



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

FEWO

•

NUMBER 019

•

1st SESSION

•

38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Thursday, February 17, 2005

—

Chair

Ms. Anita Neville

All parliamentary publications are available on the
``Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire'' at the following address:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca>

Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Thursday, February 17, 2005

• (1515)

[English]

The Chair (Ms. Anita Neville (Winnipeg South Centre, Lib.)): I think we'll begin.

I welcome everybody back once again, and I particularly want to welcome Rosaline and Sandra from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration. I appreciate your being here to take us further along this journey on gender-based analysis.

I want to advise the committee that CIDA was supposed to be here as well today, but the individual who was to make the presentation is ill. It seems to be an epidemic around here.

Let me welcome you. I do not know which one of you wants to lead off, but please go ahead.

[Translation]

Ms. Rosaline Frith (Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Direction and Communications, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Good afternoon, Madam Chair. My name is Rosaline Frith. I'm not feeling well, so I don't have much of a voice.

[English]

I hope I am past the contagious stage.

[Translation]

I thank you for giving me the opportunity to share information with you about gender-based analysis at Citizenship and Immigration Canada. I have with me today Sandra Harder, the Director of the Gender-Based Analysis Unit.

I understand that you have heard a fair bit about this work already.

[English]

I'd like to share with you today an overview of how we incorporate GBA into the daily work at CIC, which is what we call gender mainstreaming.

One of the objectives of our gender mainstreaming is to ensure that we fulfil our legislative requirement to provide an annual gender-based analysis of the impact of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in our report to Parliament.

CIC recognizes that the reporting requirement reflects a parliamentary concern for the increased accountability of departments in implementing equality commitments, including commitments to ensuring that policy and programs support progress toward equality between women and men.

I'll provide a short overview of our gender-based analysis in our department, including where the GBA unit sits organizationally in its mandate,

[Translation]

the mechanisms that ensure that policies and programs take the results of gender-based analysis into account.

[English]

the legislative requirement in IRPA, the strategic framework for gender-based analysis, and our training strategy. You've received a package of documents, and we hope you find that material useful.

[Translation]

It is available in both French and English, I hope.

[English]

I'll give you an overview of when and how the department began to implement GBA and I'll respond to some of the questions that you asked in particular.

The first question was, when did we implement it?

[Translation]

In 1999, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration made a commitment to include an analysis of this type before the passing of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

The department established the GBA Unit in 2000.

The GBA Unit did a preliminary gender-based analysis for bills C-31 and C-11 in 2001 in the form of a GBA chart, which was submitted to the standing committee.

A more detailed analysis of key areas was also done for the regulations supporting IRPA.

This analysis indicated where sex disaggregated data collection, monitoring and analysis would be required in order to assess gender-based impacts over time.

The IRPA included a legislative requirement to provide a "gender-based analysis of the impact of this Act" in its annual report to Parliament.

The second and third issues are the following:

[English]

Is there a unit within the department that is responsible for coordinating gender-based analysis, and where is this unit located? Is there a gender unit, and how have the human resources and budget allocated to that unit changed since 1995?

[Translation]

The GBA Unit in our department is located with Strategic Policy and Partnerships Branch, which is part of the Strategic Directions and Communications Sector.

The unit has two full-time employees: a director, Sandra Harder, a senior analyst, and currently a term junior analyst.

The unit became permanent in 2003 and includes two full-time equivalents. The positions were reclassified and made permanent.

• (1520)

In October 2004, a junior analyst position (term) was created due to an increased workload.

The unit is small, but it is the key decisive element for laying the foundations of analysis within the department. The analysts acquired in-depth knowledge of departmental activities and the challenges they had to meet.

Because of the legislative requirement to report and the adoption of branch GBA plans, the department will be assessing the need for further human resources as part of the implementation strategy for the strategic framework.

I will now look at the mandate of the unit.

[English]

The GBA unit provides ongoing analyses of gender-related implications of our departmental legislative initiatives and strategic directions, horizontal policy issues, and provides any emerging domestic and international trends from a gender perspective.

The unit develops tools to build capacity, to support the implementation of gender-based analysis across the department. This is done in part by delivering training programs that are specifically tailored to the departmental needs and to our branch needs.

The unit supports the department's branches in the development and implementation of branch GBA plans, as required. The unit also coordinates the gender-based analysis section of the report to Parliament and provides an annual internal stock-taking report on what we are doing in the department on gender-based analysis.

You asked about the mechanisms that are in place to ensure that the programs and policies throughout the department incorporate gender considerations. The legislative requirement to report to Parliament on the gender-based impact of IRPA is the primary mechanism to ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed. As you know, no other federal department has a legislative requirement to report to Parliament on gender-based analysis.

The strategic framework for gender-based analysis, which goes from 2005 to 2010, sets out the department's objectives and

principles for gender-based analysis as well as the concrete steps that will be taken in order to meet our legislative requirement.

A key initiative of the strategic framework is that our plans are intended to facilitate the integration of gender-based analysis in the work of the department in a practical, results-based manner that will aid in measuring performance and reinforce accountability at the branch level. According to their areas of responsibility, each branch will chart the issues to be reported on and put into place the elements necessary to undertake substantive analysis.

Each branch plan has common elements. It contains commitments to report on the area of responsibility under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. It contains the gender-based analysis initiatives to build best practices, the identification of data challenges in relation to sex-disaggregated data and work processes, and activities to build staff knowledge and confidence, including through training.

Our department anticipates that the quality of the reporting will increase each year and that eventually our department will be in a position to provide broader analyses of impacts of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act by gender.

Another issue is the inclusion of gender-based analysis in the legislative review process, which also continues to be an important mechanism for integrating GBA into the department's work. We do a lot of regulatory adjustments, and for every regulatory adjustment there is a GBA provided. We have to do a GBA before making any changes that are put forward for our legislation.

In looking at citizenship legislation, which is our next upcoming issue, we will do another gender-based analysis on any citizenship legislation that we put forward.

• (1525)

[Translation]

We now have a training strategy. This is another key element in the generalization of gender-based analysis.

There is training provided by the unit, there is documentation that contains examples taken from the departmental work guide, including three case studies. This is an opportunity to forge partnerships and to improve the department's abilities in terms of gender-based analysis.

The training started in 2001. We used status of women material at that time. We have since prepared material that was especially designed for our department. We have trained almost 150 employees, in both official languages.

The training methodology and documentation was designed as a wake-up call for departmental staff. This allowed us to increase the employees' experience and abilities. This also allowed us to arrive at a common understanding of gender-based analysis and to adopt a shared terminology. The people who had undergone the training were those most apt to turn to the unit for extra help in this domain. Therefore, the training brings about further training. This is very good.

[English]

On some of our lessons learned, the legislative requirement at Citizenship and Immigration Canada has played a critical role. Essentially, the requirement itself did not mainstream the gender-based analysis, but it created a very formal basis for gender-based analysis in the department.

At a departmental level, the gender mainstreaming required a much more strategic approach to the elements at hand. The issues and priorities differ across departments, and implementation needs to take that into account. GBA is a work in progress. The more we do it, the more we learn about it, and the better we become.

On some of the emerging and ongoing challenges, gender-based analysis is one of many factors that has to be balanced when we're developing policy or legislative proposals. In some cases, measures can be taken to mitigate differential impacts on men or women in our policies and programs. However, in other cases systemic discrimination and socio-economic barriers or other conditions pose special challenges and make it more difficult for us to make changes.

The strategic framework for GBA identifies an annual stock-taking process to consider progress made, challenges faced, and further opportunities. This annual report is intended as a management tool to be taken at the corporate level, and it facilitates gender-based analysis.

The strategic framework also states that our department will ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to enable the department to make progress in implementing the framework and meet its accountability requirements under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act.

Finally, is enough being done?

[Translation]

That is a good question, and one which is always difficult to answer. We can only speak on behalf of our department.

I believe that CIC has a strong record in implementing gender mainstreaming and that gender-based analysis is an important tool in that process. CIC is making practical, incremental but progressive steps. That being said, there is always room to do better, and there is always room to do more. However, I do feel that our system of continuing professional development will allow us to make progress, providing long-term results as well as immediately apparent improvements. The more onus we place on training, the more our program will be improved.

• (1530)

Allow me to provide you with some concrete examples. The work of our department involves four sectors and includes both national and international components.

When the legislation was being drafted, a preliminary analysis allowed us to identify the effects on men and women, and to determine which cases required sex-disaggregated data collection, monitoring or a more in-depth analysis. The results of the analysis of the bill and its regulations are available in tabular format on our departmental Web page.

I would now like to share with you four examples of subjects which are or have been subject to analysis. Firstly, there is the selection grid. When an individual makes a request to immigrate to Canada, we grant points for his or her ability to adapt to life in Canada, as well as for the level of education and previous experience acquired by the individual's partner in Canada. Previously, we only factored in the person who was making the application, in other words the principal applicant. Now, we also take into consideration the individual's partner. Both are considered.

Sponsorship and domestic violence are other subjects which have been reviewed. A few years ago, it was brought to our attention that a very long sponsorship period could have a negative effect on partners or the individuals being sponsored. As a result, the sponsorship period stipulated in the legislation has been reduced.

Furthermore, sponsorship is prohibited in cases of spousal violence and sexual assault. That is as a result of our analysis.

We are also currently reviewing the live-in caregiver program. Two weeks ago, if I remember correctly, we held a large round table on the issue of protecting those who come to Canada as live-in caregivers, the majority of whom are women. How can we protect them and ensure that they are not discriminated against as a group? Once again, our decision-making was guided by our gender-based analysis.

With your permission, I would now like to hand over to Sandra. She is going to go through the documents that we handed out to you. Afterwards, we would be delighted to answer any questions that you may have.

• (1535)

[English]

Ms. Sandra Harder (Director, Gender-Based Analysis, Strategic Policy and Partnership Branch, Department of Citizenship and Immigration): Thank you.

You have in front of you a package of information we've put together in order to give you some practical examples of how we have organized ourselves to do gender-based analysis at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.

Probably the fundamental document that guides us at this point is the strategic framework. It's a document we've put together as a result, clearly, of the reporting requirement. We recognized we needed a systematic and progressive way to implement the reporting requirement across the department, and that's what the strategic framework does. It provides the rationale and the approach we use for the reporting structure.

Rosaline indicated to you the pieces that are part of the strategic framework. I would draw your attention to the gender plans that are done for each branch in the department, because those plans are a practical application of how a branch is going to move forward on their requirement to report. As we said, there are a number of common elements in all of the branch plans, and it gives us some consistency across the department so we can take stock of where we are and how we're progressing.

I would say that's our guiding framework for the next five years, at which point we will subject it to a review and take stock of what progress we've made over that five-year period.

You also have in that package an excerpt from the annual report to Parliament, which provides some preliminary directions on our reporting. As Rosaline said, as we're moving through this cycle of using the strategic framework and as the legislation is in play for a longer period of time, more and more data becomes available for our analysis. It allows us to strengthen the kind of analytical work we do. It is very much an incremental process.

You also have in that package our working guide right now for the training manual we're developing for the department. That's just in process now; I think it's close to being ready to go to press.

You have an adaptation of the policy cycle we use. I won't spend too much time on that. I understand you had some training on GBA two days ago, so you're aware of some of the challenges of applying it in a practical way.

We've also included in this package three examples of case studies we use in our own training. When we develop our training sessions for people in the department, we use something like these case studies to get them to start thinking about how they would apply gender-based analysis. You have some examples there, and a couple of other exercises that are used in training are also attached.

In terms of a training strategy, I'll just say a couple of things. One is that in our early stages we used some of the work Status of Women Canada has done in laying the groundwork for doing gender-based analysis. What we've also learned over time is that it's really important to adapt that work so it resonates with your department, and that would probably be one of our huge lessons learned for all departments: you can't just apply a standard kind of format to training. You need to use concrete examples that work in your department, that address the business your department undertakes.

That's clearly one thing I would say; the other thing I would say is on the way we do training. It's a two-day training course and it's very much hands-on. Everybody gets involved in doing the analysis and in coming up with the final product. We do some of the training in-house with our own staff, but we have used the services of a trainer, the same one you had before you on Tuesday.

That's just to give you a bit of an overview of some of the work in our training and on the strategic framework.

• (1540)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

That was a comprehensive presentation and I think we all appreciate it.

We'll begin our rounds. Ms. Grewal.

Mrs. Nina Grewal (Fleetwood—Port Kells, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you for your presentations.

I have very simple questions to ask here. What is the role of the interdepartmental committee on gender-based analysis, who chairs

the interdepartmental committee on gender-based analysis, and how often does it meet? When was it created, does the IDC have a website to share information, and what is the seniority level of the members of the IDC? Do assistant deputy ministers or other senior officials attend the meetings? Could you describe trends in the composition and mandate of the interdepartmental committee on gender-based analysis over time? Are there any departments that have been active in the IDC on GBA but no longer participate? If so, could you suggest why this may be the case?

Ms. Sandra Harder: Those are questions that I think would be best addressed to Status of Women Canada. They chair the interdepartmental committee on gender-based analysis. The Department of Citizenship and Immigration is a member of the interdepartmental committee but we don't chair it, so you'd have to address those questions to Status of Women Canada.

I can certainly tell you we're an active member of the interdepartmental committee. We do participate in their meetings and have participated in joint sessions that have been held. But those questions would be the mandate of Status of Women Canada.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: As this committee continues to explore the use of gender-based analysis in federal government departments and agencies, could you suggest groups or individuals to invite as future witnesses on the subject of gender-based analysis?

Ms. Sandra Harder: If you're referring to the interdepartmental committee, I would say, again, that's a question for Status of Women Canada. We're simply a member of that committee; we don't chair it; we don't decide who has membership.

I can certainly tell you it's open to all departments across the federal government that take part in gender-based analysis. But in terms of decisions germane to that committee, that would be in the purview of Status of Women Canada.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madame Brunelle.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle (Trois-Rivières, BQ): Good morning, ladies. I am delighted to have the opportunity to meet you today.

You said that your department has accomplished significant achievements, which begs the question of what exactly you have achieved. You certainly grabbed my attention when you spoke about sponsorship and violence; I think that concrete examples really help us to understand an issue.

Could you share with us any other examples where gender-based analysis has provided interesting results?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: I will begin by giving you the example of the selection process. In the selection process, skilled immigrants who have a certain level of education and experience are given a certain number of points when they apply to immigrate to Canada.

Previously, we never considered the person as being part of a couple, as somebody who had a partner. After having carried out a gender-based analysis, we realized that this was unfair. Furthermore, in most instances, the woman's level of education was not taken into consideration.

We have changed our strategy and have decided that, in the future, the ability of the partner to adapt to life in Canada will be taken into consideration. Considering the two individuals as a couple has had a positive effect on families.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Are you saying that the more educated the partner, the easier his or her adaptation will be to the host country?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: Absolutely. For that reason, we take it into consideration.

We also ensured that the act's regulations took into consideration our responsibility to protect women and children from violence and recognized that violence is not acceptable in Canada. We must also ensure that the length of the sponsorship be reduced from ten years to three, because we know that, in most cases, relationships break down not in the first three years, but later on. By reducing the length of the sponsorship from ten to three years, we will avoid people having to put up with spousal abuse because they are worried that, if they admit that their relationship has broken down, their sponsorship will be cancelled and they will be returned to their own country. People are scared to admit that there is a problem, and so we are now studying this issue.

In the documentation which we hand out to new immigrants, it is stated that domestic violence is absolutely unacceptable in Canada. As a result of the analysis that we have carried out, we have been able to identify problems and take measures to improve the situation.

The live-in caregiver program is another example. Given that the majority of live-in caregivers are women, we believe it is necessary to protect them, not only when they arrive in Canada, but throughout the period that they work as live-in caregivers. There is a problem on this front, but I cannot yet offer a solution as we are in the process of not only studying our own analysis, but of examining it in conjunction with those which we carried out in-house through round tables. Work is currently underway to develop recommendations to improve the program in its entirety.

Our department also evaluates the risks faced by a person being returned to his or her country of origin. In the case of women, we now evaluate and take into consideration all types of risks. This is another area in which we have reviewed our approach.

• (1545)

[English]

Ms. Sandra Harder: As well, the welcome-to-Canada document we give to new arrivals as part of the integration and settlement material is, right now, undergoing a gender-based analysis. We're

looking at that kind of information to ensure it's consistent with the principles of gender equality.

I know, for example, it talks about women's rights in Canada, etc., so we're looking at it again, and it's under review at this time.

Ms. Rosaline Frith: One other really important thing to share with you is that we train our officers to be more sensitive. I was talking about pre-removal risk analysis; to make sure the officers doing that kind of analysis think about gender-related risk, we've put them through training to ensure they're aware of international guidelines on gender-related persecution—things like the risk of gender-related violence, such as rapes or dowry-related violence; laws that engender persecution; legally prohibited acts; sexual orientation; and trafficking questions—so it's not only just doing the work, but also training people in how they're doing their work.

• (1550)

The Chair: Thank you.

There will be another round.

Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder (Nanaimo—Cowichan, NDP): Thank you for your presentation.

I too am suffering from this flu that's going around, so forgive me.

I only have a quick question about your presentation. Under number six, on the emerging and ongoing challenges to the implementation of gender-based analysis, one of your points was: "In other cases, however, systemic discrimination, socio-economic barriers or other conditions pose special challenges." Maybe I'm not reading that right because of the state of my mind right now, but in many cases the conditions that you describe are often gender-related systemic discrimination. What are you getting at there? I'm not sure that I'm understand it in this context.

Ms. Sandra Harder: I think one of the things we were talking about there is related to the need to balance some of the program objectives with conditions in other countries and Canada's ability to have an impact on those conditions in other countries. So that would be, I think, the message we're getting at there.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Okay. Thanks.

You talked about integrating gender-based analysis into the way the department does business. What do you see as barriers to the full integration of incorporating GBA into the daily way the department conducts its business? I think many of us have experienced organizational change where it comes from the top and then down, but to truly integrate it so that it's done meaningfully, could you comment on what you see as possible barriers to that?

Ms. Sandra Harder: I'm happy to comment on that.

We took a deliberate approach at the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, which was not a heavy-handed, top-down approach. We took an approach that was based on building knowledge and listening to our colleagues, first of all, finding out what they do in their daily work and really targeting our training so that we addressed some of the issues that might come up that they wouldn't necessarily think about. We've really taken an approach that has been a kind of broad capacity-building and training approach.

At the same time, we acknowledged that sometimes you need to be able to respond to people when they ask why they should do this or whether they really have to do this. We acknowledged that we probably needed a document that said there are some accountability mechanisms and there is some accountability. We have made a public commitment to do this. Canada has signed on to certain international documents. We have the Charter of Rights. We have these things that give weight to what we're doing.

Essentially, it gives you better policy in the end. It gives you better public policy and it gives you better legislation. So instead of doing it this way or only this way, we've done this.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Is it built into people's performance review cycles?

Ms. Sandra Harder: No, not at this point.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Do you see that happening at some point?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: Well, it may not be built in directly, but it's indirectly built in. At the level of assistant deputy minister, you are responsible for administering all of the programs and all of the human resource values. Employment equity and gender-based analysis, all these issues make up part of it. Values and ethics are all part of it.

Personally, I report back on all of those issues and we talk about them. I think that Sandra said there's a bit of a double whammy where you had to have a legislative requirement, but we also had this thing about better knowledge. I can still remember when she first joined the department and we were first talking about gender-based analysis back in 1999. It was very clear to me then that most people didn't know what it meant. If you don't know what it means and you don't know how it applies to your policy area, it's really hard to implement.

It has taken time to have people with expertise in the department know how to do it and to talk to program managers who know their programs, start to make those links, and then say that they understand. It becomes part of your everyday management. Gender-based analysis is something you should be doing automatically, but it takes a lot of training and a lot of examples of real life before people start to think about it.

All of the branch plans are signed off by the director general of the branch. That makes them accountable for it, and then they indirectly report back to the assistant deputy minister. So I think there is an accountability mechanism there. It's a matter of learning and time.

• (1555)

The Chair: Ms. Bulte.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte (Parkdale—High Park, Lib.): Thank you very much.

Let me begin by commending you on the work you have done. I know one of the challenges we always have is to try to get our male colleagues to even understand the whole gender-based analysis without them rolling their eyes—of course, present company excluded, obviously.

I think what's important here and why it's important to do the gender-based analysis is to avoid unintended consequences. I think that's basically the message that needs to get out there.

Ms. Harder, I caught when you were saying that you were about to review, to do a gender-based analysis on some document. Should this gender-based analysis not take place prior to documents like that even being issued?

Ms. Sandra Harder: That's *Welcome to Canada*, a document that was first issued when...

Rosaline, you would know that.

Ms. Rosaline Frith: It was back in the early 1980s.

We've been doing *Welcome to Canada*. We have *Welcome to Canada* kits. We have brochures. I would think we've been very sensitive about making sure, and that's the difference.

In order to develop a *Welcome to Canada* kit, Citizenship and Immigration said they were going to go out and speak with Environment Canada, they were going to speak with the Department of Justice, they were going to speak with the Department of Indian Affairs, they were going to speak with all these different departments, and they were going to say to them, "What's the message that you want to give to a newcomer before they come to Canada and when they arrive on our doorstep? What are the special messages you want to deliver?"

Everybody would come back with different things, but some of the messages were very clear. Everybody agreed that you have to tell newcomers that they must obey Canadian laws—that when you come to Canada, you obey Canadian laws.

We said, "Okay, that goes without saying. Are there certain things that are special? Do you think some of the people coming to Canada will have customs about which somehow they don't even know they're not obeying the law, because those are inherent customs from their country of origin?" That's where we looked at things about family violence and we looked at different attitudes—for instance, men and women aren't equal everywhere.

So we went through those things, and we came up with the kinds of statements that we felt we should put in those documents. But it was put in as a matter of respecting the laws of Canada, not because we'd done a gender-based analysis.

So I think it's very interesting now, taking a different lens and going back and looking at those documents again and saying, "Okay, through a gender-based analysis lens, do we have it right? Do we need to improve it or not?"

I would not make the assumption that there will be major changes. I would start from the assumption that they may come back and say, "Oh, that's not bad. You did a good job." But they might come back and say, "Hey, you know what? You didn't think about it from this little bit different angle. Fix it." That will be good.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I think, Ms. Frith, what you're saying is really important. How do we get people to do this before legislation is passed?

When I first came here in 1997, the finance department wanted to pass a seniors tax benefit. It had huge ramifications for senior women, yet nobody had looked at it. I remember the Liberal women's caucus at that time really taking the finance minister, who is now the Prime Minister, to task, and it didn't go through.

I guess the other challenge we have is how to ensure that this analysis is done before the budget and not after the budget, because things tend to happen after. I wonder if you could help us. How do we move that agenda forward?

It's one thing to do it after the fact, but as legislators, how do we get the sort of paradigm shift that it must be done prior to that fact? What can we do?

• (1600)

Ms. Rosaline Frith: There are a lot of things that we do on an ongoing basis. In the federal government, when we're preparing a memorandum to cabinet on a particular issue and we're doing our policy analysis, we look at issues around sustainable development. We look at issues around employment equity. We look at issues around gender-based analysis. That should be part and parcel of any policy or program development, and in the case of our legislation, it's a legal responsibility. So we don't do any legislation in our department or any regulations without doing a gender-based analysis, which to me means before you ever get to regulations.

We're working on policy documents, so we're sitting and having policy discussions, which is why we have said that all our policy officers need to have gender-based analysis training so that it becomes an integral part to the way they're doing business throughout.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I have just one quick, last question with respect to research, if I may.

When we were being told by the trainers how the gender-based analysis is done, they talked about getting the research. One of the things that came up again was the lack of disaggregated data. Have you overcome that? What have you done or what are you doing to ensure that the data exists?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: To a certain degree, it may have been a problem in the past. It's not a problem today. Certainly in collecting all of our data on immigrants and newcomers to Canada, we collect it all by gender. We know the number of men, the number of women, and the number children. We collect all of that information.

I do know we had a little difficulty on the citizenship side at one point. We were never really separating out and counting the number of men versus the number of women, we were just counting how many people were becoming citizens. We're now making sure that all of the information we are collecting is easily analyzed by gender.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: How long have you been doing that now?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: Probably seven or eight years.

Ms. Sandra Harder: Just to amplify that a little bit, I would just add that it's not just enough to collect the data by gender. You have to make sure people know how to use it by gender and how to use it as part of their analytical skills. That's one of the things we incorporate into the gender-based analysis training. It's something we work on fairly closely with our research branch, developing opportunities for people to know how to use that data.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Grewal.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Thank you.

How do the gender-based analysis methodologies and tools used in your department incorporate the differences between different types of groups of women, such as new immigrant women, aboriginal women, and women with disabilities?

Ms. Sandra Harder: We've adopted an approach in gender-based analysis that I would say is consistent across all departments that do actual GBA. We don't just analyze only on the basis of a gender distinction, men or women, we also say that not all men and not all women are the same. There are differences within and among women and differences within and among groups of men, and you need to take some of those dimensions into account as well.

Specifically, we look at things like country of origin, age, probably education level, and those kinds of things. We take that approach into account when we're doing the training as well.

• (1605)

Mrs. Nina Grewal: Could you identify emerging and ongoing challenges to the implementation of gender-based analysis across federal government departments and agencies?

Ms. Sandra Harder: That is probably a better question for Status of Women Canada. We can only speak about Citizenship and Immigration.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Powers.

Mr. Russ Powers (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, Lib.): My questions are mostly administrative, but I'd like to commend you for your presentation. I can say that I can almost support legislating GBA into all of the departments if this is any indication.

You're basically in your fifth year of moving forward with your programming. When did you actually, really get into what you would consider full force?

Ms. Sandra Harder: I would say it took us probably a year and a half to two years to get our training—and I'm looking at my senior analyst, who is really the lead charge on our training strategy. It has probably taken us about two years to get material organized and for us to know exactly the kinds of business and issues involved.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is a really complicated department, as I'm sure all departments are. The programs are complex, the issues are complex, and the legislation is difficult, so it took us a while to feel fully proficient in that as well, but we listened a lot to our colleagues.

Mr. Russ Powers: Can you help to take me through the magnitude of the tasks you had, assuming it was probably about 2001—into 2002, really—when you got on stream? From an overall staffing standpoint for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, what's the size and the number of divisions you have?

Ms. Sandra Harder: For the entire department?

Mr. Russ Powers: Yes.

Ms. Rosaline Frith: The entire department, back then, was close to 5,000 people, but you realize we were split recently, so we're back down to about 3,000.

What you're talking about is a small unit. You're talking about three people—

Mr. Russ Powers: I want to put into perspective the task in hand—in other words, the number of you people who are dealing with the magnitude of the task within your departments. I'll take you through the questions, if you can do that, then.

So the size is about 3,000; how many divisions do you have?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: How many divisions? We've got—we're divided, first of all. You've got headquarters, and then you've got domestic regions and international regions. So you've got Atlantic region, Quebec region, Ontario region, prairies, British Columbia, and Yukon.

You've got the international region. You've got a selection branch, an integration branch, a refugees branch, an admissibility branch, and a strategy policy branch. Then you have your corporate delivery area, so you would have finance branch, communications, planning... I don't know—research.

We probably have, let's say, at least 15 major units, and then another 10.

Mr. Russ Powers: So the institution of GBA is a part of... everything, now?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: Every branch has to have a branch plan, meaning that in headquarters, for instance, the selection branch responsible for the points system for skilled people would have to have a plan. Integration branch, responsible for all the settlement programs and all the citizenship administration—they all have to have a plan. Refugees branch, responsible for all protection issues, would have to have it. So it is every branch level.

Ms. Sandra Harder: I would just add that, because it is a new strategic framework and a new initiative, we have had to take an incremental approach with the reporting requirement. We are only two or three people, so we have developed our strategy branch by

branch. I would say the full branch plan may be for all branches to be fully up and running in, probably, another year.

• (1610)

Mr. Russ Powers: That's fine. I have absolutely no criticism whatever. I am being very positive.

What would be the volume? What's the volume of work you're doing now, as a result of all the plans in place and all the areas you have now? I would imagine it would be...

Ms. Rosaline Frith: It's a fair amount of work. If I were to look at it from a branch perspective, if I put on the hat I wore when I was the DG... I was responsible for the Citizenship Act. We were trying to get a new act in place; that meant we had to do a gender-based analysis of the act. We have integration programs, so we had all kinds of settlement programs—language training, orientation. For every single one of those programs, we thought about gender-based analysis. We had several people within the branch who needed training, and then they spent a lot of time with Sandra's people, trying to learn how to use that training for the types of programs they dealt with.

I wouldn't want to... take one FTE out of a branch of 80-odd people. I don't know. It may have worked out to be that, but it was a little bit of time from every single policy officer, because we took the approach that anyone who's working on policy and programs has to think about gender-based analysis.

Mr. Russ Powers: And I think that's the key element. Now GBA is an accepted and integral part of everything you do; you think GBA when you think of the task at hand. It potentially makes it that much easier.

Ms. Sandra Harder: I would just say this about one of the things we've done. We have a small unit, admittedly, and our approach has been to support the work of other branches, not to take it on. It's not for us to do their work for them but to train them up so they're familiar and comfortable with it. Then we are there when they call and say, you know, we're not sure if there's something in here, but can you take a look at this and let us know if we're on the right track? We provide that kind of ongoing analytical support to them to the extent we can.

Mr. Russ Powers: Thank you, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Madam Brunelle, you have the floor.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I will continue with the same line of questioning. I am also a member of the Sub-Committee on Solicitation Laws. We have the impression that a certain number of prostitutes are being sponsored as live-in caregivers or foreign spouses as a means of entering Canada. This theory has not been substantiated, and is therefore simply a hypothesis.

Would your analysis provide us with data to better understand the situation? If not, how could we go about mandating your department to carry out such analysis, if it is a problem which we wish to explore? How should we proceed?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: That is an excellent question. We could certainly check whether we have data available. There will be no data to tell us whether a given number of prostitutes have entered Canada, because, under the existing system, prostitutes are not admitted into the country. That is something which we try to avoid.

Are we allowing in certain categories of people who potentially are prostitutes? That is a possibility. That is always a possibility. We have category-based data on the number of people entering Canada. We know how many women and how many men enter Canada. That data is available to us.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: You might know, for example, that 5,000 women have entered Canada as live-in caregivers, although there are only 1,000 positions available. In such an example, would it then be possible to determine whether the women are always being sponsored by the same network? It could well be that there are networks in operation. Would it be possible to find that out? Would it be possible to obtain data on this?

• (1615)

Ms. Rosaline Frith: From time to time, if we feel that something is awry, we carry out studies. For example, when somebody who has been sponsored as a live-in caregiver arrives in Canada will all the requisite documents to prove that it is a legitimate sponsorship, we know that somebody has requested the right to sponsor a live-in caregiver. If the same person persistently asks to sponsor a live-in caregiver, we will challenge them straightaway.

It is always possible to carry out specific research. That is something which we do from time to time when we feel that there is something which requires our particular attention.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Your department is the one to speak to when there are serious grounds to...

Ms. Rosaline Frith: Yes.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: There must be people whom you lose track of and who become illegal immigrants. We have heard of women who, having been contacted via the Internet or otherwise, enter Canada on the grounds that they are to be married, only to end up in a prostitution network. In such cases, they have no choice but to go underground.

Ms. Rosaline Frith: In such cases, we still take into consideration the criteria for entering Canada. Immigrants to Canada are classified according to different categories; some are skilled workers, for example; some come for family reunification reasons; and others come as temporary workers.

There are certain requirements for each category. As far as is possible, the department endeavours to ensure that these requirements be respected. It is possible that, from time to time, some people slip through the net. In such instances, should it be drawn to the department's attention, we can always check the person's file and carry out research, but we can also call upon the RCMP or request help to study the situation.

Ms. Paule Brunelle: Has gender-based analysis allowed you to detect and remedy this sort of problem more easily? Is the system that advanced?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: Thus far, gender-based analysis has allowed us to avoid doing certain things which could have resulted in such a

situation, but I do not think that it has allowed us to detect such problems.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I just have a really quick question around the accountability and timeframe processes. According to this note in the 2004 annual report to Parliament, this was just generally outlined in the process you were following, so you won't actually make a more detailed report until the 2005 report to Parliament. Is there a process to include some of the non-governmental organizations by getting their comments around the effectiveness of the GBA?

Ms. Sandra Harder: We have actually worked with the Canadian Council for Refugees. They've seen our strategic framework, and we do talk to them on a fairly regular basis at their meetings about the progress we've been making on gender-based analysis.

We haven't had any, I would say, formal consultations with non-governmental organizations on GBA, but certainly we monitor their input. It was actually the Canadian Council for Refugees that was very supportive of the implementation of the unit, and they follow us.

Ms. Jean Crowder: CIC did not come up specifically as an example of how not to do gender-based analysis by any stretch of the imagination. I know a number of the NGOs that came before us expressed concerns about lip service being paid to GBA, but I wouldn't argue that this was the case here.

I was just curious. There isn't a formal process, then, to include NGOs.

• (1620)

Ms. Sandra Harder: We haven't undertaken a formal consultation with non-governmental organizations on this issue. Our department consults with non-governmental organizations on all kinds of issues, and certainly the gender dimensions are part of that.

When we did consultations on IRPA we at the GBA unit contributed the names of a number of organizations we thought should be brought into that consultation process. When other branches in the department are undertaking consultations, we may make suggestions and tell them they should talk to this organization or make sure they include some discussions, etc. We've certainly done it that way.

Ms. Jean Crowder: I assume that part of what you do is that you look at new and emerging legislation and regulations. Is there a mechanism to go back and look at what's already in place?

The caregiver program doesn't reside under CIC, does it?

Ms. Sandra Harder: There are all kinds of issues with that particular program, the live-in caregivers.

Ms. Rosaline Frith: The live-in caregiver program is one of the programs that in fact is being reviewed right now and one at which we are looking through a GBA lens; that's underway.

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act came into effect in 2002, so it is relatively recent. It was developed with a GBA lens and will continue to be annually reported on through a GBA lens, so that's under way.

The Citizenship Act is an old act, from 1977. My God, we're getting on to almost 30 years. When I started I kept saying it was 25 years old and we needed to modernize it; we still haven't modernized it. But every time we work on a new bill, I can assure you, we do it through a GBA lens.

Even though the old act was not put in place with a GBA lens, what has happened over time is that there have been court decisions that have looked at discrimination and made sure the law does not discriminate, forcing the department to deal differently. There has also been just the ongoing review that has led us to collect data differently and do our work differently, so I would say that in our department all of our programs have undergone the scrutiny of GBA.

Ms. Sandra Harder: I would just add that one of the things that puts CIC in a unique position is that the GBA unit is part of the strategic policy branch. That's a branch and a shop that has a pretty good handle on things that are going on across the department. It gives us a certain vantage point we mightn't have if we weren't co-located with them, which allows us to know what the emerging issues are and what issues we should be following.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Ms. Grewal.

Mrs. Nina Grewal: What is the cost involved for Citizenship and Immigration Canada to use GBA? What was the driving force to voluntarily apply gender-based analysis to policies and programs? Do you share strategies with other departments concerning your success or failures in using GBA? Does Citizenship and Immigration Canada receive any funding from Status of Women Canada to help with GBA?

Ms. Rosaline Frith: The only direct charge for GBA is the unit, and there are about three people working in that unit. It's the salary dollars associated with three full-time staff.

Ms. Sandra Harder: We don't get any money from Status of Women Canada for our activities at all. It's all internal to CIC.

• (1625)

Ms. Rosaline Frith: All other costs related to gender-based analysis are absorbed by the various programs and the branches. There would never be an amount that would show in our bookkeeping as gender-based analysis, other than for the small unit.

There will be some training costs involved across the department. I'm afraid I can't give you the numbers for the training, and I don't know whether we would even keep a separate record of it. I'd have to check whether we keep records of it separately. We keep training costs overall, but I don't know if we would keep it separately for the GBA. Our attitude has been that it's part of our ongoing business, and it's just incorporated as part of the ongoing business, except for the small unit of experts.

Do we share best practices? I think that's what comes back to your interdepartmental group. The interdepartmental group is the perfect opportunity for Sandra and her team to be sharing their experiences and to let others know what we're doing. We certainly do share our

experiences. We also share our experiences with central agencies when people come to ask us what we're doing and how we're doing it. We've always been prepared to help others and move the file forward.

The Chair: Thank you.

I'm going to open it up to see if anybody who hasn't spoken would like to ask any questions or make comments.

Ms. Kadis.

Mrs. Susan Kadis (Thornhill, Lib.): Madam Chair, briefly on a point raised by Mr. Powers, we've talked a lot in this committee over a period of time regarding the importance of reporting, accountability, etc., and the optional versus the mandated GBA, or whatever program it is, and the outcomes. Obviously you're mandated or legislated to do this. Do you feel that other departments should be reporting and have a reporting mechanism to Parliament, or should it stay the way it is now? I believe it's through Status of Women Canada that there's an annual report currently.

Ms. Rosaline Frith: I will be a very good public servant and not answer that question as asked. What I will say is that I think it's important to note that we were doing gender-based analysis in the department before it was mandated, before it became a legal requirement. We were doing gender-based analysis because we had a minister who believed in gender-based analysis and who told us we should be doing it. I think it takes a very strong leadership at a very senior level in the department, and if you have strong leadership then you're going to do it.

I think in the long run Citizenship and Immigration Canada has been blessed by having it in our legislation, because it means we absolutely have to do an annual report. Once you have the annual report, then you have that formal accountability and it then becomes like any of the other things where we have a formal accountability. We have a formal accountability on employment equity: we know we're going to report on it. We have a list of things we know we will do; then that list automatically becomes part of the deputy minister's way of evaluating our performance. Each ADM then goes to the director general level and below, and it becomes part of how you do things. So it's been a good thing.

The Chair: Ms. Bulte.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I have a quick question to follow up on Mrs. Kadis.

When you said you had a minister who believed in this, correct me on the dates if I'm wrong, but didn't government, in about 2000, develop a whole action plan on gender equality, and wasn't gender-based analysis one of the items as part of that action plan on gender equality? Were you doing this in light of that, or was this done even before?

Ms. Sandra Harder: That report was part of Canada's report on Beijing. The first initiative in that report was to implement gender-based analysis. They were almost in tandem.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: I thought I had read something somewhere, that's why.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any other questions or comments before we finish this portion of the meeting?

Then let me say thank you. Thank you for getting out of your sick bed. We certainly appreciate it, and we appreciate both of your presentations today. I think you've given us lots of good information.

Moving forward, Ms. Crowder, do you want to proceed with your notice of motion today?

• (1630)

Ms. Jean Crowder: Thank you.

I submitted a notice of motion that the Standing Committee on the Status of Women call on officials from the Department of Justice to appear before the committee and answer questions on the government's response to the pay equity task force final report 2004.

The reason I brought that forward was that I believe it was two meetings ago that somebody from Status of Women Canada talked about the fact that some work was going on around this pay equity report. I just thought it would be appropriate for the committee to be brought up to speed on the status of the report that was tabled back in May 2004, with a number of good recommendations. It was a report that was commissioned by the government.

The Chair: Thank you.

Are there any comments?

Ms. Bulte.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Yes. I'd like to speak to the motion, if I may.

First of all, as a new member on this committee I want to commend you, Ms. Crowder, for bringing this motion in the first place. I believe this government is committed very much to pay equity. That's why the Minister of Labour as well as the Minister of Justice—because they both share responsibility for pay equity—requested the report.

Now, one of the things that did happen when the report was released is there was a news release where they again acknowledged their commitment to pay equity, that it is a conflict issue, and they also advised that justice officials would be consulting with stakeholders all across Canada.

You also know, if you've looked at the report, Ms. Crowder, that it has 113 recommendations. One of the things they did say with the news release is that they wanted to analyze the recommendations, all 113 of them. They wanted to consult with stakeholders, both through the private and public sector, and they wanted to have interdepartmental consultations in this area.

Now, I have been advised that the government is continuing to review these recommendations and is still continuing in its consultations with public and private sector stakeholders in this area, and that there is still no official response to this document.

Again, as a new member, I guess I have a couple of questions, and maybe you could help me here.

Was this a report that was indeed tabled in Parliament, or was it just released? I guess that's the question.

Ms. Jean Crowder: It was released as far as I know.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Okay. Because one of the things we did in another committee, where a report was tabled before the House dissolved, is we retabled it. I was going to suggest, if it was actually tabled in Parliament, we could retable it. But you're saying it wasn't; it was just released.

I guess the position of Justice in this area is that they feel it wouldn't be appropriate at this time because they're in the process of conducting these consultations and looking at all these recommendations, and they haven't come to a conclusion. We might prejudice the outcome if we proceeded at this time.

So maybe there's another way we could work on this, as opposed to having the officials... That's the only thing the government is concerned about.

The Chair: Let me just check if there's anybody else.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich (Blackstrap, CPC): I will agree. I think that probably the jury is still out. It's no use having them come. They would not be prepared, probably, to answer questions on behalf of the justice department. I think we have a lot of work ahead of us, so I think that one could be deferred.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Crowder, let me just check.

Does anybody else want to comment?

Paddy.

Hon. Paddy Torsney (Burlington, Lib.): I did wonder if we could get some clarification from the clerk, though.

Is this one of the reports that's in the House? And what happens after it's prorogued? Do you still have 180 days?

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Richard Rumas): It's 150 days.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: I keep getting the wrong number.

The Clerk: It's normally 150 days on the government response. But this was a task force and not a government—

Hon. Paddy Torsney: So they did table it in the House?

The Clerk: It was tabled by the minister.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: Okay.

The Chair: Madame Brunelle.

[Translation]

Ms. Paule Brunelle: I think that it would be a good idea to invite government representatives to appear before the committee, in order to show that this committee is firmly committed to taking action on gender mainstreaming.

In Quebec, for example, pay equity was won after a long struggle which lasted some 15 years.

There is no doubt that this committee aspires to see both pay equity and gender equity. If representatives from the Department of Justice are not prepared to act, we must find a means to communicate to the government this committee's willingness to work on the issue of pay equity. As parliamentarians and as women, we must send out a clear message to women across Canada, who have high expectations of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women. Women must know that the Standing Committee on the Status of Women exists, that it understands their expectations concerning pay equity, and that it intends to take action. It is not a matter of putting people in a difficult situation, or trying to back them against the wall, but, rather, it is a matter of sending out a clear message.

• (1635)

[English]

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: Ms. Brunelle, I couldn't agree with you more. We are committed to pay equity.

I was a pioneer in the seventies when we didn't have pay equity, so I have lived through this.

I don't disagree with what you are saying, and it is important to take a strong message to the government and to the people of Canada that we are deeply committed. My concern is that it may not be the way to do it, through this report, which is very comprehensive with its diverging views of major stakeholders, and I don't want to prejudice the outcome and the careful consideration that must be done at this time until everybody has been consulted in this area.

I know government runs slowly, but we're not even a year in that area. We had an election in between. Maybe we could do it another way, just by a motion or by the consensus of this committee that feels strongly about pay equity, and we move forward and we ask the justice officials or labour and justice to continue to work aggressively on this report, just to show something positive. I just don't want the process to be hurt in this. That's my only concern.

The Chair: Ms. Crowder.

Ms. Jean Crowder: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My intent certainly was not to interfere with any process. I think the feedback that many of us have certainly heard from the NGO community is that they don't see any action on this. And if the consultations are happening, it's a challenge for people to find out how they are being included in those consultations. So I think what would be really helpful for many of us is to understand more formally what that process looks like and how people can access it.

So I think it wasn't so much about getting definitive answers on what part of the report was going to be implemented, if any, or anything like that. It's this. What does the process look like? What does the timetable look like? How do people get involved? What does the access look like? So it was those kinds of issues.

I think it would be really important for people to have that information so that it's not another report that languishes somewhere in purgatory.

The Chair: Thank you.

I have Ms. Torsney and then Ms. Minna.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: Can I make a suggestion? I don't actually have a copy of this report.

A voice: I do.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: I don't know about anybody else, but I wonder if you could get copies for every member.

And I don't know if the Library of Parliament has done any research, Julie, on the report.

Maybe that's the first step in terms of then figuring out if we want to go somewhere from there. And then maybe the chair could undertake to speak to some of the officials who are working on it and figure out if there are points of opportunity. Certainly if there is opportunity for us to input, let's be part of that process, because I'm fairly certain that everybody around the table does believe in pay equity—since we're some of the few Canadians who actually get pay equity.

So is it possible that we can figure out if the library has done anything on it yet?

The Clerk: I'll get copies for everyone.

The Chair: Do you wish to respond?

Ms. Jean Crowder: I would be prepared to table the motion if we could agree on a date we would bring it back.

Hon. Sarmite Bulte: As Ms. Torsney said, why don't we let our researchers do some work on that. We would get it and examine it, and then we could look at the reality. Again, I'm not trying to stop this. Let's bring it back after our researchers have looked at it to see what might be a possible process. Could we do that, Ms. Crowder?

• (1640)

Ms. Jean Crowder: I'm happy with that.

The Chair: Ms. Minna.

Hon. Maria Minna (Beaches—East York, Lib.): As a follow-up to Ms. Crowder's comment with regard to how the consultation is being done, who has been called, who has participated, and how they are communicating, the whole process, I was going to suggest that the clerk's office could get that information for us and hand it out to the committee members so that we can see what the process is. There may be suggestions to improve it and to include groups who have been left out.

The Chair: We could become part of that.

Hon. Maria Minna: We should be part of that process. I don't see why we couldn't be.

Mrs. Lynne Yelich: Our first witnesses can be those poor Newfoundland people who didn't get pay equity. Then we could really start with a case in point.

The Chair: Are you withdrawing or tabling the motion?

Ms. Jean Crowder: I'm tabling it.

The Chair: Is everybody in agreement, pending the research that the parliamentary library, through Julie, will undertake?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Hon. Paddy Torsney: Could we make a note to revisit this on March 8, which is International Women's Day?

An hon. member: That would be perfect.

The meeting is adjourned.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

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

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

**Also available on the Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire at the following address:
Aussi disponible sur le réseau électronique « Parliamentary Internet Parlementaire » à l'adresse suivante :
<http://www.parl.gc.ca>**

The Speaker of the House hereby grants permission to reproduce this document, in whole or in part, for use in schools and for other purposes such as private study, research, criticism, review or newspaper summary. Any commercial or other use or reproduction of this publication requires the express prior written authorization of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Le Président de la Chambre des communes accorde, par la présente, l'autorisation de reproduire la totalité ou une partie de ce document à des fins éducatives et à des fins d'étude privée, de recherche, de critique, de compte rendu ou en vue d'en préparer un résumé de journal. Toute reproduction de ce document à des fins commerciales ou autres nécessite l'obtention au préalable d'une autorisation écrite du Président.