



House of Commons
CANADA

Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

FAAE • NUMBER 004 • 1st SESSION • 38th PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

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Chair

Mr. Bernard Patry

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Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

• (1535)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.)):
Good morning.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are considering the humanitarian situation in Haiti and the Caribbean.

[Translation]

Our witnesses today are from the Canadian International Development Agency: Guillermo Rishchynski, Vice-President, Americas Branch,

[English]

and Ms. Catherine Bragg, director general of humanitarian assistance, peace and security, multilateral programs branch.

[Translation]

We also have Yves Pétillon, Program Director, Haiti, Cuba and Dominican Republic, Americas Branch. Thank you for coming before the committee today.

[English]

We'll start with Mr. Rishchynski, please.

[Translation]

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski (Vice-President, Americas Branch, Canadian International Development Agency): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, members of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, for having invited us this afternoon to share with you the experience of the Canadian International Development Agency in responding to the humanitarian situation in Haiti and the Caribbean over the last few months.

I appear before you today as Vice-President of the Americas Branch, responsible for our agency bilateral program in the Caribbean. With me today are Ms. Catherine Bragg, Director General, Humanitarian Assistance who manages all of humanitarian aid efforts, and Mr. Yves Pétillon, Director of the Haiti program and responsible for all bilateral cooperation between Canada and Haiti.

[English]

For us at the agency to focus our efforts on what has transpired in the Caribbean, you have both multilateral and bilateral representatives from CIDA, because when there are instances like the hurricanes that hit the Caribbean, the Canadian response is done in

two parts. The first part, and the most immediate response to disasters of this type, is through our multilateral programs branch represented by Madam Bragg. It is in charge of humanitarian assistance, the initial assistance done in response to international appeals for aid following a disaster. On the bilateral side, the side that Monsieur Pétillon and I work on at CIDA, we are involved in the efforts of long-term reconstruction.

[Translation]

Canada's interventions have been on two fronts: the first, responding rapidly to emergency situations with rapid and visible actions in support of the Haitian population. Canada's recent contributions and commitment to reconstruction following hurricanes Ivan and Jeanne are an example of a quick response in a short time. I will come back to this example in a few minutes.

At the same time, we must intervene and support essential activities from a sustainable development perspective. We are supporting reconstruction efforts through the bilateral sector of our program for Haiti and the Caribbean.

[English]

It seems, Mr. Chairman, almost unjust that a region as fragile and as poor as the Caribbean was touched this past hurricane season by storms of the magnitude of Ivan and Jeanne. We at CIDA did our level best to respond to the needs of the populations touched by these storms. What I would like to do, with your permission, sir, is to allow Madam Bragg to tell you about the humanitarian response in the first instance to the tragedies in Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, and other islands of the Caribbean, and then return to a discussion of the long-term reconstruction effort we are involved in.

Without further ado, and with your permission, Madam Bragg.

Ms. Catherine Bragg (Director General, Humanitarian Assistance, Peace and Security, Multilateral Programs Branch, Canadian International Development Agency): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the standing committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the humanitarian situation, and CIDA's response in Haiti and the neighbouring countries to the recent natural disasters. The multilateral programs branch of CIDA has worked closely with CIDA's Americas branch in its response to ensure a coordinated and complementary response. My branch also works with the agencies of the United Nations,

• (1540)

[Translation]

the Red Cross and Canadian NGOs in responding to disasters.

Before commencing my presentation, I would like to—

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): What document are you referring to? Is it the one that begins with "Thank you, Mr. Rishchynski"?

Ms. Catherine Bragg: Yes. We have made a few small changes.

Before commencing my presentation, I would like to ensure that our appreciation for the work of our partners in responding to these natural disasters appears on the record.

I would like to begin my testimony by reviewing the impact of hurricane Ivan and tropical storm Jeanne, then update the committee on the current humanitarian situation in the most affected areas where we have programs, and finally provide an overview of the humanitarian assistance provided by Multilateral Programs Branch.

[English]

Hurricane Ivan strengthened quickly to a category four storm as it made a direct hit on Grenada on September 7, 2004. It continued its course through the Caribbean, causing further devastation and destruction in Jamaica and Cuba.

Grenada was most severely affected; 37 people were killed and 352 injured. Of the total population of approximately 100,000 people, more than half, that is 60,000, were left homeless. In Jamaica, 17 people were killed and some 25,000 people were seriously affected. Cuba also suffered serious damage to homes, infrastructure, and livelihood on the western tip of the island.

Tropical Storm Jeanne initially made landfall as a category one hurricane in the Dominican Republic on September 15. It lost strength as it crossed the island, and was only a tropical storm as it crossed Haiti. However, flooding caused severe devastation in Haiti. My colleague will mention some of the extent of the devastation in terms of the 3,000 people who died and the approximately 300,000 people who were affected by Tropical Storm Jeanne.

The humanitarian response phase has moved quickly to the reconstruction phase in counties affected by Hurricane Ivan. In Grenada, for example, the Pan American Health Organization reported that as of October 8, almost 89% of health care services were restored. Water supply was also quickly restored. No epidemics have been reported. Of course, the island faces a long road to reconstruction.

In Jamaica, three weeks after the disaster, while several hundred people remained in public shelter and power supply still was not completely restored, the International Federation of Red Cross was able to report completion of the emergency phase of the operation.

In Haiti, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported on October 19 that while more than 2,500 families still require shelters, the immediate relief phase of the emergency situation related to the floods was over. At that time the entire population of Gonaïves received two weeks' rations.

The Canadian and Norwegian Red Cross set up a 150-bed field hospital to replace the main referral hospital. The water supply situation was reported as being relatively good, with 20 water points set up in the city.

The security problems throughout Haiti are a serious concern and pose a constraint on humanitarian assistance operations. The recent upsurge in violence has led several agencies to temporarily reduce their level of activity, but the situation has stabilized enough to allow eight agencies to re-establish operations. My colleague Mr. Rishchynski will speak more about the security situation.

In response to needs arising from Hurricane Ivan, the multilateral branch has provided \$1.89 million in financial support to the work of the International Federation of Red Cross, Care Canada, Oxfam Canada, and the Pan American Health Organization. Relief supplies worth approximately \$200,000 were also provided through the Canadian Red Cross to victims of Hurricane Ivan in Jamaica and Grenada. These agencies provided important relief—food, shelter, clean water, and health care—to the population affected by the disaster. Following the devastation costs in Haiti by Tropical Storm Jeanne, the multilateral branch provided \$2.5 million in financial assistance to the International Federation of Red Cross, the United Nations appeal, and Médecins du Monde Canada. CIDA also provided about \$100,000 in relief materials through the Canadian Red Cross. Our partners are providing shelter, food, clean water, and health care.

The assistance provided by my branch was planned in close collaboration with the Americas branch, which also provided immediate support to local responders and followed up quickly with rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance.

I will now turn the presentation back to my colleague, who will speak about this bilateral support.

• (1545)

[Translation]

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: Mr. Chairman, right after the hurricanes struck the Caribbean, CIDA set up an interdepartmental task force to prepare our humanitarian response and support the reconstruction plan for the affected areas.

[English]

At the same time, humanitarian assistance was being loaded on aircraft in Canada and in the region, supported by CIDA, to meet the immediate needs of populations in Grenada and Jamaica, and subsequently when tropical storm Jeanne hit Haiti, we immediately turned our efforts to longer-term needs with respect to what populations would require insofar as reconstruction efforts are concerned.

In the case of Hurricane Ivan, particularly for Grenada and Jamaica, we immediately created a reconstruction fund of \$6.5 million Canadian to deal with the long-term needs of rebuilding in Grenada and those areas in Jamaica that had been touched by the hurricane.

In the case of Grenada, the \$4.5 million provided by CIDA for reconstruction was directed primarily at the rehabilitation of the agricultural and forestry sector at a level of \$2 million, and approximately \$1.6 million for upgrading the disaster response capacity of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, which had first responsibility insofar as Grenada's response to the crisis was concerned.

In addition, our high commission in Barbados, responsible for Grenada, received an increase to its Canada Fund of \$100,000 in order to support immediately projects being undertaken by NGOs and other partners, both internationally and locally, in Grenada. We also allocated \$600,000 Canadian to the Caribbean Development Bank for their social development fund to support reconstruction projects on the island.

In the case of Jamaica, a contribution of \$2 million was decided upon by the agency, of which \$1.8 million would be given to the Office of National Reconstruction in Jamaica under the auspices of the Prime Minister's office, which was tasked with the coordination of all relief and recovery efforts. With the Jamaican authorities, we established that approximately \$1 million of this \$1.8 million would be directed toward recovery of the agriculture sector and approximately \$800,000 to the recovery of the fisheries sector.

In addition, we increased the Canada Fund for local initiatives in Jamaica by \$200,000 to allow our high commission to respond to projects submitted by local and international organizations active in the country. It is our expectation, Mr. Chairman, that of the \$6.5 million for Grenada and Jamaica, all of it will be disbursed in the coming months and should be fully disbursed well before the end of the current government fiscal year of March 31, 2005.

[Translation]

Where Haiti is concerned, we were shocked by the devastation that we saw in Gonaïves, the third largest city in the country, with a population of over 300,000. We realize that an emergency fund needed to be created immediately for Haiti and the North-West, where Gonaïves and the other affected communities are located. We set up a \$2 million emergency fund to support projects and delivery mechanisms through the NGO network and other organizations, both Canadian and Haitian, already active in Haiti, and international organizations.

[English]

Some of the projects we are currently supporting through the \$2 million emergency fund for the northwest of Haiti include \$225,000 Canadian to World Vision Haiti to allow for 1,600 children to return to school in the area of Chansolme in the northwest and to support their parents' return to economic activity.

● (1550)

[Translation]

We also gave \$425,000 to Oxfam-Québec to provide drinking water and latrines at temporary shelters and in targeted areas of Gonaïves, and we gave institutional support to the Haitian National Water Service.

[English]

Similarly, we offered \$238,000 in assistance to the Service Oecuménique d'Entraide, a Haitian organization working in partnership with Canadian Feed the Children, in order to support interventions relating to the provision of potable water, the building of latrines, and the re-establishment of agricultural production in the region.

[Translation]

We also contributed \$400,000 to the Agence pour la coopération technique et l'aide au développement

[English]

for a sanitation and disease-prevention program, including the construction of 1,000 household latrines, the production and distribution of 3,500 mosquito nets, and the temporary creation of 200 person-months of work for women in the devastated area.

The Haiti program

[Translation]

is considering other contributions. We are thinking about the possibility of increasing this emergency fund over the next few days and weeks in response to the very good projects that have been proposed by organizations involved in recovery and reconstruction in Gonaïves.

In Haiti, of course, security is a crucial factor in the delivery of aid.

[English]

We have to keep in mind that the lack of security forces in Haiti has left security mainly in the hands of the United Nations mission, MINUSTAH. They had 300 Argentine soldiers in Gonaïves at the time the tropical storm hit, and their camp as well as most of the city was devastated by flooding. Since that time MINUSTAH has been able to deploy additional troops, another 142 soldiers, to Gonaïves, and we can report to you today that the security situation with respect to the delivery of aid is much better than it was at the time of the crisis.

[Translation]

The main problem that we have seen in Gonaïves is not a lack of aid. Aid and resources have been available. Delivery and security were the two major challenges for both the international and Haitian communities, so that they could respond to a crisis affecting over 300,000 people.

We have also worked closely with the various branches of the Red Cross, which have slowed down their activities in order to strengthen their security system. Medical personnel sent by Quebec were integrated into these teams and benefited from the same conditions as the other Red Cross members. The various organizations have resumed their activities, and we have reason to hope that with the new security measures, assistance from Canada and other organizations will continue to get to where it is needed.

[English]

In the case of Grenada, as reported by Madam Bragg, many of the services that were affected by Hurricane Ivan are slowly returning.

Prime Minister Mitchell of Grenada travelled to Washington, D. C., in early October to meet with the international donor community to assess the needs of Grenada, and it was there that Canada undertook its pledge of \$4.5 million in our reconstruction fund, our initial response to the long-term needs of the country.

In the case of Jamaica we are working very closely with Prime Minister Patterson's office with respect to the \$1.8 million of long-term reconstruction funds that we will be making available.

Clearly, there's a lot of work still to be done, but I think in the first instance we have been able to stem the most deleterious effects of these two tragedies in the Caribbean and we will continue to work closely with local and international partners as well as partners here in Canada to ensure that our humanitarian response and our reconstruction response gets to the people most in need and is focused upon the needs that have been identified as priorities by the organizations working on the ground.

We would be very happy, Mr. Chairman, to entertain questions from you and other members of the committee.

Merci.

The Chair: Merci.

Now we're going to start with questions and answers. It's five minutes each.

We'll start with Mr. Goldring, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thank you very much for your presentation.

The first comment I'd like to make is on my personal observation when I visited Grenada two weeks after the hurricane had hit. I realized that even two weeks after, we literally had nothing in the area at all, other than a cheque that had been written for some work to be done. And we should recognize that at this point in time for Grenada itself the biggest problem immediately was security. Of course, the troops from Venezuela and Trinidad and Tobago brought security under order, but because the island had been a major disaster, with 90% of all the buildings being flattened, I believe the area was caught unprepared for an entire country to be flattened. The fact is that perhaps more could be done internationally to have a more involved immediate response.

With Haiti, I sense that the same situation happened there, only it was further compounded. We had many commitments through CIDA. There was an update in June and July that some \$140 million to \$180 million had been committed there, and I take it that a lot of that is an ongoing commitment. Part of that commitment was for 500 troops to provide stability in the area, and we withdrew those troops in August. Then one of the other commitments that we made was for 100 members of the policing. My understanding is that there are 57 members or so there now.

Given all of the disasters that have befallen the area and the fact that a lot of the aid has been held up for security purposes, my overall question is why would Canada not be prepared to move in with a DART team? Or was there lack of political communication that prevented Canada from providing some of the security for its aid programs and other programs? Is that a combination of events? Maybe you could comment on that.

• (1555)

The Chair: I want to pinpoint to our guests that if it's a political reason, such as for the withdrawal of the soldiers from Canada over

there, it's not a question that we usually ask the witnesses. It's up to you if you want to answer, but a political reason—

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: No, I think we can comment—

Mr. Peter Goldring: We'll use another word, rather than “political”—communication.

The Chair: I just want to be sure that our guest knows about this. Thank you.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: Understood.

Mr. Goldring, I think you raised some very valid points, particularly with respect to the preparedness in the Caribbean. We have worked over the course of the last 30-plus years in the Caribbean with organizations locally to prepare for these kinds of disasters. The organization I referred to in my remarks, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, was in fact created some time ago to try to upgrade capacity in the region to be able to not only respond but to be ready for hurricanes, which are a fact of life, regrettably, in this part of the world.

I think one can prepare as best one can for whatever mother nature may mete out, but I don't think anyone expected a category four storm to make a direct hit on an island the size of Grenada. The hurricanes, when they have hit the region, oftentimes are glancing blows. This was the equivalent of the detonation of a bomb over an island at a level of devastation that I think frankly caught everyone unprepared, and even the best efforts of CDERA were incapable of dealing with the magnitude of the tragedy. There was in the initial days subsequent to Ivan's hit on Grenada a period when people were in shock. I recall Prime Minister Mitchell, when he was asked the effects on the economy, made the statement, “We have no economy. Our economy has been utterly destroyed.” It was a level of devastation that even by Caribbean standards shocked the sensibilities.

With respect to Canada's efforts, I should mention that Hurricane Ivan hit Grenada on September 7. Within a week, Canada had ten tonnes of material on the island in terms of responding to needs identified by both CDERA and the Red Cross. That was not taken in by a Canadian aircraft; it was taken in on a commercial carrier whose space was offered to us. However, we were able to get ten tonnes of material supported by Canada within a week into Grenada to meet the most urgent needs as identified by those on the ground. We had experts from our high commission in Barbados in Grenada within 72 hours of the hurricane having hit, as soon as the airport was open to allow us to begin working with local authorities on an assessment of need.

I think one thing we need to underline to you today is that in international efforts to deal with these kinds of crises, we very much rely on the Red Cross and other international organizations to tell us what it is that is truly of urgent necessity in terms of the supplies that can be flown in in response to a disaster of this type. Aid of a coordinated nature really has to be the focal point of our response, and in that context having our experts in Grenada early on working with local authorities allowed us to identify what those most urgent needs were. That is in fact what was the object of the ten tonnes of material that Canada put into Grenada on the morning of September 15, within a week of the disaster.

In the case of Haiti I think you are correct that with the \$180 million that Canada has pledged as a consequence of the international conference on Haitian reconstruction, which took place in Washington in July, perhaps there was greater preparedness in terms of understanding what the needs would be. But I think we were all taken aback by the level of devastation in Gonaïves caused by a tropical storm that was clearly of a level of magnitude in terms of natural phenomena much less than a category four hurricane. But the sad reality is that the denuding of forests in the northwestern part of Haiti resulted in a veritable wall of water coming down from the mountains and sweeping everything in its path. They have only found, I believe, something in the order of 2,000 of the victims. The other 1,000 who are presumed to have perished in this disaster were either washed out to sea or remain buried under the tonnes and tonnes of earth that descended upon a city of 300,000, Haiti's third-largest city.

With respect to the commitments that Canada had made with respect to a military presence in Haiti, you are correct. We had 500 soldiers in Haiti at the time of the multilateral interim force that was deployed to Haiti immediately after the crisis began in February of this year. Those Canadian soldiers were withdrawn only when MINUSTAH, the United Nations stabilization mission in Haiti, was able to put troops on the ground. Today there are some 3,200 troops on the ground in Haiti under the command of Brazil. Brazil has the largest contingent, but it also includes troops deployed from countries as diverse as Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, and Paraguay.

● (1600)

In the case of the police, Canada has committed to sending 100 police officers. Our first 50-plus are on the ground there. Others are being recruited to go into Haiti over the course of the coming weeks and months, to allow the police contingent to reach its total strength, which is envisaged to be something in the order of 1,600.

Again, this is a regional and global effort. Police officers from China, Jordan, Sri Lanka, and African countries such as Benin are also part of this force. It is expected that the total MINUSTAH deployment of both soldiers and police will be completed some time between now and the latter part of November.

Clearly it has taken time for the international community to be able to get its deployment level up to the need identified by Secretary-General Annan when he made the appeal for the international community's participation in a peacekeeping force for Haiti.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rishchynski. We need to get some other comments.

Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Thank you very much.

When I requested that the committee invite CIDA officials to come here if we had time, the issue I had in mind was Haiti. I know that other countries in the region are important, but, as you will understand, for language reasons and because of a special responsibility that we feel in Quebec and in Canada for Haiti, that country is our primary concern.

You gave us an outline of what happened shortly after that terrible storm on September 7, but it is now already October 27, and I would like to know about the health risks, which you have not mentioned. Newspaper articles in Quebec have indicated that doctors that went there, in particular from the Médecins du Monde organization, came back and reported that there were major health risks, that they had seen larva and that devastating epidemics might break out. That is one point.

There is also the problem of violence. We know that Gonaïves is recovering extremely slowly from this disaster. The crisis that began in January and seemed to have subsided, appears to have reached a new level of violence now, it seems to me. According to all the reports we have had and the information on the Internet, the violence is extremely serious. Many parts of Port-au-Prince seem dead, we are told. There is very little activity and people are frightened. There are armed men—some people call them *chimères* and others, rebels—who rule the roost in various areas. In Gonaïves, ordinary criminals have apparently attacked even Red Cross vehicles.

I would like to ask you a question. Do you feel that the MINUSTAH forces are adequate? Is the security issue not a priority? Is it safe to say that no serious reconstruction efforts are possible if there is no security? I know that Haitians are proud people and we love them for that, and they sometimes say that they can handle things themselves, but it seems obvious to me that the force that is there is inadequate and that more needs to be done.

I will not go over Mr. Goldring's questions, which I felt were excellent. I will end with one more question, Mr. Chairman. How many CIDA people are in Haiti right now?

● (1605)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Rishchynski.

[Translation]

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: On the health situation in Gonaïves, Ms. Lalonde, with your permission, I'd like Mr. Pétillon, who is our program head for Haiti and who was also the head of assistance in the field, in Haiti, for three years, to answer your question.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rishchynski.

Mr. Yves Pétillon (Director, Haiti, Cuba and Dominican Republic, Americas Branch, Canadian International Development Agency): Ms. Lalonde, yes, that was a very major concern in the days immediately following the disaster. So far, no epidemic has been declared. According to the information provided by our people in the field, there is less danger now than there was in the beginning. Why? Because in the city of Gonaïves itself, the water has largely receded. In the city itself, there are no longer any large districts that are flooded. There are still some pockets but very few.

What we often see on television are the areas where there is still water. There is a lake that has formed outside the city. In other words, in order to reach the city you virtually have to go across a lake. That water is still there. In the city itself, the dry mud left behind when the water receded is now being removed. So the current health situation is better, because the larva no longer have the environment they need in order to develop.

We are now more optimistic than we were two or three weeks ago.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: On the question about MINUSTAH and violence, you are right when you say that the situation is quite volatile. We know that. I would say that Canada has great confidence in the special representative of the Secretary general in Haiti, Juan Gabriel Valdez, a well-known Chilean diplomat. He has been on the ground in Port-au-Prince for almost two months, managing all of the work of MINUSTAH. He got off to a good start, I think, with the soldiers from the region and particularly with the MINUSTAH commander, General Ribeiro from Brazil. He is starting to take bolder security steps, particularly in Port-au-Prince.

You asked more specifically if there were enough MINUSTAH people to do the job. I think that we have to reserve judgment until all of the resources are in place. We'll see then how the forces are distributed among the other cities. There is still a security challenge outside Port-au-Prince, particularly in cities where former soldiers and others are the only armed presence, so to speak.

The jury is still out, but in our opinion, Mr. Valdez has gotten off to a good start. He has the support of a Canadian assistant on policing issues. I'm talking about Mr. Beer, who is doing an excellent job. We do hope that with the deployment of other police officers and other troops to come, the security situation in Haiti will improve.

With respect to your question about the CIDA presence in the field, we now have four Canadian officers working in the embassy. They were deployed from headquarters here. They are stationed permanently in Port-au-Prince. There is also an officer from Mr. Pétillon's Division here in Gatineau, who is there temporarily.

It's important to point out that we have a CIDA program support unit made up of Canadian experts and expatriates. That unit does an excellent job in terms of contacts and monitoring with local organizations. There are over 20 professionals involved, and that is a fundamental part of CIDA's presence on the ground.

I'd also like to tell you that in late 2001 and early 2002, we set up a mechanism in Haiti known as the Canadian Local Fund Management Centre. It's an administrative mechanism that we have at the embassy, which is managed by CIDA officers and is there to respond to proposals submitted by local NGOs, international NGOs and NGOs in the Canadian network working in the field in Haiti. This mechanism enables us, for example, to use a \$2 million emergency fund almost immediately to meet the main needs that have been identified.

•(1610)

The Chair: Thank you. We're now going to go to Mr. Coderre.

Hon. Denis Coderre (Bourassa, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You are all quite modest. I have seen for myself what CIDA has done for Haiti. In my opinion, you deserve to be congratulated.

However, a distinction must be drawn between two things: the reconstruction of Haiti and the specific issue of Gonaïves and the surrounding area. This is not the first time that there have been problems, particularly in the Mapou region, but there are other regions where the devastation is not yet over. So in my opinion that needs to be dealt with.

We'd also like to acknowledge the facilitation work that you have done with the diaspora, which has a crucial role to play. Not only does it send \$900 million a year to Haiti, but the specific work that it has done on the Gonaïves problem has shown the extent to which we, as a government and you as a department, can play a facilitator role. Mr. Pétillon's contribution to that is worthy of mention.

That said, we still have some concerns. MINUSTAH has woken up. It is finally playing its peacemaker role. With all of the problems in Bel-Air and Cité Soleil, we have discovered that we will never be able to bring in any goods whatsoever or contemplate reconstruction unless and until the arms have been put down.

A distinction must be made between the \$180 million for reconstruction until the election—given that we want to contribute up until the election campaign, because we need to make sure there is an election campaign in Haiti—and the whole issue of the reconstruction of Gonaïves.

I know that you are working with all of the partners from the civil society, both locally and internationally, and that your coordinating committee meets every day at 4 p.m. in Gonaïves.

Are you satisfied with the way other governments are currently contributing? I get the feeling that there's a certain fatigue internationally, even though some \$1.3 billion have been contributed. However, there's a presence problem. For example, when it was a security issue, the Americans immediately said that they had to voluntarily withdraw their troops. In Canada, we didn't have that problem and we decided to stay.

Did that situation stop the aid from getting through? I remember that the last time we went there, they had even stolen a tanker truck because there was a water issue. Currently, is the aid still getting through?

The problem was that back then, there were six sectors and we had only covered three of them. Getting a main street back open doesn't guarantee that things will get through to smaller neighbourhoods. I agree with you that it's not a problem of scarcity, but one of smooth flow and reaching the destination.

Secondly, there's a drinking water problem there. Sixty-eight wells were contaminated and we were told that there wasn't enough know-how for decontamination. I know that Oxfam and CARE, among others, played a role in that. Perhaps you could describe the water situation to me.

I'm coming to my last point. I think it's essential that...

•(1615)

The Chair: How many points do you have to raise, Mr. Coderre? There'll be no time left for answers. Go ahead.

Hon. Denis Coderre: I would like you to comment on sustainable development. You have been focusing on deforestation. I think that we have to focus on sustainable development. When you establish criteria on the basis of needs and priorities, is sustainable development a priority? I have other questions, but I'll come back to them later.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: I will let Mr. Pétillon answer the questions on programming.

Now, as to whether we are satisfied with donors' performance, I would say that in general we are. The lessons learned last time the international community went to Haiti have not been forgotten. As a result, coordination among donors is very different from what it used to be. For example, at the end of September, when donors had a second meeting in Port-au-Prince, everyone was ready to make adjustments to cover all needs. Things were very different in the 1990s. This is a good start, but we do have to deliver, and it is a long, time-consuming process.

With respect to coordination, which is headed by the United Nations with support from the Organization of American States, there is now a better foundation and we are more likely to succeed. However, the fatigue that is setting in—and we see it in many world capitals—must not be allowed to have a negative impact on the process. Fortunately, the process has been working so far, but we have yet to see how it is maintained as time goes by. If the security issue becomes a greater concern in the months ahead, some countries may begin to wonder why they are there. But at present, everyone is willing and I think the coordination effort will produce the expected results for the most urgent and fundamental issues.

In the long term, this battle will probably take 10 to 15 years. Establishing a climate conducive to national reconciliation on a different level from the kind of reconciliation we've seen in recent years, establishing a system that leads to a new social conscience for Haitians, will depend on full restoration of democracy and elections.

I am going to let Mr. Pétillon answer your questions about delivery of aid and water in particular.

The Chair: Mr. Pétillon.

Mr. Yves Pétillon: With respect to coordination, I would add that Canada, through CIDA, has played an essential role in facilitating dialogue among donors, and dialogue between donors and the government.

We will continue to play this facilitation role for as long as the Interim Cooperation Framework is in place. Canada has a special role to play, and other donors ask us to act as facilitators in their dialogue.

With respect to the second part of your question, the issue of U.S. citizens is a concern. The voluntary departure of non-essential personnel and their families affects us. You are of course aware that the United Nations has also asked families to leave Haiti.

Given the indicators we have, we think that such action is somewhat exaggerated. Let's remember how the UN was hit in Iraq. That is having repercussions in all countries where they have a presence, and they react automatically to ensure maximum security.

We monitor our people's safety every day. There is a chain of communication set up between the embassy and all Canadian organizations we support in Haiti, so that we can monitor the situation in the whole country. For example, our ambassador and our team in Haiti do not recommend that we follow the U.S. and UN example.

With respect to water, which is a more technical problem, the Canadian Local Fund Management Centre has funded a number of water projects. One focused on the Service national d'eau potable, Haiti's national water service, to help restore a public water system. This has not yet been done, but we are allocating money to the project because it fulfills an essential need. Water is currently delivered by truck, something that cannot be continued indefinitely. Water is a priority. Two or three of the projects we have funded are associated with water.

Now, with regard to sustainable development, I would say that it is crucial. How are we taking it into consideration in our current programming? Well, we do take it into consideration, and we will be boosting local development programming substantially. Local development is a development process that involves the people. Every community, community unit and existing organization must engage in some sort of priority planning. In most cases, their focus will be erosion protection, drainage basin protection, or something similar.

The next step is either to fund priorities like these ourselves or try to mobilize other donors. These funds would go towards drainage basin protection, reforestation, and so on. At present, one project organized by OXFAM Quebec in southern Haiti is working very well. You might have heard about it on the CBC's French-language network several weeks ago.

With the \$180 million slated for Haiti, we will be focusing on more projects like these.

● (1620)

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. McDonough now has the floor.

[English]

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our CIDA officials for giving us a comprehensive overview of the humanitarian response, in the face of this horrendous crisis. It does seem unbelievable that an area that has been so hard hit already could face what has happened.

I have two questions. The first relates to the interim cooperation framework to which Mr. Pétillon has made reference. The second is a two-part question around the coordination and monitoring of donor contributions to Haiti.

I'm sure you're aware that there has been some criticism by Haitian grass-roots organizations about the interim cooperation framework, on the basis that it's being drafted and controlled by external actors. I think that's really intended as a reference to the U.S. more than anything else. I'm just wondering, in view of that, whether there is a role that Canada can play, and whether CIDA sees the need for there to be a real effort to ground the interim cooperation framework more at the community level, so it is genuinely a foundation or basis on which Haiti can move forward.

Secondly, you'll be aware that the Canadian Foundation for the Americas has very much called upon Canada to assume a major leadership role in Haiti within the international community, to ensure that Haiti doesn't slip from view. That's as much with the United Nations and OAS as the broader international community. I'm just wondering if that is a feasible role for Canada to play. Do we have what's needed there from the Canadian government to be able to effectively carry that role out?

With specific reference to the FOCAL report recommending the creation of a governmental trust fund that could be jointly monitored by donor governments and the UN, to ensure full transparency of the government spending that is taking place, is this a route, in CIDA's view, that should be pursued, and is it happening?

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: With respect to le Cadre de Coopération Intérimaire, we share the concerns that have been expressed locally in Haiti about the engagement of all elements of Haitian society in that process. Clearly the donors took a lead in the needs assessment that was done in Haiti through the months of May and June. But I can assure you that there was extensive and rigorous consultation with Haitian civil society to ensure that we got things right in terms of the priorities, particularly in the areas of economic and political governance.

While some organizations perhaps wished for a different model, I think the model that was ultimately settled upon in terms of the output of the CCI document was one that engaged in a very fulsome way, in my judgment, the views and the expressed needs of Haitian civil society in particular, as well as the Haitian government.

But we would be less than frank if we didn't admit that there is tension in Haiti between the transitional government—the Latortue administration—and certain elements of civil society. It's something we're quite sensitive to. We see an ongoing role for Canada and other donors as facilitators, as Monsieur Pétillon indicated, in the political dialogue and the move toward national reconciliation that is going to be a necessary underpinning for this process to work.

We obviously couldn't lead on everything that is in the CCI, but we chose strategically, as a government and as an agency, to try to lead on energy and local development, which are two elements that impact clearly at the community level first and foremost. We need to ensure that as we go forward with programming, there is the buy-in of the local communities to ensure that they have a stake in how these processes move forward, and that they are truly stakeholders in the process and this isn't a *dirigisme* kind of model that they begin to feel is being imposed from somewhere else.

We see an ongoing role for Canada to continue that facilitation role of working with the triangle of donors, the national government, and civil society in bringing coalescence around the priorities that have been identified, and how funds are going to be expended. We will continue to play that role. So far, the efforts of Monsieur Pétillon and his team have resulted in Canada having a unique place at the table, with respect to the interests of donors as diverse as the European Union, the United States, other countries in the region, and donors such as Japan and the European countries that are also acting bilaterally.

On the FOCAL proposition of a donor trust fund, this was looked at with the World Bank in the context of the needs assessment. The

decision was taken at that juncture that we did not want to necessarily create duplicative mechanisms that would result in a loss of engagement on the part of donors directly with the projects or areas in which they would take a lead.

So the decision was made that a trust fund was perhaps the best mechanism to deal with the electoral process, but the developmental side of the equation would be better dealt with through close coordination of a formal and informal nature among donors at the local level in Haiti. The offices represented there would work very closely with the UNDP in particular, as a foremost interlocutor, and also at the macro level internationally, with regular meetings of the international community in Port-au-Prince to take stock of what was working and what wasn't working.

So far, the meetings we've had subsequent to the exercise in Washington in July, and most recently at the end of September in Port-au-Prince, have led us to conclude that this is starting out in the right direction, but the proof will be with time. We're confident that the CCI is a good structure from which to begin, but how soon and how effectively we can demonstrate change in the daily lives of Haitians will be the way the overall program and the engagement of the international community is judged.

To return to the comment made in response to Monsieur Coderre's question, what is different is that for the first time in Haiti the international community is coordinating its efforts, in an understanding that if we don't decide among ourselves where we're going to punctually act and start stepping over each other and duplicating efforts, we will do nothing to meet the needs and aspirations of the Haitian people.

So far we've managed to start this process in a positive light, and I hope the months ahead will provide a judgment that the international community has learned its lessons and in fact is operating in Haiti in a manner very different from the experience that took place during the 1990s.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now we'll go to Monsieur Boudria and Mr. Menzies, and then we'll have another round.

Monsieur Boudria.

[Translation]

Hon. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Firstly, I would like to thank Ambassador Rishchynski and the officials from CIDA for being with us.

A few years ago, as minister for CIDA, I visited Haiti on several occasions. At the time, in approximately 1997, we were pleased with the country's progress with respect to security, among other things. The situation that had prevailed before, one that can be described as a *Hobbesian state of nature* had disappeared. People were starting to abide by the law again. Respect for police authority had improved. The situation had changed. Of course, it was a time when we allocated a major part of our aid to Haiti. However, it now seems as though we've returned to square one.

A question comes to mind, concerning not only Canada but all donor countries. I suppose that, to a certain extent, I'm attacking Americans. They tend to arrive in large numbers and, after laying some sort of initial order—at least in their opinion—they leave the premises with the impression that everything is fine and leaving everything as is behind them. When another disaster strikes and everything collapses, the same thing happens all over again, the Americans think everything is fine and in order, and they return home. In the long term, these highs and lows constitute an obstacle in achieving the necessary level of security.

In my opinion, all countries, with no exception, must develop a culture based on respect for the law and institutions. Fourteen courts have been rebuilt; I was still minister when two or three of these places were inaugurated. Some court houses were rebuilt, others are housed in brand new buildings. As for the rest, you are more aware than I am. Today we know where the situation stands.

Can you help us understand what we can all do to make sure that, despite the decrease in humanitarian aid, we will not be reduced to starting from scratch as a result of disorder and non-compliance with the law? Pardon me for making a speech rather than asking a question.

• (1630)

The Chair: It is a very broad question and the answer will have to be shorter.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: You are right. I think that everyone in Haiti and the international community was happy when Mr. Aristide came back in 1994. After the coup d'État, democracy was restored. Unfortunately, in the late 1990s, there was a lack of political will. Things could have changed, and there could have been true national reconciliation taking into account the interests of all groups in the country. However this lack of will precipitated the events and ultimately, Mr. Aristide had to leave the country.

Now, the sole responsibility of the transitional government is to put in place the political process they need to hold democratic elections. It could also start the work that should have been done at the end of the 1990s. Will it succeed? I think that the willingness of the Latortue administration and the other representatives of government, who are more technicians than politicians, could change things, but there again, all the other groups have to want to get involved. The lack of trust among the various groups in Haitian society remains a fundamental issue.

Can that change? I think that the international community is now aware that in the absence of a new national consensus, it is not very likely that things will change. However, by working with Haitian civil society, which is more organized than ever before, as well as with the other interested parties, the country may move in another

direction. There are risks everywhere, of course, but in my opinion, we have no other choice but to support those efforts.

As Mr. Coderre mentioned, the diaspora has a very important role to play in achieving a national consensus that is different from what they have had in recent years. The international community and donor agencies are all well aware of the enormous challenges. But we have no choice. The abject poverty of these people, who are deprived of basic services that we consider essential to all human beings, may cause it to fail. At all the meetings with the donor agencies, we concluded that in the medium term, that was the compromise. However, we must achieve good results to ensure the long term commitment of the international community. Otherwise, we will not be able to improve the situation in Haiti.

• (1635)

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we are going to move to Mr. Menzies, please.

[English]

Mr. Ted Menzies (Macleod, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

If we as questioners keep our questions a little more concise, then we can impose upon the learned witnesses to maybe keep their answers a little more concise and we'll perhaps all have a chance to address all of the questions we would like answers to.

Thank you for coming and thank you for providing this information.

In doing some research on bilateral humanitarian assistance, looking through the summary reports, maybe I'm missing it, but I didn't even see Haiti on this list. Is it under the American allocation? I have a couple of questions, so if you would answer that at one point... When I look at disaster preparedness under the American allocation, it's down to zero in 2002-03. Maybe we're just not looking in the right place, but maybe you could address that.

As was mentioned earlier, Haiti used to be on the top end of the recipients list. Not that long ago it was in second position. In 2000 it was over \$30 million that we disbursed to Haiti; in 2003, \$23.5 million, or \$23.85 million. So, indeed, were there fewer issues, and was our focus away from Haiti? I'd like a bit of an answer on that, if you could.

One very, very simplistic question: you talked about national water supply. It's pretty much a given that most of these Caribbean nations are going to experience some sort of a disaster or hurricane or whatever it may be. What have we done about spending money wisely in preparation, to help get these countries prepared for it, like a hurricane-proof desalination plant, a very simplistic sort of proposal?

That's the first issue, fresh potable water, every time there's a disaster. Is there some way we can spend a lot less money than we would need to spend afterwards trucking water to them by preparing and building some sort of a system that can withstand the storms they do expect every year?

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. Bragg, you've been silent. I'll let you...

Ms. Catherine Bragg: Let me try to see if I can answer your question on the humanitarian expenditure. I don't know which table you are looking at.

The Chair: I think he was probably looking at the main estimates. The minister is coming later on to comment on some of your figures, and might be ready to answer it. It's a good question. No problem at all.

Ms. Catherine Bragg: I can run through for you how much has been spent in Haiti in terms of humanitarian assistance because of the recent tropical storm and hurricane. I can also give you some figures in terms of the last flooding in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in May. As well, there was some humanitarian assistance also provided in the aftermath of the political instability in the spring. If we add all of that together, maybe we can give you a total number.

I'll go back from the most recent event. In terms of the tropical storm Jeanne, the total humanitarian assistance from the multilateral branch is \$2.5 million, and \$2 million from the Americas branch. That is not considered to be part of the reconstruction. In terms of the flooding in May, a total of \$1 million was spent on the island of Espanola. That would be for both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. After the political instability in the spring, CIDA provided \$3.95 million, so close to \$4 million, in terms of humanitarian assistance and food aid to Haiti.

I can have further breakdowns for you if you want.

• (1640)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: With respect to your question regarding emergency preparedness, we are working with, as I mentioned earlier, the Caribbean organization for disaster preparedness and reconstruction.

Perhaps I should go back and say that one of the reasons you don't see allocations in 2002-03 was that the region was saved from hurricanes. It was a banner year, in the sense that there were storms, but the storms stayed in the mid-Atlantic and did not touch land. I think the lessons of hurricane preparedness in the Caribbean are certainly being embraced in terms of local building codes and construction, but a category four storm with sustained winds of 180 kilometres an hour for a period of almost 20 hours is something that very few structures would withstand. One reads in the reports about Grenada, for example, that of 77 schools on the island, only two were still standing when the storms were over. These were not built of wood; these were concrete structures. I think the level of devastation of a category four storm really is such that even the best of preparedness would not have resulted in a lack of damages.

Should we be doing more with respect to working with the islands to ensure that these kinds of issues are taken on board on a more fulsome level with respect to how they construct, how they build, bearing in mind worst-case scenarios? Absolutely. The level of resources required for many of those efforts far outstrips what we, as a bilateral donor, would be able to provide. This is an area where the World Bank, the Caribbean Development Bank in particular, I think play the key role, because they are the ones most involved in the investments on infrastructure that go into many of these island nations.

Perhaps there is a bit of a situation in the Caribbean that they have learned to live with natural disaster in a fashion that we cannot because it is such a part of their lives, but I can assure you that in our discussion with governments and officials of international financing institutions, we continue to underline the need to ensure that the planning done is planning for the worst-case scenarios. Unfortunately, sometimes that planning does not meet the required level of specification.

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you. We will now go to Mr. Coderre, who will have to keep his preamble short.

Hon. Denis Coderre: There will be no preamble.

I want to talk about sponsorship. We have talked about water and several other issues, and that brings me to the issue of the diaspora. Basically, we want to establish a coaching strategy. What are the criteria? There is clearly extraordinary experience among the diaspora. Are you focussing solely on health issues, for example? Are there very specific slots or do you have some flexibility that will enable you to implement what we call pilot projects?

Secondly I want to talk about public health. The last time we went to Haiti, hygiene was awful. There are open sewers. So there is a major problem there. There is also a problem with waste collection and management. Of course that all needs to be organized, but do you have flexible parameters? I do not have a specific idea in mind in asking you that question, but I assume that you need to adjust when you get there. Everything needs to be redone.

• (1645)

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: Of course there is some flexibility. The one thing we cannot forget is that Canada is part of a broad coalition with the other donors. There are sectors where we lead the way, and we have more flexibility there. I'm thinking for instance of energy or local development. We are involved in the work that is being done in the fields of health care and education, where other donors lead the way, and we must harmonize our programs with all of those offered by the international community.

I'd like to highlight the fact that the fundamental characteristic of our programming in Haiti is that it is more and more flexible. If there are good suggestions and we are able to support them, we will do so. However, we must compromise with the other donors under the Interim Cooperation framework because we are not the only party involve.

So, of course, there is flexibility. We hope that the conference to be held shortly in Canada with the diaspora will be a good starting point for coordinating our efforts and theirs, and that it will allow them to have the opportunity to be involved in the process and submit their proposals to CIDA so that we may consider them in the context of our contribution to the ICF.

The Chair: Thank you. Ms. Bourgeois, please.

Ms. Diane Bourgeois (Terrebonne—Blainville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rishchynski, I would like you to clarify certain issues related to security and sustainable development.

With respect to security, given that there still hasn't been any disarmament and that efforts are underway to destabilize the interim government, according to information we have, it would seem—and I mean seem—that Canada and the other countries haven't done everything they could to help people have access to drugs, commodities, etc.. As you said so yourself, it would seem very difficult to offer services because of the deterioration of the social climate.

As you stated in your report, there are 100 police officers under the responsibility of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It would seem that's not quite correct, that we only have half that number. First of, is that correct? Second, how come we didn't send our 100 police officers? I'm asking you the question because I have friends who are among this group of police officers.

Third, do we still have peacekeepers? We know that Morocco is getting ready to dispatch peacekeepers to Haiti. Do we still have peacekeepers? We were supposed to have 500 of them, if I'm not mistaken, and I am being told there are none left. They've come back, I'm being told. Why have they come back? Do we need them? Do you plan on continuing to help with the country's disarmament? Will we continue to be involved in the common security initiative with other countries? I want to have some clarification on those points.

Moreover, are our 100 police officers safe? That's important.

With respect to sustainable development, we know that practically all problems in Gonaïves are partly due to soil erosion. Unfortunately, the Auditor General of Canada issued a report yesterday stating that CIDA did not have a long term vision on the environment and sustainable development. Of course when we spoke of Haiti that was my first thought. What is CIDA doing? Do you have a long-term vision? What are we doing with the agencies? I want some clarification on this point.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: That is a very good question, Ms. Bourgeois.

I can tell you that disarmament has begun, however, this is just the start of a process that will take a great deal of time because, unfortunately, there are a lot of weapons in Haiti, coupled with a long standing tradition of violence. We do, however, have the UNMISTAH and the peacekeepers. The troops in Haiti are peacekeepers. The Brazilians are playing the lead role because they have the largest contingent. In order for the assistance to be effective, there naturally needs to be security. That is the number one challenge for the UNMISTAH. Mr. Valdez, who is in charge of the United Nations mission, is well aware of that. We spoke to him about requirements, explaining why he had requested a Canadian to be the number two person with respect with police issues. This person is in place.

I can tell you that most of the 100 police officers are now there. The deployment of our police officers was phased in. We did not simply send over 100 police officers at once. In early September, we sent over 30 and then a second contingent arrived at the end of September. We are now very close to the 100 mark, but it is true that some police officers are still awaiting deployment. We are waiting for the other countries that promised troops and police officers, to send them. We are hoping that deployment will be completed by the

end of November and that the international response will reflect the figures set by Mr. Annan of the United Nations, namely about 6,000 soldiers and 1,600 police officers. They are working with local Haitian security forces to implement the security plan. We hope that this disarmament process which began a few weeks ago, will move ahead quickly and provide greater security to Haitians and to aid workers staying in Haiti.

As for sustainable development, we have a very tangible vision with respect to Haiti. This is the objective of all of the cooperative work that we do in this country. The environment is a very special sector because many of the problems that exist in Haiti are caused by deforestation and other similar phenomena. This has been an essential part of our programming for a long time. Mr. Pétillon referred to a project underway in Southern Haiti. This project has been around for nearly 10 years. We have other projects. We even have a binational project with the Dominican Republic and Haiti on the Artibonite basin where we are trying to do good things to rehabilitate the environment of the country.

I have not yet had an opportunity to read the Auditor General's report on CIDA, which was tabled yesterday, and therefore I am not able to respond, on behalf of the agency, to the comments contained therein. However, I can assure you that as far as our program in Haiti is concerned, we do have a long term vision and the environment is a pivotal aspect of all of our programming.

• (1650)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Rishchynski.

[English]

Now we're going to pass to Mr. Goldring, please.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Thank you very much.

You mentioned that the United Nations proposal for a security force for Haiti had been set at approximately 6,000. It is my understanding that had been set previously, and Canada supplied 500 troops to that amount, so that would have been a United Nations requirement of some standing and some time. When the Canadian troops were removed and pulled back in August, that really left the United Nations troops at the level today of approximately 3,000.

Given that Haiti has gone through—and it says in this report it's the third time—terrible situations with its government and instability over the last twenty years, has one of the problems been that we make these commitments for stability and to return a society back to normalcy, but we just put too few resources in, we don't add up, we don't keep our commitments?

Given that the 500 Canadian soldiers were there on site in August during an unstable period for Haiti itself, compounded by this tremendous problem of the weather conditions one month later, why would we not have reacted and at least returned those soldiers, or at least worked towards what the United Nations commitment was? Isn't this the root problem, that we don't live up to the expectations of a commitment for a stable society?

• (1655)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Rishchynski.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: In terms of your specific question, Mr. Goldring, there were two elements to the deployment of troops, and subsequently police, in Haiti.

The multinational interim force, which was created in February, was an immediate response to the situation in the country after the departure of President Aristide. That was not under the command of the United Nations. That was the object of a UN resolution to put troops on the ground, but it is not what is on the ground now in terms of MINUSTAH, which is the long-term United Nations mission for Haiti.

The 6,600 military and 1,600 police were what came out of the UN resolutions, if I recall correctly, during the course of the latter spring, and then the subsequent appointment of Mr. Valdez from Chile as the UN Secretary General's special representative puts him as the overall commander of that force. Our 500 troops that went there earlier in the year were troops that were sent along with troops from France, Chile, and the United States to provide the multinational interim force, which was the precursor of MINUSTAH.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Is each one of these not being short-changed? You have the troops and you don't have the number that you need. You have a commitment of the policing of 100, and we have some 54 there now, whereas England, for example, posted on station a destroyer and supply ship in case there were problems. They had people in the area, in the region.

If we're going to have a long-term economic and political relationship in the region and also participate humanitarian-wise, should we not have a staging place, a preparation, a plan to deal with this, so that we can do more to at least meet our commitments to these organizations?

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: I think in the Canadian sense, we have lived up to the letter of the commitments that we have made. I think our contribution to the CCI developmental plan for Haiti at a level of \$180 million over the course of the next two years is a commitment we anticipate to meet fully.

In terms of the issues of military deployment, that is beyond the purview of ourselves in terms of people in the development field. I can't give you an appropriate answer to that question, unfortunately.

I can tell you that, for example, when we had the Canadian military on the ground in Haiti as part of MIF early in the year and ourselves on the development side, the coordination was very, very close. We did a number of joint projects together. I think from our perspective and DND's, it was quite a successful cooperation.

We must respond to UN resolutions and to the requirements as set out by the Secretary General with respect to troop levels and the like. There the decision was taken that the 6,600 would be primarily deployed from the region, for a number of reasons of a political nature. In terms of our commitment of the 100 police, as I said, this has been done in phases, but we fully anticipate that we will have our 100 police on the ground and have them doing good work down there.

The Chair: I just want to point out to Mr. Goldring that the British government always has a ship on post all year round in the Caribbean, probably because of their previous Commonwealth

colonies. They're always over there. It doesn't stop you from your question.

Mr. Peter Goldring: Manoeuvres there.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Menzies, a short question.

Mr. Ted Menzies: Yes, a very short question.

I was recently in Asia, on a different topic certainly, trying to promote trade in beef. It was a tremendous eye-opener when you see the burgeoning economy over there. It's wonderful to see. That's a good-news story, because CIDA has been a strong supporter of aid to China.

At what point—and I would suggest that maybe this is the point—should... Our \$54 million a year in aid to China is pretty minuscule and might rather be directed to something like Haiti. The fact is that China is now giving \$3.4 billion worth of aid to North Korea. Ours is basically a drop in the bucket. Should we not be thinking about redirecting that to these—I'm not going to call them more important—certainly very serious issues, such as Haiti?

● (1700)

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: As vice-president of the Americas branch, I hesitate to comment.

The Chair: If you allow me, our minister will be here on November 15. That's a great question you can ask her.

Now, I have a question for you, Mr. Rishchynski. I have a question following the question of Monsieur Coderre.

[Translation]

My question pertains to the diaspora. In your opinion, what role could the North American diaspora, including the United States and Canada, play and is the North American diaspora prepared to play a role in Haiti's national reconciliation?

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: We believe, Mr. Chairman, that Canada's Haitian diaspora has a role to play in Haiti. However, we need to be very careful when we set up programs involving the diaspora so as not to create divisions. For example, if we were to provide funding to a Canadian technician of Haitian origin so that he could work in Haiti, his salary would be three times the salary earned by a local Haitian professional. That is the challenge.

How can we get the community located here, in Canada, to work in Haiti without creating many problems? Indeed, the conditions of a professional working outside of Haiti are much better than those of a professional located in Haiti. This is why we will be holding a conference in Montreal, probably in December, in order to discuss with the Canadian diaspora what it is prepared to do and how we could work with it through the Interim Cooperation Framework. We will use the flexibility provided by CIDA projects and programs that will be taking place in Haiti over the next 18 months.

There have already been diaspora conferences held in Miami and New York City. We participated in the New York city conference as observers. There is a tremendous amount of will amongst the members of the Haitian community in North America to help their country of origin as it meets these challenges and rebuilds. Nevertheless, we still need to figure out how all of this can be organized to ensure a positive contribution.

We are hoping that we will be able to provide you with a more tangible answer following the Montreal conference.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

I'm going to Ms. McDonough for a very short question. No preamble, please.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you.

You've made the point that security is absolutely essential to provide meaningful development and to use development aid effectively. It may be an impossible question, but I wonder if you could indicate how long you think it's going to be before we achieve a level of stability there, both with respect to democratic institutions and also specifically with respect to the judiciary, an area that seems to be almost totally neglected. I wonder if that's a role Canada can and should be playing to really help in the rebuilding of the judiciary in Haiti.

Thank you.

Mr. Guillermo Rishchynski: I would hesitate to offer a prediction on when the situation in Haiti might stabilize, but I am, Madam McDonough, very encouraged at the attitudinal framework of the international community as we enter this new phase of engagement.

Monsieur Coderre made reference to the fatigue. It was palpable during the nineties. People were leaving. Everyone was reducing, because it was simply an impossible context in which to work. People understand that this time we have to do it differently, that we have to undertake the lessons of the past as a foundation for what we do in the future, and that security and disarmament is the key.

However modest the efforts so far of MINUSTAH, I would say these efforts are the most we have seen in quite some time in Haiti to try to address these very fundamental issues. Our hope certainly is that those continue to accelerate under the leadership of the United Nations and that we may be in a situation where Haitians themselves begin to appreciate a difference in their conditions of life.

The justice sector is absolutely critical to the long-term viability of democratic institutions in the country. They take time to design. I can assure you we are working—and are not in a position yet to announce, but hopefully will be in the near future—initiatives in the justice sector. We've been quite involved and were during the 1990s in areas such as prison reform.

President Alexandre, who is a judge of the Haitian Supreme Court, now the interim president, never hesitates at every opportunity to underline to us and all other members of the international community the need for a justice system that responds to the needs of Haitians, as an absolutely fundamental underpinning to the democratic process in the country.

It will take time to develop, but we're confident that now, having focused the Cadre de Coopération intérimaire in areas such as political governance as a fundamental concept in terms of where the international community is going to work punctually, that we will be able to make contributions to the justice sector. The accrued experience of organizations such as the OAS, which was quite involved in the prison reform area through the special mission that was there in the past, provides us with a foundation to do that.

As I said earlier, this is an effort that is going to take a very long time. As we reflect at the working level at CIDA on our overall engagement, yes, our \$180 million over the next two years is an essential contribution to underpin this transition back to full democracy, but we are going to need ten to fifteen years of sustained effort by the international community to really begin the process of working with Haiti to make the necessary changes in the society. It's linked to the creation of this different kind of national consensus, which regrettably has been absent in the country historically. We have placed our hope in that. We have no illusions as to the difficulty, but it is a risk that in our judgment is worth taking and worth Canada's playing a leading role in trying to move it forward.

• (1705)

[Translation]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

I would like to thank today's witnesses, Mr. Rishchynski, Ms. Bragg and Mr. Pétillon.

[English]

I think your testimony is very valuable for our committee. Once again, thank you very much.

I will ask our members to remain for just a few minutes. I see a quorum.

You have received the planning calendar for the next few weeks. Next Monday we will have the Minister of International Trade for the main estimates. After that I'm going to request your approval for a motion to meet with a German delegation, because we received a note from the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs saying they would like to have a joint meeting between both houses. That motion will read as follows:

That, pursuant to the Order of October 20, 2004 concerning a meeting with a delegation from the Parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany on November 3, 2004, the Committee sit jointly with the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs

If you agree with this, after that—because it's outside our slots on Monday and Wednesday—we have the possibility on Thursday morning, November 4, to have as a witness for disarmament Professor James Fergusson, the director of the Centre for Defence and Security Studies, University of Manitoba, and, if he's available and the committee so wishes, Mr. Ernest Regehr of Project Ploughshares.

On November 15 we have the main estimates; we have the Minister of International Cooperation. We have the Minister of Foreign Affairs on November 29. And we have the permanent representative to the United Nations for disarmament on December 1. This means we've been quite successful in having the ambassador, and also the three ministers appearing for main estimates, before the committee.

Does everyone agree with this calendar and the motion?

Madam McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have no difficulty with the proposals. I'm a little concerned about the possibility, and I don't say this with specific reference to the meeting with the German delegation, that we could end up filling up the other seven vacant days with various visiting delegations, which would have the effect of basically displacing the priorities the committee had already decided upon.

It's my understanding from our earlier meeting that we had clearly identified the foreign policy review as a very high priority, in terms of our getting ourselves up to speed and focusing on some of the priority issues that need to be addressed as part of the foreign policy review; and second, the agreement that we would, to the extent possible, have public hearings with respect to national missile defence.

I want to flag that as a concern. I know there was a great deal of work that this reflects—

The Chair: I want to respond to this, Ms. McDonough, with the fact that we already agreed twice to meet with the German delegation —

• (1710)

Ms. Alexa McDonough: That's fine, and I'm not objecting.

The Chair: I want to let you know also that you're going to receive, concerning disarmament and everything else for the other seven slots we have before the recess in December, a plan with a lot of witnesses. I don't have the plan translated into both official languages. It's in English right now. It's going to be translated today or tomorrow, but probably tomorrow. You'll receive it at your office, and we'll be ready next Monday to see which witnesses you would like to have. The work is done, but because it's not in both official languages, I cannot get it out to you.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Very well.

[English]

The Chair: Regarding any other delegation, there is none for the moment, apart from this German one.

Madame Lalonde and Monsieur Goldring.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: My comment is further to what Ms. McDonough had to say. I thought that we could have lunch with the German delegation on Wednesday and hear from witnesses on, for example, antimissile defence, in the afternoon. We could invite all kinds of witnesses.

Hon. Dan McTeague (Pickering—Scarborough East, Lib.): We could have lunch with the other witnesses. It would be more appetizing.

The Chair: That is quite possible, but they did make an official request to meet with the committee and we did agree to do that. We did not therefore agree to a lunch, but there may be a lunch as well. We need to realize that the meeting will take place the day after the American presidential election. So it might be interesting to meet colleagues from the European Union, particularly Germany.

Mr. Goldring, go ahead.

[English]

Mr. Peter Goldring: I note another piece of paper that was given to us. It's for Mel Hurtig and his new book. If he appears on December 1 with the other representatives, do we get a copy of his book to review before we talk with him?

The Chair: If you agree that the committee spend the money to buy a book for every member...

Mr. Peter Goldring: If he's being brought before the committee...

The Chair: Madame McDonough.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: I don't want to second-guess what the work plan is going to look like, but one of the things I would hope we could be looking at—perhaps I can just flag it at this point—is, given what we know to be some restraints or restrictions on our mobility to do widespread travel, some creative way to use new modern communications technology to invite some input: video-conferencing, creative use of the Internet. There are many government departments doing this—for example, the foreign policy dialogue that the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs used.

It seems to me if we're serious about getting the views of Canadians—letting them have their say in the decision about NMD—it behoves us to look at some creative uses. I'm asking if we can raise that issue for staff to come back and report on.

The Chair: When you receive the work plan, we can take an hour next Monday to look at it. It's up to you to propose something to the committee at that time. I want you first to look at the work plan we are suggesting to you, and we'll decide next Monday. You're going to receive this before the meeting. Be sure to open your e-mail and look at it, and we can discuss it next Monday after the main estimates.

I think the committee is working hard. Members want to get to the bottom of these facts. I think it's great.

Madame Lalonde.

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde: I would like to know, Mr. Chairman, if this work plan calls for the striking of subcommittees, one for trade and another for human rights. What is keeping us from striking subcommittees?

The Chair: I will ask our clerk to answer that question. Mr. Knowles, please go ahead.

The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Stephen Knowles): Yesterday, Mr. Chairman, I received the name of the last member from the last party. We now have the member's names for the two subcommittees. Next week or right after the Remembrance Day break week, we will set up the subcommittees.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: As early as possible—

The Chair: It would be very good if we could try and set something up next week, if we have the names of the members from all of the political parties.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: Absolutely.

The Clerk: The names are already posted on the Website.

Ms. Francine Lalonde: They should get together and come up with a work plan.

The Chair: That is great, excellent.

[*English*]

Are there any other questions?

[*Translation*]

Thank you very much.

[*English*]

Madame McDonough, the last one.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Very briefly, I know it's a recurring question, but I note that in the memo we've been given about the

interest of Mel Hurtig appearing before the committee, which I would very much support, there's also a reference to the clerk being in touch with the coalition for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Has it been communicated to them that they are invited to come on the occasion on which the disarmament ambassador is now confirmed to meet with the committee.?

● (1715)

The Clerk: Mr. Chairman, I told them to look at the website. It's been on there for a week, the invitation or motion of the committee. I've been speaking to them, and it's just a question of scheduling; I'm looking at it. We're discussing dates in one of those blocks in November.

Ms. Alexa McDonough: Excellent.

[*Translation*]

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

[*English*]

The meeting is adjourned.

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

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