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Chair

The Honourable Robert Nault

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•(0845)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Robert Nault (Kenora, Lib.)): Colleagues, we'll get started.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we will have a briefing by Global Partnership for Education.

We have the pleasure and the honour of having Julia Gillard and her colleague Karen Mundy here this morning. I think we'll have the presentation by Ms. Gillard, and then we'll go into questions and answers and have a very broad discussion about the work of the Global Partnership for Education.

It's our pleasure to host you both this morning.

We'll do this in about an hour, roughly, and then we'll go into other business and let Ms. Gillard and her colleague get on with their day. I think it's about eight o'clock at night in Australia, so they're still awake and hanging in there. That's always a good thing.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development of Parliament, welcome.

Ms. Julia Gillard (Chair of the Board, Global Partnership for Education): Thank you.

The Chair: We're looking forward to your presentation, so I'll turn the floor over to you.

Ms. Julia Gillard: Thank you very much.

Honourable chair and members of the standing committee, thank you very much for having us here today.

I'm here in my capacity as chair of the board of the Global Partnership for Education. I want to take a few minutes to tell you about the work of GPE, the Global Partnership, and how it fits into the broader landscape of international co-operation.

I will then turn to Dr. Karen Mundy, a Canadian, not an Australian, who is with me as chief technical officer, and who is going to outline some of the interim results of our new strategic plan. I'm looking forward to the discussion that will follow.

The Global Partnership for Education is the only multilateral partnership and funding mechanism exclusively dedicated to education in the world's poorest countries. Our partnership includes 65 developing country partners and over 20 donor countries, multilateral agencies, civil society, teachers, and the private sector.

Our work is dedicated to expanding inclusive, equitable, quality learning; to strengthening education systems; and to promoting

government leadership and donor harmonization. We do this at the country level by locking together better sector planning, improved policy dialogue and mutual accountability, and offering results-based financing.

The Global Partnership supports research and analysis into the unique educational contexts of our partner countries. We then provide critical financing for the development and implementation of comprehensive education sector plans, plans that are endorsed by all partners.

GPE is also the largest financier of civil society advocacy in the education sector as part of our commitment to inclusive, evidence-based policy dialogue. GPE disburses approximately \$500 million U.S. per year, with 50% of this going to fragile and conflict-affected countries.

We very much value our partnership with the Canadian government, which was one of the architects of our precursor, the fast-track initiative. Canada has been a core donor since 2002. We thank you for that.

Canada continues to play an active role on our board and technical committees, and has contributed \$147 million to GPE to date, with another \$45.5 million committed. I would also like to recognize and thank Canada for offering to host our June board meeting this year, the first one ever held in Canada.

Outcomes in education can have a dramatic impact on progress in achieving all of the sustainable development goals. According to UNESCO, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries left school with basic reading skills. Investments in girls' education can reduce child marriage and maternal and infant mortality and increase the health and economic situation of families. We know that a child born to a mother who can read has a 50% greater chance of living past the age of five, a quite staggering statistic.

Despite the central importance of education as a human right and a driver of other rights, 121 million children and adolescents are out of school. Most of them are girls and children living in fragile and conflict-affected states. Seventy-five per cent of refugee youth are out of school.

A full cycle of education in a developing country costs \$1.18 a day per child, yet global resources have fallen. Donor aid to basic education dropped by more than 14% between 2010 and 2014, even as development aid overall increased by 8%.

I have been proud to serve as a commissioner on the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity. The recent commission report highlights that low-income countries receive less than a quarter of all education aid. These are the countries that are most in need, the countries where girls are most likely to be out of school, the countries where children are most likely to experience the effects of conflict and instability.

In order to realize the full potential of education to create a learning generation, the same education commission report shows that international financing must increase from \$16 billion per year today to \$89 billion per year by 2030.

●(0850)

We are at a pivotal moment for everything the Global Partnership for Education stands for and for what we can accomplish. I'm very optimistic. The past 18 months have been nothing short of a quantum shift towards the emergence of a new global consensus that education must take centre stage in the efforts of the world to achieve the sustainable development goals. This is education's moment, and GPE is poised to be one of the primary implementation agencies for SDG 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

I would now like to invite Dr. Karen Mundy to discuss GPE's strategic plan and some of our key interim results.

Dr. Karen Mundy (Chief Technical Officer, Global Partnership for Education): Thank you, Julia.

Thank you to the chair and the committee. It's a real honour to be here today to speak with you about the Global Partnership for Education.

Last year GPE launched its new strategic plan that will see our partnership through to 2020. This strategic plan, as you heard from Julia, is aligned to SDG 4, the delivery of equitable and quality learning for all children and youth.

Our partnership is influenced by a number of guiding principles that place development effectiveness, mutual accountability, inclusiveness, and a focus on results at its centre and at the core of all we do. We are working to pursue these strategic goals and to measure our results against our objectives. Our strategic goals are improved and more equitable student learning outcomes through quality teaching and learning. We will measure our results in this area.

Second, we hope to increase equity, gender equality, and inclusion for a full cycle of quality education, targeting the poorest and most marginalized, including children in conflict-affected contexts.

Third, we aim to support educational systems to become both effective and efficient. This last November I presented our partnership's interim results to our board, and a full set of results will be presented in June of this year. As can be expected, the results show areas where we have both surpassed our targets and areas for increased attention. I'll highlight a few of these.

An additional 9.3 million girls are now in school across our partnership, due in part to GPE's support. Despite that, we know that we have equity concerns across the partnership, and this continues to be a core focus for our work.

I am very grateful to Canada for supporting GPE through gender institutional analysis to develop a gender equality strategy. We have now invested approximately \$1.5 billion in our active grants to help improve gender equality across the partnership.

We are excited this year to be working with Plan Canada and other partners to introduce an approach to gender responsiveness in sector planning that highlights the importance of governments costing gender responsiveness in their schools and in their school system.

We are very pleased to see an ongoing rise in the rates of lower secondary school completion across our partnership. However, we note that in many of the poorest countries, primary completion rates are stagnating at around 80%, and this is of growing concern.

Half of GPE's disbursements go to fragile and conflict-affected countries in the partnership. As you know, about a third of the children who are out of school in the world live in a conflicted-affected context. For GPE, 63% of all refugee children live within the geographies of our 65 countries, so it's an important focus for us.

We have invested \$2.2 billion in conflict-affected countries, including in Haiti, Mali, Central African Republic, Yemen, and Chad. Despite incredible barriers, the primary completion rate in these settings has risen substantially, from about 55% of all children completing primary school to 68%.

We have exceeded our milestone in relation to pupil-teacher ratios. As you know, the core of an education is a good teacher. In our partner countries, 29% of classrooms now have a pupil-to-teacher ratio of 40:1 or less. That's up from 25% only a year ago. We think this is an amazing result.

One of our most important results and areas of focus is in leveraging strong domestic financing for education in the partner countries. Every dollar that GPE invests should leverage improved concentration and focus from governments on improving their education systems. We know that to achieve SDG 4, low- and middle-income countries would have to nearly triple their spending on education.

The global standard for domestic financing of education is that governments allocate between 15% and 20% of their total public expenditures to education, with a particular focus on basic education. This is a requirement for the receipt of GPE funding. We have seen domestic financing improve across our partnership. Additionally, up to 30% of our grants are delivered as a results-based tranche. That is to say that governments must produce results in equity and learning, and show efficiencies in their system in order to receive that 30%.

● (0855)

As Julia mentioned, GPE invests in civil society and in multi-stakeholder accountability systems at the country level. We routinely support countries to have a sector review, a review of their education sector that brings all stakeholders to the table and at which there is careful tracking of results.

Since 2002, public expenditure on education in GPE partner countries has increased at a higher rate than in non-GPE partner countries; 72% of our partner countries increased public expenditure or maintained spending above 20% between 2014 and 2015, and 22 GPE countries allocated more than 20% of their budget to education. This is a very strong result for us.

We are committed to achieving real results in learning outcomes for all children through our focus on systems building, our focus on equity, and our focus on quality learning for all children. We welcome the ongoing partnership with the Government of Canada to achieve these results.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much for that presentation. Global Partnership for Education is a very important institution, and we're very proud as Canadians to be actively involved in it.

Colleagues, I think we'll go right into questions.

I'll start with Mr. Allison.

Mr. Dean Allison (Niagara West, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Ms. Gillard, for coming to committee, and Dr. Mundy as well. I enjoyed the conversations we had last night at the event.

I have three questions for you, so I'll just get right into it.

There are a lot of great organizations. We have Gavi, the Global Fund, and all these things. Why GPE? In terms of return on investment—you did touch on this in your opening remarks—why you guys as an organization?

Second, how are you different from the other organizations that are providing education in terms of how you provide?

The third question, which sort of ties back into the first question, is about donor fatigue. What are your greatest challenges as you

move forward, with other governments or with what's going on in the development community?

● (0900)

Ms. Julia Gillard: I'm very happy to answer those questions, and I'll do that as quickly as I can.

On the choices, we would bring before you the increasing evidence that we can't achieve what we want to achieve in areas like health unless we also focus on education. Indeed, GPE has been working very strongly with the Global Fund and with Gavi, because there is a recognition that what they want to achieve in health will be held back unless there is education.

For example, the evidence is very clear that if we can keep adolescent girls in school, it dramatically reduces their risks of getting HIV/AIDS. Because people's lives are joined up, the services that they need have to be joined up as well. We won't acquire the outcomes we want in health, climate change, or peace and security unless we are also focusing on education.

In terms of our comparative advantage, it is that we focus on whole school systems. Many people are doing wonderful things, innovative things, that are showing progress, but to actually take those things and make them impact the lives of millions of children, then they have to have an effect across the whole school system. We know that from our own countries. There may be schools in Canada, five or 10 of them, that have a wonderful new approach to literacy or numeracy. That's only going to affect the lives of millions of children in Canada if ultimately it's shared through a whole province, and then the province shares it with its neighbours and it goes across all of your schools. That's what we do, the whole school systems.

On donor fatigue, we recognize that this is not an easy age for government and budget priorities, and that's true around the world. However, we think that in a world where there is some increasing of donor aid—and the statistic we've given you is an 8% increase—it is truly tragic to see education's share going backwards, so we would advocate for both an increasing share for education and greater government investment in foreign aid.

The statistics that Karen gave you on domestic resource mobilization are very important. At the end of the day, most of the money for schooling in developing countries is going to come from developing countries themselves, which is why a key effectiveness in our model is the leverage of international aid resources for more domestic resources.

Mr. Dean Allison: Great. As a follow-up to that, how do you choose your countries? I'm assuming they contact you and say they'd like to do some more...and it's very much like the Global Fund, right? We'll only partner with countries that are prepared to step up and do their fair share.

I'm assuming that's a similar model to what you guys are looking at.

Ms. Julia Gillard: We have a model of eligibility that is based on the country's income band, so we cover low-income countries and lower middle-income countries. We also have eligibility for grants that is factored off the country's income band and also its school outcomes. That used to be factored off the millennium development goal of universal access to primary school. Now we've lifted ambition, because the sustainable development agenda is a bigger one, and it's looking at secondary school too.

So yes, countries do contact us, but when you look at that low-income and lower middle-income band, we've got very high coverage, and the partnership has grown in recent years, so clearly, countries do think that the model is an effective one for change.

Mr. Dean Allison: All right.

I have one last quick question: is there life after politics?

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Julia Gillard: Well, I suppose I'll let you watch me today at the committee, and you can make the conclusion after that. You can judge.

Mr. Dean Allison: Thank you very much.

The Chair: We'll go to Mr. Fragiskatos, please.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you for being here today.

For me it's a very interesting meeting because I've a huge interest in literacy, especially child literacy. The social, cognitive, and emotional development of children is, as you know, so determinative in terms of their future growth and development as human beings. As well, 80% of the child's brain is fully developed by age three. Yet the focus of the international community, states themselves, on pre-primary education, the kind of education that focuses on developing the child prior to elementary school, prior to kindergarten, through play and basic tasks that are intended to develop cognition, has been traditionally lacking in terms of funding. I wonder if you could speak to whether or not you're focused on pre-primary education.

• (0905)

Ms. Julia Gillard: Perhaps I can invite our chief technical officer, Karen Mundy, to talk to that. We do have a new initiative in early childhood development that she's been overseeing for GPE.

Dr. Karen Mundy: You're absolutely correct. We have great neurological research now that shows us that the hot area for brain development is in the first three years.

I want to make a bit of a radical case to you about the importance of upper years of education for that early development. When women are literate, they are able to stimulate their children in those early three years. They are able to access health services, to provide nutrition, and to earn income for their families in ways that support the zero-to-three-year age set. I would say that there's perhaps more value in the dollar spent on a girl's education than almost any other input into the early development of children, so that's GPE's focus.

We do work in the pre-primary, three-to-six-year age range. I want to remind everybody that every year of a child's life is important, and that many children in those years, three to six, fall off the staircase of the educational ladder. It's very important that we address their needs, particularly for children who come from very poor or marginalized contexts. They achieve much better results and learning outcomes in primary and secondary school if they're had that pre-primary learning.

That's really the focus of our work. Again, we don't dispute the importance of that zero-to-three age set and how significant the outcomes later in life are to the investments made at that period, but we would argue that the investment in literate young women is a significant input into that early development.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: I agree completely that focusing on a young woman's education is important. I just wanted to know whether there was a focus on pre-primary education. Thank you very much for touching on that.

The connection between lack of economic development and conflict and even wars is well understood. Less focused on, though, is the connection between a lack of educational opportunity in societies and conflict—again, conflict that tends towards war. Could you talk about that connection? I think when we think about the causes of conflict in societies, conflict that manifests in war, we forget about the importance of a lack of education.

Ms. Julia Gillard: There is very good evidence that rising literacy rates, rising educational levels, are actually protective factors against conflict. That proposition has been statistically proven, but it's not as simple as just saying there needs to be education. Of course, we have seen the phenomenon around the world where education systems have been effective, but people have graduated from school into economies that offer them no opportunities and no hope. Disillusioned youth can then end up being a source of conflict in those societies. Education, however, is a protective factor against conflict and violence. There is of course a complex relationship between education and counter-radicalization work. Experts in the area point out that some of the most known terrorists in our world were actually highly educated people, including, for example, those who conceptualized 9/11.

So it's not only about the delivery of education, it's also about the content of education, the world view it gives people and the ability it gives them to think through their own actions and consequences.

One thing that GPE has seen happen in our partner countries, and the GPE's planning and grants-based processes have made a difference to, is the work for, I would say, from our part of the world, is the work for madrasah schools. I know that different terminology is used elsewhere. We think that bringing madrasah schools into the mainstream of the education system and ensuring that they're registered in teaching the national curriculum or the regular curriculum is also important for trying to encourage protective factors against long-term conflict and violence.

• (0910)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Yesterday in the *Ottawa Citizen*, I read a piece that you penned. You talked about Khadija in Tanzania. I think she was about 12 years old when she was forced to marry. She didn't have the opportunity to attend school, but is now raising a child who is in school and doing very well, apparently. That's a great success story.

Can you talk about how you track those kinds of success stories in general? How are you measuring results, basically? What's the basic methodology behind that?

Dr. Karen Mundy: We are measuring results for girls across our partnership. We help governments to invest in good data, good systems for monitoring data, and to ensure that they are tracking children both in school and out of school. So in our results framework, on an annual basis, we roll up the data from the countries so that we can give you a statistic like the one I presented earlier on the 9.3 million girls across the partnership who are in school today, who might not otherwise have been without our partnership's efforts.

I'd like to pass it back to Julia, because nothing speaks to the public better than stories of young individuals who have achieved success in their lives because of the investments in education.

Julia.

Ms. Julia Gillard: Shortly before coming here, I was in Malawi, where GPE funds are being used for school construction, for teacher training, for the provision of financial support for the most marginalized to get to school, and for assisting mothers clubs. Malawi is a very poor country, with very low rights of girls getting through to the end of secondary school. Through meeting with one of these mothers clubs and going to a village, we met a 14-year-old

girl with a one-month-old baby. The work of the mothers club is to try to help these girls get back into schooling by helping them with the care of the child and by trying to inculcate a set of values and aspirations to get them to the end of schooling.

We think that kind of on-the-ground work is really important, and we do seek to resource it. GPE also collaborates with the organization Girls Not Brides, and they seek to persuade governments to legislate. In many countries there aren't the marriage laws that Canada has and Australia has that define minimum marriage ages, so there's a regulation question, but apart from a regulation question, there's a dynamic relationship between schooling and early marriage. The evidence is very clear that if we can keep a girl in secondary school, her likelihood of marrying very young is dramatically reduced.

We need to be ensuring that the schools are there for the girls to go to, whilst organizations like Girls Not Brides and active organizations on the ground are encouraging families to think about alternatives to early marriage and keeping their girls in school.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Fragiskatos.

I'll go to Madame Laverdière.

[Translation]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for being here and, above all, for the fantastic work they're doing.

It's often said in the real estate industry that location is fundamental. Location, location, location. I think that, when it comes to development, even when we talk about security and stability, the fundamental thing is education, education, education. Once again, congratulations on all the work you are doing.

That said, this work requires major funding. You talked a bit about it in your presentation. Do you foresee that the Global Partnership for Education will face funding difficulties or challenges?

Thank you.

• (0915)

[English]

Ms. Julia Gillard: Thank you very much.

We do face a very immediate challenge on funding. We are entering into our replenishment cycle. GPE last asked the donor community, both the countries and the philanthropic community, to replenish GPE funds in 2014. We raised about \$2 billion. We will hold another replenishment event, either very late this year or very early next year, so that we have replenished funds to undertake the new strategic plan that has been described to you.

That means that this is a very critical time for us to be putting the case for change in education to donors and partners, both traditional friends like Canada and new potential donors around the world. We do think that we come to that task in the circumstance where there is a rising global focus on education and a lot of momentum for change in education.

It was very telling to me, and pleasing to me, when I sat in the United Nations General Assembly and watched the sustainable development goals be adopted, that when the UN Secretary-General finished his speech, the first person to speak afterwards was Malala from the public gallery. I think this very structuring of the event told us that there was a realization in the global community that unless we were educating children, particularly girls, and meeting the courage of a child like Malala with the opportunity to go to a quality school, we would be failing the development agenda.

In this circumstance, we think that what we do, as well as what other organizations do.... I would point particularly to the newly structured fund Education Cannot Wait, which is specifically for education in emergencies and in humanitarian crisis and conflict. This is a moment when the global community will focus on the better resourcing of education right across the board. We will be here in June for our board meeting, but we will be in continuous dialogue with the government and the Parliament of Canada about its consideration of its further support for the Global Partnership for Education.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Thank you very much.

You also mentioned a few countries that are in a conflict situation or are facing great difficulties, such as Mali and Haiti, where you are doing critical work.

You also work with refugees. I'd like to know what that entails. Since your work often revolves around school systems, it's bound to be more complicated in the case of refugees.

[*English*]

Ms. Julia Gillard: Thank you.

For understandable reasons, the world's political attention tends to go on refugee questions when refugees are moving into developed countries. For example, the very major refugee inflows into Europe have received a great deal of media and political attention. However, the vast majority of the refugee population is in low-income countries, and more than 60% of the world's refugee population is in GPE countries, the 65 countries that we serve.

We work with our developing country partners to help them have plans for schooling and resources so that they can include refugee children's education in their education systems. When your own education system is under a lot of stress and strain and you're a very poor country, that is a very difficult thing to do.

For example, a very poor country such as Chad, which has a great deal to do to keep developing its own education system for the children of Chad, actually approached GPE when it started to see major refugee inflows into Chad so that we could provide assistance to enable them to offer the refugee children a place in school. It was an incredible act of generosity off a very impoverished base, but then

something that we were able to work on with them. That's our main focus at this stage on refugee children.

We are very supportive of the new fund Education Cannot Wait, which is specifically dedicated to children in conflict and crisis. We will be working with Education Cannot Wait to see what more can be done in the immediate humanitarian circumstance, but then to get continuity from the humanitarian response into the longer-term development work.

• (0920)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: I'd like to ask another question.

You talked about countries covered by the Global Partnership for Education. Are you considering the possibility of increasing the number of countries where you operate?

[*English*]

Ms. Julia Gillard: Our focus will remain on low-income countries and lower middle-income countries. We think that's where the greatest need is and the greatest challenges are.

I'm continuing to serve as a member of the international commission on education financing, and I'd commend that report to the committee. When you look at that report, there is some very compelling information about the patterns of aid flows for education. When you unpack aid flows, you find that quite a lot of international aid is actually for post-secondary. It's provided by countries in the form of scholarships for people to come and study in their countries. Australia does that, and obviously it has merits for the individuals involved. However, it does mean that when you look at the amount of funding that is flowing to school education, it is low.

When you unpack which countries it's going to, GPE does stand out as the organization that is most specifically focused on the poorest. So we will continue that mission of focusing on low-income countries and lower middle-income countries.

Ms. Hélène Laverdière: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Laverdière.

Mr. Levitt, please.

Mr. Michael Levitt (York Centre, Lib.): Ms. Gillard and Dr. Mundy, thank you very much for your testimony. I know you've had a couple of busy days in Ottawa, on the Hill. It's great to have you here this morning before you return home.

In terms of Canada's four-year, \$120-million support for GPE, I'm glad to see there's a large portion of the funding committed to basic education and also important funding for teacher training so that these children continue to receive quality education.

I'm also interested in the smaller areas of contribution, the 2% and 3% of the funding that's committed to democratic participation in civil society and also general human rights education. Could you give us a bit of detail on the types of initiatives that GPE undertakes and its impact on education in those areas?

Ms. Julia Gillard: I'll open on that, and Dr. Mundy may want to contribute as well.

The essence of the GPE model is that we work with the country to develop a country-owned plan for schooling. In doing that, we look to the governments for leadership because at the end of the day, governments run the vast share of the education system, and have to have a plan for schooling for every child in their country.

We have an inclusive planning process that includes civil society representatives, so we do provide resources to civil society groups in developing countries so they can participate in those planning processes through what we call a local education group. Their participation in that local education group we think strengthens planning, because they bring the knowledge from the ground about what is happening and what is on people's minds—the minds of parents, for example.

The local education group is then also involved in stock-taking the implementation of the plan to make sure that things are on track. That, for us, gives us some greater coverage and contestability of information about whether the plan is being implemented well and properly. It may be that a government genuinely believes that a plan is on track, or it may be that a government wants to say to the world that a plan is on track, whereas the civil society group that is at work on the ground can point to and surface information about things that aren't going so well. Then we can work with the country to correct course.

We think there is a general advocacy role for civil society in developing countries for more resources into education, but we also think there are these very specific roles to strengthen the planning and the implementation processes, so we resource through our civil society education fund for that.

• (0925)

Dr. Karen Mundy: We support the civil society coalitions in 62 of our 65 developing country partners. These coalitions play a vital role in social accountability for results in the education sector. They engage in budget-tracking exercises to help lower corruption and fraud in the system. They play a very important role in representing the voices of marginalized populations. We think that's one of the unique pieces of GPE's approach, and of course we focus on the government and a government system, but we understand that system has to be widely owned. It needs broad stakeholders around it to ensure that its performance is such that marginalized children are reached.

You asked about general human rights education and how GPE promotes it. We invest quite heavily in curriculum development and in the production of learning materials. Those materials are vetted to ensure that they have good-quality focus on human rights. But I think we cut at a different level on the human rights issue. We are committed to inclusive education, to education that includes children with disabilities, that addresses the needs of girls and other marginalized populations. At the level of the sector plan, we're very

emphatic about the need for inclusive education. Inclusive education by definition is about the right of children to an inclusive education.

Mr. Michael Levitt: Thank you.

I want to come back to something you said, Ms. Gillard. You're operating in some fairly hot spots. I want to use Burundi as a very quick example, because our subcommittee on international human rights is just completing a study on it at the moment.

You talked about country-owned and about country leadership. You've had a situation in Burundi where since the beginning of the 2016 school year, the Burundi government has shut down education for over 80,000 students. We heard that testimony in our hearings.

How do you operate...? Other countries are examples of ones where you're probably facing some similar challenges, and they're significant. How do you deal with or continue to perform your mandate in the face of a country where there will be no leadership and you will in fact be running against a very significant headwind?

Ms. Julia Gillard: That's a good question. Obviously, this work is complex and very context-specific. Our model is one where, in countries where we are providing an implementation grant, we appoint a grant agent. It may be the World Bank, UNICEF, Save the Children; it can be one of the bilateral donors that's at work in that country. The grant agent manages the funds and the disbursement and obviously ensures that things are on track, as well as having these local education group processes.

We find that's difficult, but we find that gives us the oversight and fiduciary accountability that we need. It is not a panacea for all problems. There are times when circumstances get too difficult, so that it is not safe for the sorts of agencies that are grant agents to maintain their personnel within country; or when, even with the strongest of advocacy, a government is determined to not do the right thing. GPE, like the rest of the international community, has to face those challenges and do the best we can. We have managed to keep working even in some environments where other bodies have withdrawn or ceased to be active. We've continued to work, for example, in places like Yemen and South Sudan. We have shown an ability to keep some things going, even when the local environment is very hot and very difficult.

• (0930)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Levitt.

We can come back to it, Dr. Mundy.

I'll go to Mr. McKay now.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to both our witnesses.

It is good to see, Ms. Gillard, that there is life after politics. You are demonstrating that quite admirably.

In another life, I authored a bill called the “better aid” bill. It said three things: that Canada's aid had to be for poverty alleviation, that we had to consult those who were to receive that aid, and that it had to be consistent with international human right standards. It also said that, within six months of every government year-end, there had to be a metric published that in fact we complied with the better aid bill. The previous government showed no great enthusiasm for complying with that metric, in part because it's difficult to actually measure aid effectiveness.

Given that all governments have a kind of flavour du jour that they want to put forward their aid to do particular policy goals, how do you set up your relationship with a recipient government so that you have a metric going in and a metric coming out? And are there occasions when you actually come to the point where you're saying this is not effective use of donor dollars?

Ms. Julia Gillard: I'll defer most of that to Dr. Mundy. I think she might want to make a comment, too, on our work in hot environments.

From the board perspective, I just did want to say this. We work with countries on this planning task of generating an education sector plan. Then for the low-income countries, that comes forward for consideration as to whether we would make a grant based on that plan. In order for us to say yes, we've got to see increasing domestic resources and we've got to see robustness in the plan. And there have been times when the board has been hard-headed enough to say the plan that is being brought before us isn't good enough and we won't make a grant based on this plan, so it's got to be done again with improved quality. So in that “going in”, to use your phrase, there is a willingness at GPE to be a very hard-headed about where we will invest funds and not do it against unsatisfactory planning processes.

Karen will be able to address the rest of the question.

Dr. Karen Mundy: I think the focus on aid effectiveness makes the most sense if it's partnered with a focus on development effectiveness. Development effectiveness requires country ownership, but it also requires country responsiveness to clear metrics and outcomes.

GPE introduced a results-based financing model in 2014 at its last replenishment and we're still learning how to use results-based financing as a lever and an incentive for developing country partners.

Every country receives a 30% tranche of its total allocation in a results-based form. That results-based form requires the country to select a clear metric in three areas: learning, equity, and efficiency. They must, then, report on that metric. It is validated by external validators and they receive a payment for that result.

We've only introduced it now in about one-third of the countries we work with. They have not yet reported on results, but I have every confidence that when countries do not achieve their result, if they do not achieve it, we will stand firm in the use of the results-based financing. We will not deliver the financing unless the result is achieved.

At the same time, we work very hard to encourage governments to select results that are attainable and to ensure that in their plan they've costed the right interventions to achieve the results they set out in their RBF. It's not in anyone's best interest not to deliver the

financing to governments, but what we want to do is help governments to become more focused on owning and delivering on results in their sector plans.

That's our model. It's perhaps unique. We had a scholar looking at our results-based financing model recently, and he said, “If I look across the wide range of organizations doing results-based financing, you're the only organization that is trying to leverage a whole system through results-based financing. You're not just targeting one item or one program and then paying for that result. You're actually trying to encourage a strong system. You are requiring governments to select indicators that will lift the entire system up.” So I think it's quite unique to us.

● (0935)

Hon. John McKay: I once attended a lecture by Bill Gates in Washington. He is not an inspiring speaker, shall we say, but on the other hand, his content is just amazing. He has two great initiatives: one, international health; and the second is education in the United States. To the great consternation of the education establishment in the United States, he has really shaken things up, because the outcomes of dollar per educated child are really poor in the United States.

I was wondering whether you had any association with the Gates foundation. There may be others, but at least they have done a lot of thinking about whether the application of dollars is actually effective.

Ms. Julia Gillard: We certainly have a relationship and exchanges with the Gates foundation. I think as recently as last week, Dr. Mundy was in dialogue with one of the specialists and technicians at the Gates foundation, so there is exchange of thinking and ideas.

The Gates foundation doesn't, at this stage, invest in education for development. The focus of their education work has been in the U.S. domestic education system, and of course they've been profoundly transformative in their investments and approach for AIDS and for vaccinations. The work that the Global Fund and Gavi do has been really transformed by Bill Gates and Melinda Gates becoming the kind of philanthropic donors and partners that they are today.

We do collaborate with both Gavi and the Global Fund because of this joined-up issue of health and education and everybody's increasing perceptions that we need to do more together. But there isn't co-operation with the Gates foundation on education for development directly, because the Gates foundation is currently not in the business of being a major donor or philanthropist or driver of change in the education for development space.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. McKay.

We'll go to Mr. Kent.

Hon. Peter Kent (Thornhill, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you for your presentation today and for the great work you do.

I have two basic questions. One, is there a GPE standard with your partner countries? I know that most of your focus is on primary and elementary education, but in respect of secondary school levers, do you have a GPE standard, or do you work to the standard of the partner country?

Second, my generation was relatively well educated without digital benefit, but the computer today is very much a reality in the developing world and certainly in the developed world. Do you have a digital dimension to your assistance, or is that something that would come from other funding agencies?

Ms. Julia Gillard: I'll answer the second question. On the issue of standard, I might call on Dr. Mundy.

Because our work is country-specific and country-led, the digital component differs from place to place and differs because of levels of development. In many of the countries in which we work, we're working with schools that do not have electricity, do not have connectivity, don't necessarily have running water, don't necessarily have bathroom facilities for children. So there's a limit. It doesn't mean that there is absolutely no difference that can be made by technology. Some of our teacher training and teacher support could still have a technology component, but they're not at the stage where you could conceptualize every child having a device and every device being serviced and used properly. Other countries are at different stages and they are very interested, particularly in dealing with challenges of remoteness in their own countries through leveraging the benefits of new technology. If that's appropriate and forms part of their education sector plan, then we would work with that as a key educational development.

• (0940)

Dr. Karen Mundy: I'd like to say a little bit about innovation, because in a way your question referred to innovation, as did the question about our work with the Gates foundation. As a partnership, this year we will be developing an innovation strategy, and one of the areas we are very interested in is the ability to leverage digital innovation, perhaps less at the level of the individual classroom and more at the level of the system. We think there are opportunities to digitize and to get information about service delivery. Is your teacher in the school or not in the school? For example, using SMS, we think there are opportunities for teacher education through digital formats.

When I met with the Gates foundation last week, we discussed some of the innovation areas where they are considering—they have not decided, but they are considering—investments in education. We discussed some of the areas where we might have a common interest in working on innovation.

GPE is a partnership-based organization very much focused on the core principle of development effectiveness, which is country ownership. We think it would not be appropriate to that core commitment to set an international standard and then impose it on countries. On the other hand, we believe that countries need to measure learning outcomes in order to track their own progress and, even more important, in order to target resources to those whose learning outcomes are weakest. Invariably, those are the children who are most marginalized. Those are girls. Those are children with disabilities.

Our goal in our sector planning process, which we support in our grants, is always to ensure that there is a good metric of outcomes for all children—not just the smartest children but all children—and that learning is the focus of those metrics.

Internationally, with SDG 4, we know that to measure outcomes against the SDG 4 goal there is going to have to be some kind of global learning measure. GPE partners with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics based in Montreal and supported generously by the Canadian government. It is developing a sophisticated way of ensuring some equivalency in the grade 5 or grade 6 test levels that are gradually growing across GPE partners so that we'll be able to say how effective an education system is against meeting a common learning-outcome target.

It will take a few years for the equivalency mechanism to be developed. In the meanwhile, GPE continues to encourage every country to test its students for learning outcomes, not so much as a stick, but more as an opportunity to look at how to target resources within their systems to achieve good outcomes for all children.

It will be an exciting day, I think, when every country has a nationally owned litmus test of the success of learning outcomes in its system and when those learning outcomes can be looked at for lessons in improvements across our partnership.

The Chair: We're going to run a little bit over time here, but not too much, and everybody will get a chance to ask their questions.

We'll go straight to Mr. Saini, and then to Mr. Kmiec.

Mr. Raj Saini (Kitchener Centre, Lib.): Thank you very much to both of you for your very important testimony today. It was a pleasure meeting both of you yesterday evening.

One thing about education that has been part of the main theme of your opening remarks and part of your questioning is the importance of education for women and girls. Part of that education also has to do with health education, when you're talking with young girls about sexual reproductive rights.

I'm sure you are aware of the 1984 Mexico City proposal—or the “global gag order”, which is the other way it's known—a policy that was initiated by Ronald Reagan. You have Republican presidents who institute that gag order, and then you have Democratic presidents who rescind it.

In the first few days of the Trump administration, you now have the imposition of that gag order again, but this time the gag order is more global in reach, which has affected aid organizations that are working, and that I'm sure in many cases are partnered with you. My question is, how will you be able to effectively conduct your work? Is there a problem with the partnerships that you formed on the ground? I'm sure that when you go into any fragile society, it's not just education, but also health, and you've integrated your systems with those health organizations. How is that going to affect your work going forward?

● (0945)

Ms. Julia Gillard: You raise an incredibly important issue. From the point of view of GPE, I don't see the recently issued executive order impacting our work, because, by the very model we've described to you today, we are not an organization that is funding an individual to go into a school to do education on sexual health and reproductive rights and potentially transmit information that would get them into trouble with the new executive order.

Our model is different, with a systems-wide approach and systems funding. We do know that keeping an adolescent girl in school is a protective factor against early marriage and early pregnancy. But while schooling is an important component, it's not the only component. Many of the organizations that do the other components—that actually offer direct advice to women and girls about their sexual health and managing their reproduction—will clearly be impacted by the approach of the new administration in the U.S.

GPE hasn't issued a formal statement on any of this, but as a personal observation, I think it's to be deeply regretted. I think the evidence is very clear that when women and girls can't access good-quality information, ultimately what you end up seeing is women dying as a result of early pregnancies or unmanaged sexual health questions. If they had the benefit of information, they would be able to make their own choices and avoid some of these very tragic outcomes.

Dr. Karen Mundy: I think that where we are making investments in sexual and reproductive health is in the literacy of the girls themselves so that they can access information. We do have some investments that touch on the development of a curriculum in social skills and life skills areas, but I don't think those investments would draw any scrutiny under this new gag order.

Mr. Raj Saini: The other point you raise, which I think is a very important point that is not spoken about too often, is the concept of the madrasah schools, which are being funded by very rich countries in parts of the world where education is most important, especially in rural or remote areas. When you go into a country, especially fragile countries like Malawi, Yemen, or Mali, how do you compete in that space?

You have education that is somewhat backward in that area, which is presented as being important for them. You come into a space where you want to provide education with numeracy and literacy. How do you compete in that space, especially with traditions and hierarchies that have a legacy behind them for many years, when you want to provide something that will change the structure, organization, and forward thinking of that community? What tools do you have? What skills do you use to show the people that what we're trying to do is far better and more progressive than what has been an establishment of the past, especially when the influence is from rich countries, specifically around that region?

● (0950)

Ms. Julia Gillard: Once again, this is a complex question. It does very much depend on the context and the attitude of the government.

To give you an example that I personally saw in Senegal, which is now a lower middle-income country, GPE has worked there with the government, and they have specifically in their education planning determined—I think they call them “darah” schools rather than

madrasah schools, but it's the same concept—that they will reach out to those schools and seek to regularize them in the system. If they are regularized in the system, they will qualify for some government funding.

In that context, my sense is that those schools were not so monied and resourced by outside interests that the government funding would be not attractive to them. The schools did want the government funding, so they were prepared to do the registration and compliance work that would get the funding. The lesson from that, I think, is that many of these questions are questions of political will, government regulation, and system structure, and they are the very things that, through the GPE approach, we work on.

In context, while some of these schools might be very well resourced, I do agree with you there is a competition-style problem, but at the end of the day, governments can regulate and structure systems, including systems for non-government schools.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Saini.

We'll go to Mr. Kmiec now.

Mr. Tom Kmiec (Calgary Shepard, CPC): Thanks to both of you for this presentation. It's been interesting to learn about what your organization does.

I was talking to my colleague, and one of the problems that all of you in international organizations have is that governments make commitments, and you expect them to follow through, with the funding to come at some point. I say that you're all in the collections business, because at some point you're going to come and ask for money, or what you've said publicly that you have to account for. As a former politician, you know that's the bane of our existence.

I was looking at your website. I am curious about the status of donor contributions. You have a document there which says that as of September 30, 2016, Canada's contribution is still outstanding. There is \$45.5 million U.S. outstanding. Is that still the case today? If it is, why is that? What are your plans going forward in terms of new contributions?

Ms. Julia Gillard: Canada, at our last replenishment, made a four-year commitment—that's my understanding—with monies being disbursed from Canada to us over the time period. Canada's contributions are being received on time and as expected.

Mr. Tom Kmiec: Can you talk more about this replenishment? Both of you have used the word “replenishment” at different times. How does that work? I notice that all of your donors are governments except for one foundation, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation. How does replenishment work? Could you explain this concept?

Ms. Julia Gillard: We have recently added some other philanthropic organizations that are supporting particularly the knowledge and technical exchange work that Dr. Mundy oversees. We'll have to make sure the website catches that.

The way replenishment works is that we do create a moment... For example, I know that Canada recently hosted the Global Fund's replenishment event. We do create a comparable global moment whereby we ask key partners to come forward and make pledges for our replenishment cycle for the years to come. At the 2014 replenishment, we had governments make pledges. We had developing country partners also pledge and indicate what they were going to do with their domestic resource mobilization. We did, at that replenishment event, receive a commitment from CIFF, the philanthropic organization that you've pointed to.

We've had a very good track record of governments honouring their commitments, so we haven't been in the unhappy circumstance where pledges have been made and people have let us down in large numbers. We have been able to program expenditure. We'll be looking to have hosted a replenishment event of that kind of dimension either late this year or early next year, and we'll be asking governments to make pledges.

The ability of governments to do that obviously varies. Some governments are able to make multi-year commitments, and Canada has done that. Some governments, because of their budget processes, are only able to make one-year commitments and give you an indicative figure for what they might be able to do in the year beyond. The U.S. tends to be in that situation because of the nature

of its budget processes. The maximum stability for us with the multi-year commitments is obviously very highly valued.

● (0955)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Kmiec.

Colleagues, I think we'll leave it there this morning. This has been a very interesting and helpful discussion.

Honourable Julia Gillard and Dr. Mundy, on behalf of the committee, thank you very much for this very helpful presentation.

Julia, most of us, of course, are politicians still working, and it's always nice to see an ex-prime minister doing great work. We very much appreciate your taking the time with us this morning.

Thank you very much on behalf of the committee.

Ms. Julia Gillard: Thank you very much for having us.

The Chair: Colleagues, we'll take a five-minute break and then we'll go in camera for three pieces of business. It shouldn't take us more than a half an hour.

Thank you.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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