transferring payments from paper to direct deposit, which had service benefits, security benefits, and some efficiency benefits for the government. Our group that was responsible for this realized that this might have differential and unintended impacts, so it undertook a formal GBA study and found, as you might imagine, that access was linked to gender, and in many cases to income. An adjustment was made in how we rolled that service out to Canadians. The responsible group offered a series of exceptions, so that individuals who were at a high risk of not having access to traditional or Internet banking services could continue to receive their payments by cheque.

A second example, and it's sort of an inside baseball term, is the workplace 2.0 initiative. That's the Government of Canada's major modernization of the space in which we work. It involves the footprint of the government, technology, collaboration, and a response to new work patterns. We undertook a major GBA on that, and the one finding we came away with was that, for women, one element of the strategy that was particularly helpful was the additional technology and capacities for telework. Given the statistics, which point out that in the area of care, either for young children or for parents, women tend to shoulder most of the burden, the flexibility of being able to work from home, or have that additional assist, was useful.

• (1650)

Even here, in the long-term vision and plan for the parliamentary precinct, we've done a gender-based analysis to look at this facility and how, when this facility gets renovated, the facilities that will be available for members and staff and visitors will be informed by an understanding of how different people, different genders, have different requirements to modify facilities and open up accessibility to the Hill.

Finally, the build in Canada innovation program is a program that we administer to promote innovation. It sets up the Government of Canada as the first buyer for entrepreneurs who have a product that they want to get into the market, but they face that hurdle. After the Government of Canada has sponsored this project, they're in a better place to market it into the open marketplace.

It's not a particular secret, but women have less access to grants or programs like this. The statistic is that 15.6% of small businesses are owned and operated by women. We anticipated that there might be differential access to people who have the benefit from this program, so we undertook a GBA and in fact found that there was not equity in how the funding was being distributed.

We are not permitted to direct procurement on a basis of gender, but we enhanced our outreach to women's organizations and to business organizations that had direct contact and reach to women. To give you a sense of the metrics, in 2015-16, our office of small and medium size enterprises held 38 sessions. They reached out to almost 3,000 female business owners and entrepreneurs to raise awareness of how they could buy from government and how they could gain access to the build in Canada innovation program.

Those are some of the examples. We are in the midst of finalizing the survey for Status of Women.

During the last presentation, there were some questions asked about barriers. My colleague mentioned some of the barriers, so in questioning, I'd be more than happy to share what we in our department see as some of the barriers for advancing gender-based analysis.

The Chair: Excellent.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Nault, you have 10 minutes.

Mr. François Nault (Director, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada): Good afternoon.

[*English*]

Thank you for inviting us today. Today is a special day for StatsCan. It's the official 2016 census day, so I'm very happy to be here.

We're happy to have the opportunity to discuss Statistics Canada's approach to gender statistics.

I will do my presentation in English.

[*Translation*]

However, you have the text and the presentation in French, and of course I will be pleased to answer questions in French.

[*English*]

I'd like to start by discussing how StatsCan fits into the Government of Canada's commitments to GBA+. Statistics Canada is mandated to provide information and analysis about Canada's social and economic structure so that federal departments can develop and evaluate public policies and programs. While our agency is unique in that we do not develop public policies and programs ourselves, we do play an important supporting role.

Since 1995 federal departments have been required to incorporate GBA+ into their legislation, policies, and programs, and in 2015 the federal government committed to strengthening the implementation of GBA+ across departments. These requirements have ensured continuing demand for gender statistics at Statistics Canada, as well as statistics involving a variety of intersecting identity factors, such as economic situations and diversity characteristics. Together these data paint a picture of the social and economic situations of women, men, girls, and boys and facilitate gender-based analysis.

For many years our agency has systematically considered gender and diversity when developing data and analytical products. Today I would like to share some of the ways that we support GBA+ through the development and the accessibility of these products.

As Canada's national statistical office, Statistics Canada is responsible for the systematic and coordinated collection of data related to women and girls. Information on sex is routinely collected through the census of population program and is contained in a substantial portion of the over 300 surveys and statistical programs managed by Statistics Canada.

I've placed a few examples of these surveys on slide 3, for those who have the presentation. There's the labour force survey, and then the general social survey, so on time use, on victimization, on social identity. There's also the Canadian community health survey and the uniform crime reporting survey. These are all surveys that operate through base funding, but Statistics Canada also responds to the data needs of federal departments by conducting cost-recovery research. For example, this year Statistics Canada was commissioned to conduct a survey on sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, with an expected release in the fall of this year.

As slide 4 shows, the data that we collect at Statistics Canada covers a wide spectrum of socio-economic conditions affecting women, such as representation of women in the labour force, enrollment of women in post-secondary education, women's time spent on unpaid work, women's health and well-being, and women as victims and offenders.

Importantly, many of our surveys are collected over time, allowing for measurements of gains and the persistence of challenges in the social and economic conditions of diverse groups of women, men, girls, and boys.

How we do make this data available?

I have two slides on this, slide 5 and slide 6. Ensuring that the data we collect are accessible is critical to our role as information providers. We understand that this data is used to assess the differential impact of policies, programs, and legislation on women and men, and we have taken steps to improve accessibility to the data in recent years. A broad range of gender statistics are readily available on the Statistics Canada website. The landing page to our website is organized by subject area, and under the subject "Society and Community" you will find women and gender, where there are links to the latest daily release bulletins, data tables, publications, and analytical studies.

Sex-disaggregated data tables are one of our most important sources of gender statistics. These tables include both statistics and indicators and can be found through the links on *The Daily* on the Statistics Canada website under "Summary Tables" or in Statistics Canada's socio-economic database, called CANSIM. After each census sex-disaggregated tables series are produced based on the analytic themes for census releases including labour, families, income, aboriginal peoples, and so on.

•(1655)

All these tables are prepared with policy-makers and the general research community in mind, so the tabular information is ready to use, usually broken down not only by sex, but by geography and by age. As such, they are the basis for much of the gender-based analysis being done across the Canadian federal and provincial governments.

I have so much material; you will have to stop me at one point, but we have a lot of things to say.

Sometimes government departments and researchers have specific needs not addressed in any of the available tables. In this case custom tables can also be purchased directly from Statistics Canada.

As slide 6 indicates, there are new initiatives to make things even more accessible. As of February 2012, StatsCan's key socio-economic database, CANSIM, became available free of charge. This is in addition to the increasing accessibility of a range of public-use microdata files through the data liberation initiative, along with the more detailed micro files available to researchers, including from the Statistics Canada Federal Research Data Centre, open to federal employees, and in research data centres located in universities across Canada.

So far I've mainly spoken about the data products we make available to our users, but StatsCan also provides a wide range of analytical products, mindful of the federal government's need for analysis that is relevant to policy, program, and legislative development. Doing a quick search on *The Daily*, I found a number of recent articles taking a gender-based approach to analysis, covering topics such as gender differences in financial literacy, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, in health and in employment, among others. Several studies on diverse groups of women also came up, including articles on senior women, aboriginal women, and women belonging to a visible minority group.

On slide 8 you will see a number of titles pulled from this search. Notably in 2015-16 we released seven chapters of the 7th Edition of "Women in Canada". This statistical compendium is a collaboration with Status of Women Canada that has been produced roughly every five years since 1985. The information presented in this publication helps fulfill the Government of Canada's commitment to encourage GBA+ by painting a comprehensive gender-based portrait of the Canadian population, including sections on family and living arrangements, health, education, paid and unpaid work, and crime.

Here are a couple of highlights from recent chapters showing how this publication not only looks at gender differences in the population, but also intersecting factors, like education and diversity characteristics.

On slide 9, immigrant women of core working age are more likely to have university degrees than non-immigrant women, but they are also more likely to be unemployed than non-immigrant women and take longer to integrate into the labour force than immigrant men. On slide 10, aboriginal women are less likely than the non-aboriginal population to have obtained a university degree and less likely to be employed, but among degree holders, aboriginal women are slightly more likely than non-aboriginal women to be employed. In this type of analysis we're looking at gender, but also multiple intersecting

factors that we think provide key information to our stakeholders in other departments.

As slide 11 shows, we know that our data and analytical products are reaching federal departments. Recently I attended a GBA+ champion event hosted by Status of Women and have put out a call for examples of how Statistics Canada data has helped the department to support GBA+. I have a number of examples. I'll skip through those, but my colleague from Finance has given a number of examples already.

We also play a role on the international scene. You can see that on slide 12.

I'll jump right to the concluding remarks.

Stats Canada is, first and foremost, a provider of information. Through our many statistical programs and surveys we are able to provide sex disaggregated data on a broad range of social and economic topics through data tables, microdata files, and analytical products. Our products are always developed keeping data users in mind, routinely considering gender and various intersecting identity factors. In recent years we have taken steps to make our data even more easily accessible to users and have contributed to a number of analytical products to help facilitate GBA+ in the development of policies and programs and legislation, and we will continue to engage with other departments.

Thank you.

•(1700)

The Chair: That was excellent.

We have time for one round of questioning. We're going to begin with my Liberal colleague, Ms. Vandenberg.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Thank you very much. There's a lot of information there. It's very useful.

I'd like to start with Mr. Botham. In the most recent pre-budget consultations, you indicated in your remarks that there was an effort to make sure that you were reaching out to women's groups and consulting on gender. Can you elaborate a little on that?

Mr. Richard Botham: It really starts with the list of stakeholder organizations, ensuring that it is a full and representative list. I think that comes from a commitment by our minister's office to do that. Because it is an annual event, there is a historical element, too. It is a list we can go back to and refresh. There was an open consultation as well. There was an opportunity for a wide, diverse group of Canadians to provide input. I think there are two elements. One is a conscious effort to reach out, and the second is an openness on the part of the hearing. It is those two factors that allow for that.

• (1705)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: In 2009, this committee did a report on gender-responsive budgeting, and one of the things that was recommended was that there be a GBA of the budget and that it be published. Is that the case?

Mr. Richard Botham: I am sorry. I am having a problem with an echo.

The 2009 report commitment to...?

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: The report of this committee on gender-responsive budgeting recommended not only that there be a GBA of the budget, but also that it be published. Is that something that is happening? Is it being published?

Mr. Richard Botham: The department does not publish the gender-based analyses that are performed by the department, in the same way that we don't publish analysis more generally that is provided to the minister for decision-making. That is treated as part of the confidential material provided to the minister for the purpose of his or her decision.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: On the challenge function, I noticed you said in your remarks that if it is seen, in the initial assessment, that there are no or few gender impacts, the GBA can be very brief. In some of our hearings, we found that sometimes it is not obvious. Sometimes it is very easy to look at something at the outset and say, "Nope, there are no gender impacts", and that is how it often gets missed.

How often does it happen that you say, "No, there are very few impacts"?

Mr. Richard Botham: It is a two-phase process, as it is, say, for our strategic environmental assessment. I would go back to my remarks that there are two types of proposals we look at. One would be a proposal coming from another minister or department, where a GBA is performed by that responsible department. In the second case, where the proposal is developed within the department, we would do a preliminary scan, and then we would make the determination whether to move on to a full one. I don't know what the breakdown is, but I am fairly certain that the majority of cases fall into the category of a preliminary scan rather than a full GBA.

We deal with a very wide range of issues. Every year, we brief the minister on hundreds of issues. As you say, some of them may be less obvious and still have a gender consideration. From our perspective, it is fairly clear that there are pieces of information that the minister would require to make a decision. Gender would be one, in certain cases, but also education and income levels. Those are fairly obvious and probably more specific to, say, our tax policy area, where the implications in many cases are for particular individuals and groups of individuals. It would be more frequent that we have in-depth gender-based analysis for that.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Before you ran out of time, you were talking about the fact that you are getting uneven information from different departments. The styles and the depth of the information that you get are inconsistent. This is similar to what we have heard from others, including the Treasury Board Secretariat, which said that some departments, where it has a social implication or direct impact on Canadians, are doing much more of this, and others, like Fisheries, a little less.

Can you tell us how we can ensure more consistency in the kinds of information that you are getting?

Mr. Richard Botham: I suspect that on a system-wide basis it is very similar to the kind of approach we had to take as a department, namely, that there has to be a commitment that it is important—and I believe I heard some of the remarks by my Treasury Board Secretariat colleague on this. There has to be training for people so that they know how to go about their job. It is very helpful to have a consistent framework that departments agree to and have bought into, so it is understood that this is part of the work that needs to be done.

The other thing I would point out is that, as another colleague mentioned, it really is time-dependent. There are some issues where there is sufficient time to do a broad range of analysis, and there are other issues that come up and are settled fairly quickly. In those cases, they are unlikely to have the same depth of treatment.

• (1710)

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: One of the biggest barriers you mentioned is the gender-disaggregated data, so I'd like to go on to Statistics Canada because it sounds like there's a lot. You have custom tables, you have disaggregated data, you have the "Women in Canada" report, you have research centres in universities, and the 300 surveys you talked about. This isn't the first department we've heard from that indicated that the lack of such data is a barrier. Where is that disconnect? How can we improve the data?

Mr. François Nault: If other departments have indicated there's a lack of data, I'm pretty sure they don't know how much data we have. As I mentioned in my presentation, I just did a call last week and had a fantastic response on how departments are using the data. A lot of departments are really using our data, but if there is a lack of data or perceived lack of data, I will be very happy to work with these departments. In fact, it's part of my role, as I see it, to provide as much data as possible to any department.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Excellent, more communication would be—

The Chair: All right, we're going over to our Conservative colleague, Ms. Harder, for seven minutes.

Ms. Rachael Harder (Lethbridge, CPC): I'm going to start off with a question for Mr. MacLeod. I have a few questions for you.

I'm having a little bit of a hard time making the connection between what your department does and how that would relate to a gender-based analysis. I guess when I consider signing a contract for something or purchasing large equipment, for example, helicopters for the military, I'm not clear on why a gender-based analysis would be necessary for something like that. Could you please help clarify that for me?

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: In fact, one of the comments that we often get back from our employees when we are out doing training and engagement—and not just from people on the procurement side but from the real property people who are working in real estate—is how is this relevant, and how does it matter to us? There would be some areas of our business where, when we would look at the consequences and at the filters—policy or programming ones—that we would apply in terms of cost, gender, or whatever impacts there might be, we may move very quickly through a gender-based analysis.

The examples that I shared with the committee were meant to underscore a little of how the mandate of our department works, whether it be as the custodian of the parliamentary precinct or the people who work here on a daily basis. Gender differences may create different needs or demands on the facilities, such as the direct deposit initiative through our Receiver General function, where it is a direct delivery of service to Canadians. In fact, the research did show that there were gender implications there.

So, I understand your question, and it's true that it's not across the full range, but when we do look, when we scratch the surface and sometimes when we go a little bit deeper, we do find that areas of our programs have direct impacts and that there is also potential for unintended consequences, including unintended negative consequences for certain groups.

Ms. Rachael Harder: At the end of the day, after you've done GBA then, does it affect the scoring of bids in determining a winning bid, let's say?

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: On the procurement side, as I mentioned, given the nature of procurement, the rules, the law, and the policy in which we work, we're not permitted to assign weights to procurement based on gender.

There is one demographic element to whom we can direct procurements, and that's indigenous people, but beyond that, procurement is based on objective assessment criteria, and GBA comes into the mix less from how the procurement is going to be awarded but more toward what some of the ancillary impacts might be. For example, on the Build Canada innovation program, with 15.6% ownership among women, we had reason to believe as we were distributing the grants that there wasn't going to be equity. We can't direct, but we can take steps to raise awareness and ensure that the competitive process is open to all and that men and women are aware of the opportunities to compete for government business or for government programs.

● (1715)

Ms. Rachael Harder: During your presentation, one of the things you said was that there are many barriers to doing GBA well and that you'd be willing to comment on that. Perhaps you could outline some of the most significant barriers your department faces.

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: From a survey that we're currently filling out for Status of Women, our employees have identified several barriers.

One of the barriers is the sequencing of programs, because sometimes a program or a proposal moves ahead before a GBA is done, and so it's playing catch-up,

There are issues around data. It's often not the availability of data; it's the agility and the capacity to manipulate that data and apply it to relevant outcomes. The capacity to use data is not consistent across all program areas.

There's also culture. When I go out to do GBA training, the intuitive element is obvious. The second or third question I get is, "I'm not saying I don't get what you're trying to do, I just don't get what it means for me. I design office space. What does that have to do with gender-based analysis?"

Then there's frequency. Often there can be long periods of time between when an organization does a gender-based analysis and the next opportunity to do it. There's a certain loss of capacity.

Sequence, culture, frequency, and the reach of the training are the barriers that have been identified by our employees.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Awesome.

Mr. MacLeod, do you enjoy doing GBA?

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: It's an element of my job that brings me great pleasure and joy. Yes.

Ms. Rachael Harder: Good for you!

I'm out of time, for all intents and purposes.

The Chair: Okay, very good.

Ms. Malcolmson.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Thanks to my colleague for that great question: do you like your job?

This year's budget bundles together both budget requests and some legislative changes. We're calling it an omnibus bill—not everybody does. What is the Department of Finance's obligation to conduct GBA? How do you do that when there is a mix of policy and financial commitments? Does that get fanned out to different agencies, or does it all remain on your plate?

Mr. Richard Botham: In terms of the advice the department provides to the minister to budget for the budget, there really are two types of proposals, as I outlined. One would be where a proposal is advanced by another minister or another department. In those cases, it's the responsibility of that minister or department to undertake the gender-based analysis and provide our department with their analysis. The second category pertains to tax policy issues. Our department is the source of the development of that policy. In that case, it is our department that performs the gender-based analysis.

There isn't a distinction between policy and financing, or the financial aspect, because we provide advice at the same time on both those elements of a proposal.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: In the former example, your responsibility is to ensure that the work is done without duplicating what's done by other departments.

Mr. Richard Botham: We tend not to duplicate it, but if we see something that has been missed, we would go back to the department and ask them for any further analysis we think we need to have for a full proposal to our minister.

•(1720)

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Mr. MacLeod, you made reference to the number of women who are heads of small businesses—I think you said 16%. You said that the GBA test you had done—maybe this is in a previous year—had shown there was unequal access to capital.

I'm curious about other GBA work that's been done on women's sustainability in the small business area. We just got some news that the PBO has identified costs to small business as a result of a change in policy on taxation—both loss of jobs and costs to the economy. Do you know whether a GBA analysis was done on that decision?

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: No, I don't know whether a GBA was done on that.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Might it have gone through Finance, as an example, as a budget decision?

Mr. Richard Botham: I'm sorry. Are you asking me?

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: I'm curious as to whether the decision around the change in the small business tax was subject to a GBA assessment in the budget, if it wasn't through Public Works.

Mr. Richard Botham: Any decisions that were included in the budget had gender-based analysis performed on those proposals. All tax policy proposals had gender-based analysis performed. Tax policy is the responsibility of the Department of Finance, so we do gender-based analysis on all tax policy proposals.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Is it fair that even if there is a disproportionate impact on one gender versus another, at least the information is known? It ends up being a balancing act or a political decision, but the information is in the hands of the decision-makers. I guess another way to put it is that it doesn't mean that all the decisions are gender-neutral decisions or are going to benefit men and women equally, but at least there's transparency for the cabinet around the implications of what they're deciding.

Mr. Richard Botham: It is part of a full briefing to the minister to include gender-based analysis, and that's why we perform gender-based analysis on all proposals.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: It doesn't necessarily screen out the bad decisions, but at least the decisions are fully informed.

Mr. Richard Botham: We strive to fully inform the minister for the purpose of making decisions for the budget.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: Can I come back to a question that I think one of my colleagues—I can't remember from which side—asked?

On Finance Canada's description of doing GBA “where appropriate, and where data exists”, I think you described there being a light “scan”, or an initial touch. Can you give more specific examples of when you would identify that GBA is not appropriate and not necessary to do at all?

Mr. Richard Botham: Well, an example would be potentially an issue touching on species at risk. It may be that there is not a strong human dimension to the resolution of a decision on that issue. There are issues around wrecked vessels that exist in Canada, so we would seek to decide whether there is relevant gender-based information that should be provided to the minister on issues like that, and we would decide whether more fulsome analysis is required. Those may

be issues where we would determine that there is not a strong analysis on a gender basis that is required.

Ms. Sheila Malcolmson: That's a good example. Thanks. Both are important issues.

To go to Stats Canada, how often are you disaggregating data by gender?

Mr. François Nault: As often as we can: I think sex is probably one of the key characteristics that's given in all our statistics.

The Chair: You're out of time, Ms. Malcolmson.

I'll return to my Liberal colleagues and Mr. Fraser.

•(1725)

Mr. Sean Fraser (Central Nova, Lib.): I want to start by talking about monitoring and measuring. Do any of your departments actively monitor the implementation or effectiveness of your existing GBA practices?

Mr. Richard Botham: I think we actively monitor it from a quality perspective. Alfred mentioned that one of the barriers is whether or not gender-based analysis is an ongoing and regular practice. I think one of the things we benefit from is that the budget is an ongoing, annual, and regular activity that engages the majority of economists, analysts, and executives in our department. We have an opportunity to, every year, look at the quality of the analysis done. I think there is that active element.

I think we are probably in a bit of a transition phase in terms of how we look at gender-based analysis. Historically, I think there has been more of a focus on an activity basis: do we have a process in place and are people respecting the process? One of the issues that we're working on going forward is that quality element and tracking and assessment to better understand just what kind of impact that analysis is having on decisions. That's something we're looking at for the future period.

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: From our perspective, that would be an area that represents a challenge. If we're looking at changes we could make in how we implement and apply GBA, it would be to the tracking and monitoring, and coming back on a routine basis to see whether in fact the impacts are being smoothed out, or whether they are persistent and require a rethink. That would be one of the areas for further work.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Is there any reporting done by either of your departments to a public body or to a group external to your department?

Mr. Richard Botham: We report to Status of Women. I don't think we report on our activities to a body outside of government.

Mr. Alfred MacLeod: We don't report outside. We report on an annual basis to Status of Women, both in terms of qualitative descriptions of what's happened in our program and some quantitative indicators of how many GBAs we have done, or how much training. But no, there's no systematic public reporting on it.

Mr. Sean Fraser: Mr. Nault, sorry for skipping you.

Mr. François Nault: I don't think we have really measured our output of statistics by gender, but I'm pretty sure from the example I gave that, over time, we have increased the amount of sex disaggregated data available.

As I mentioned as well, it's our seventh edition of "Women in Canada". In each edition, I think we've tried to improve and add new stuff and new information in that publication. The one that we are doing right now is no exception. There's a lot of new data in it for the first time.

Mr. Sean Fraser: I'm splitting my time with my colleague Ms. Nassif.

The Chair: All right. Three minutes.

Mrs. Eva Nassif (Vimy, Lib.): Thank you for the presentation.
[Translation]

My question is for the representatives of Statistics Canada, Ms. Hudon and Mr. Nault.

Before making a decision concerning a complete gender-based analysis, one of the requirements that a department or agency must fulfill is to examine the quantitative data, such as statistics. Does Statistics Canada communicate with departments or agencies to actively supply them with data, disaggregated by sex and other identity factors, to help in implementing the complete gender-based analysis process? If so, does Statistics Canada provide departments with data in the case of the gender-based analysis process?

Mr. François Nault: Certainly. Initially, I had the feeling that we were perhaps not being as proactive as we should have been, but, as I said, I have written to all the departments in the last few weeks, and I have many examples of departments that use our data.

At Statistics Canada, we are organized into various specialized divisions. For example, there is the health statistics division, the education statistics division, or, in my case, the aboriginal statistics division or statistics on immigrants. I work directly with departments like Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. I can offer them all the statistics they need for gender-based analysis. We are therefore much more proactive than I had initially thought. Several departments have given us many examples of data they use to do their gender-based analysis.

●(1730)

Mrs. Eva Nassif: I don't know whether I can ask another question.

The Chair: You have only one minute left.

Mrs. Eva Nassif: In the case of gender-based analysis, has Statistics Canada collaborated with the departments and agencies so they are able to use the data from its "Women in Canada" report quickly?

Mr. François Nault: I am going to let my colleague answer the first question, and I will answer the second.

[English]

Ms. Tamara Hudon (Research Analyst, Social and Aboriginal Statistics Division, Statistics Canada): I just wanted to add that part of the work we do with the "Women in Canada" publication involves a very extensive engagement process with our stakeholders, because we want to know exactly what kind of data is necessary to be making the decisions that are required.

We do this right from the outline stage, where we engage multiple departments to give us some feedback. We incorporate their feedback there. Then through a second process, we allow our stakeholders to review the draft documents, again adding an additional checkpoint so we can make sure that we're including in the drafts, to the extent we're able to, information that will be used.

An example of this is our work with Immigration on the "Immigrant Women" chapter. There were several points during that process where we were asked to provide information on, for example, admission categories, because that was relevant to their processes.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That's our time.

I want to thank our witnesses. You did an excellent job. There was a lot of data. I loved the statistics, of course, as a statistician myself, but the examples you provided were very helpful to us. Thank you.

To the committee, we shall see you Thursday when our academics will be here, so bring your smart questions.

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