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Chair

Mr. Kevin Sorenson

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• (1050)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Kevin Sorenson (Crowfoot, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

This is June 7 and this is the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, meeting number 63. We've been discussing our report on democratic development and we're moving into committee business.

We have a notice of motion that is in order. It's Madam McDonough's motion on Darfur, a very timely motion.

Madam McDonough, would you like to speak to your motion, please?

Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP): Let me say also, to give credit where it's due, the motion I've brought forward is amended to incorporate some friendly amendments that we've had some back-and-forth around; it has been circulating.

I think it's extremely important, both because of the continued crisis in Darfur—

The Chair: May I interrupt here? You're speaking of an amended motion. Would you read your motion, so we're sure we're all talking about the same thing?

Ms. Alexa McDonough: This is the one that was distributed by the clerk. On the earlier one that I distributed, Bernard had proposals for amendments. I'm happy to read it, if that's the quickest way to make sure we're all looking at the same thing.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development, as part of its ongoing concern for the crisis in Darfur and consideration of issues of corporate social responsibility, invite senior officials from DFAIT, CIDA, and other relevant departments, as well as the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide, to appear before the committee to share knowledge about what Canadian public and private funds are currently invested in Sudan, and explore legislative initiatives the Canadian government could put forward to set regulations for such investments, and report to the House on its findings.

Going right back to the first reference to crisis in Darfur, this is really picking up where some very good earlier work left off to update and try to move forward on addressing the crisis in Darfur. I think that was originally an initiative that came from Madame Lalonde, if I'm not mistaken.

Secondly, on the issue of corporate social responsibility, everybody in the committee will be aware of the earlier work done by the subcommittee, then endorsed by the full committee. We also passed a motion calling for us to follow through. We're still waiting for the government's report back, and I guess in the context of any debate

around this, government members may be able to shed some light on this. When we originally asked for there to be a reporting back, it was suggested that the government would be only too eager to do it, probably within two or three weeks. It's now past two and a half months and we've had nothing reported back, so it's really to say let's take some responsibility to address this further.

Finally—I've jumped over this, so I'm simply going back—the all-party Parliamentary Committee for the Prevention of Genocide, as everybody here will know, has been doing a good deal of work on Darfur and they had a full day's round table that was attended by representatives of all parties and a lot of civil society, and want to bring forward the work into the context of this committee. It's really combining those three elements.

The Chair: I have a question as to whether or not we have the relevant groups mentioned. When we talk about the private funds and public funds, Canadian funds, I'm not certain if that's all DFAIT and CIDA.

Madame Lalonde was actually on the speaking list first. Madame Lalonde.

• (1055)

[Translation]

Ms. Francine Lalonde (La Pointe-de-l'Île, BQ): I suppose that we will be inviting other people, because we are saying, as I read in the French version “[...] invite, entre autres experts [...], ».

I would like to mention the battle I had to fight several years ago, when the crisis was raging in Sudan between the Sudanese government and the South, before an agreement was reached. The Canadian company Talisman Energy had played an important role by financing the government of Sudan, its soldiers and its equipment, which had refuelled the war in the South.

I, myself, was asking the government to do something, including to amend the Special Economic Measures Act to impose, in some circumstances, binding measures on the corporations.

I am therefore satisfied with this motion to explore legislative measures. It will not only serve in the case of Darfur, but as well in other circumstances. I am happy with this motion, and it is information that we need.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Madame Lalonde.

Mr. Obhrai, and then Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We have a serious problem with this motion. Our main concern is the jurisdictional problem; we are really encroaching on a lot of territories here. For example, we are dealing with public funding, the responsibility of the Department of Finance, Treasury Board, and other government bodies—not DFAIT or CIDA.

When you go on to private funding, this again creates a jurisdictional problem as to where and to whom this private funding goes.

The issue then falls down to the fact that we want to explore legislative initiatives put forward for such investments. Now, that is not the responsibility of the committee on foreign affairs; it goes to the finance committee, or somebody else.

The way this is designed, if we are going to become financial experts.... So the government....

An hon. member: Call the question.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Goldring, very quickly. And here's the problem: if they were to ask for relevant departments or relevant parties—

A voice: It's there.

A voice: Let's forget it. We have difficulties, but they want to call the question.

The Chair: All right.

Mr. Goldring.

Mr. Peter Goldring (Edmonton East, CPC): It goes further than that. You're setting regulations, and you mentioned a particular industry. If this is about industry, it might be for another department, yet again.

What is the thrust of this? What is the difficulty they're trying to determine? It's very poorly worded; it doesn't have a good description of where this is intended to go, other than a broad-based series of regulations on some industry.

The Chair: Are we ready for the question?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: We are adjourned.

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