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Chair: Mrs. Karen Vecchio



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• (1300)

[English]

The Chair (Mrs. Karen Vecchio (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): I call this meeting to order.

This is the third meeting of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on Tuesday, February 4, the committee will begin its study of intimate partner and domestic violence in Canada.

Given the ongoing pandemic situation and in light of the recommendations from public health authorities as well as the directive of the Board of Internal Economy on October 19, 2021, to remain healthy and safe, the following is recommended for all those attending the meeting in person.

Specifically to you, Dominique, this is what you need to do. Anyone with symptoms should participate by Zoom and not attend the meeting in person. Everyone must maintain two-metre physical distancing, whether seated or standing. Everyone must wear a non-medical mask when circulating in the room. It is recommended in the strongest possible terms that members wear their masks at all times, including when seated. Non-medical masks, which provide better clarity than do cloth masks, are available in the room. Everyone present must maintain proper hand hygiene by using the hand sanitizer at the room entrance. Committee rooms are cleaned before and after each meeting. To maintain this, everyone is encouraged to clean surfaces such as the desk, chair and microphone with the provided disinfectant wipes when vacating or taking a seat.

For those participating virtually, I would like to outline a few rules to follow. You may speak in the official language of your choice. Interpretation services are available for this meeting. You have the choice, at the bottom of your screen, of either floor, English or French audio. If interpretation is lost, please inform me immediately and we will ensure interpretation is properly restored before resuming the proceedings. Before speaking, please wait until I recognize you by name. If you are on the video conference, please click on the microphone icon to unmute yourself. For those in the room, your mike will be controlled as normal by the proceedings and verification officers. I remind everyone that all comments should be addressed through the chair. When speaking, please speak slowly and clearly. When you are not speaking, your mike should be on mute.

Before we welcome our witnesses today, I have a few administrative pieces that we need to discuss. Everybody should have re-

ceived some documents. You should all have received a document looking at the budget—a copy of the budget for the study on intimate partner and domestic violence in Canada. Can I get a show of hands that everybody has received that? Fantastic.

Is it the will of the committee to adopt the budget of \$7,050 for the study of intimate partner violence and domestic violence in Canada?

Marc, are you good with this? Can I have a show of hands on support for this budget of \$7,050?

Mr. Clerk, it looks as though it's a unanimous decision that we can spend this money today. Thank you very much.

Now we will turn to the press release.

Emmanuella, could you look at the French version for us to ensure that it is excellent as well? I would like to review our media release that will be going out specifically around this study. This has been put together by our analyst and our clerk.

Thank you very much for putting this together.

I would like to look at the English version first to see if there are any concerns with the English version of this media release. I am seeing no concerns.

I'm going to ask if there are any concerns.... I'm sorry. I should have asked you, Andréanne. You're always having to speak French. I'm so sorry.

Emmanuella, Andréanne, Marc and Dominique, could you guys look at the French version and let me know whether it is good and matches the words of the English version? Laila is good with that. Are there any comments or concerns with the English or French version?

Emmanuella, are you still reading?

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos (Saint-Laurent, Lib.): I am still reading the French version, but so far I don't see any issues.

Andréanne is probably better than I am though.

• (1305)

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche (Shefford, BQ): Same here. I have no problem with the French version.

Mrs. Dominique Vien: I agree.

[English]

The Chair: That's awesome. Could I have a show of hands?

All those in favour of this media release? Is anyone opposed to this media release?

Mr. Clerk, we're good to go. We're good for action.

Thank you very much. It's great that we could get through these so quickly.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Actually, Madam Chair, I just noticed that there may be a little something missing in the French version.

[English]

The Chair: Clerk, may I reopen this, since something has been seen, although it's been passed?

Go ahead, Andréanne.

[Translation]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: In the fifth bullet point, it says that the committee “will consider various international legislative experiences regarding the criminalization of coercive and manipulative behaviours between intimate partners.”

I just noticed that the words “et sur les autres outils de politiques publiques” are missing.

It's important because it adds something to paragraph d). So it would be good if we could add it to the fifth bullet in the release.

[English]

The Chair: I want to ensure for Andréanne that the information she is receiving is already in the English version.

Analysts, is there something that's missing in the English version? Was that something that was missing in the French version only?

Go ahead, Dominique.

Ms. Dominique Montpetit (Committee Researcher): It is not in the English version or the French. We just summarized, so this is a part that we left out. We will add it in both languages.

The Chair: Can I get consent from the committee to add that in both French and English? Is everybody okay with that?

Go ahead, Laila.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge (Fort McMurray—Cold Lake, CPC): Can we just confirm what is being added in both languages before we proceed?

The Chair: Analysts, I'm going to pass that back to you.

Go ahead, Dominique.

Ms. Dominique Montpetit: In the original motion, I think it was point (d) that mentioned legislation regarding coercive and controlling behaviours, as well as “other public policy tools”. We summarized the information in the press release, so “public policy tools” is not in the press release at the moment.

If I'm understanding correctly, the suggestion now is to add that to the last bullet point, the fifth bullet point, in the press release.

The Chair: Are there any objections to that? I see that it matches what we are studying.

I see none. All in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: That's awesome.

Let's move on to this great study that we're going to be starting. I will let everybody know that I am working with my son's Casio watch from 1980, it looks like, so I will be ensuring that I keep everybody to their proper times.

Today is fantastic because we have some wonderful people who will be our witnesses today. I would like to start by welcoming our panel of witnesses.

From the Department for Women and Gender Equality, we have Alia Butt, assistant deputy minister, strategic policy; Annette Arsenault, director general, gender-based violence policy; and Lisa Smylie, director general, research, results and delivery branch.

It is wonderful that you have joined us today.

I have a red note here. I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to ask you this, Clerk: Do we have the senior counsel and the director and general counsel? Are they here with us today as well?

Ms. Stephanie Bond (Procedural Clerk): Yes. Ms. Levman is here, as well as Ms. Farid.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

We also have with us, from the Department of Justice, Nathalie Levman, senior counsel, criminal law policy section, and Claire Farid, director and general counsel, family and children's law team, policy sector. I have it noted here that they will not be making opening remarks.

I'm now going to turn the floor over to the first speaker.

There may be a different order that you would like. If you do want a different order, please let me know.

Ms. Butt, I'm going to pass the floor over to you for five minutes.

Ms. Alia Butt (Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy, Department for Women and Gender Equality): Thank you very much.

[Translation]

Before we begin, I want to acknowledge that I am speaking with you from the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe peoples.

I am pleased to connect with you from the various territories and communities you are in today.

[English]

Madam Chair and committee members, it's a pleasure for me to participate in your study of intimate partner violence and domestic violence in Canada.

[Translation]

I am the assistant deputy minister of strategic policy at Women and Gender Equality Canada. I appreciate this committee's dedication to the continued research of an issue that is central to our work.

Everyone in Canada has the right to live free from violence. However, in Canada, 44% of women, or 6.2 million women, will experience some form of intimate partner violence in their lifetime.

• (1310)

[English]

In fact, intimate partner violence is one of the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence. GBV is one of the most pervasive, deadly and deeply rooted human rights violations of our time. It is also preventable and a significant barrier to achieving gender equality.

The data on intimate partner violence paints a disturbing picture. In the last year alone, over 225,000 women experienced intimate partner violence. That means that 618 women in Canada every day lived in fear, experiencing violence by a partner. Younger women between the ages of 15 and 44 years experience the highest levels of intimate partner violence of any age group. In addition, indigenous women are two times more likely to experience spousal violence than are non-indigenous women. People with disabilities, LGBTQ2 individuals, women living in the territories and women living with low income are more likely to experience intimate partner violence in their lifetime. And let's not forget that for every woman impacted, there is a family and often children impacted too.

Preventing and addressing gender-based violence is a national priority, and numerous actions are under way that provide a solid foundation to build upon, including responding to the reported increased level of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since April 2020, the Government of Canada, through Women and Gender Equality Canada, has provided emergency funding to support over 1,200 organizations that provide a range of GBV supports and services across Canada. To date, more than 1.3 million people have had a safe place to turn because of this funding.

The pandemic has reinforced the need for and urgency of a national action plan to end gender-based violence. To this end, Women and Gender Equality Canada is working closely with provincial and territorial governments to develop this plan, building on what we have heard from stakeholders and indigenous partners. Important steps towards the national action plan to end gender-based violence have been achieved in recent years and months.

At their 38th annual meeting, held in January 2021, the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the status of women endorsed the joint declaration for a Canada free of gender-based violence, which confirmed the common vision, principles and goals for responding to GBV. This joint declaration provides the overarching framework for the plan currently under development.

In December 2021, at their 39th annual meeting, ministers agreed to continue their commitment and collaboration to advance towards this national action plan. To support this effort, the Government of Canada is investing \$601.3 million over five years,

starting this fiscal year, to advance towards the national action plan to end GBV.

Women and Gender Equality, or WAGE, is investing \$450 million of this funding in the following areas: to support shelters, sexual assault centres, women's organizations and other organizations providing supports and services to those experiencing GBV; to enhance the GBV program, including funding to engage men and boys and support at-risk populations of survivors; to establish a dedicated secretariat to coordinate ongoing work toward the development and implementation of the GBV national action plan; to advance important research and knowledge mobilization; to support crisis hotlines; and to support the important work the government is doing on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. WAGE is also investing \$55 million to bolster the capacity of indigenous women and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations to specifically provide GBV prevention programming. The call for proposals to access this funding is currently open.

All of these initiatives are building on the federal GBV strategy launched in 2017. I would like to highlight for the committee a few of the Government of Canada's key achievements. Since 2018, the department has invested over \$30 million in GBV research, including a new national survey that provided us with our first comprehensive understanding of intimate partner violence in Canada, with an innovative index developed by the University of Western Ontario. Also in 2018, the government launched the GBV Knowledge Centre's online platform, which brings together program and research evidence and resources to enable evidence-based action on GBV. The platform also includes key information on resources available for those affected by GBV. Since 2015, the government has invested over \$1 billion to prevent and address GBV and committed an additional \$601 million through budget 2021.

Of our own investments in that period, WAGE provided more than 1,600 organizations with \$730 million to support more than 500 projects working to prevent GBV and to support survivors and their families. Because of these projects, nearly 2.6 million women gained access to programs and supports related to GBV, including access to counselling, court services and trauma-informed victim services. An additional one million people gained skills and knowledge to prevent GBV and to support those affected.

I'm getting the signal.

I'm confident this committee's study will make a valuable contribution to the efforts to end GBV. I look forward to reviewing your study and applying it to the GBV national action plan.

• (1315)

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Butt, for recognizing that whenever the green pen starts circling, I'm winding it up. Thank you so much. That's wonderful.

I'm now going to pass it over to Annette Arseneault.

Annette, you have five minutes.

Ms. Alia Butt: Madam Chair, I'm the only one who was going to be—

The Chair: Well, goodness gracious, Ms. Butt. Did I really... I'm going to break here.

Did I steal all of your time? Do you still have a lot left?

Ms. Alia Butt: No. That's okay. I ran through it fairly quickly.

I'm the only one making remarks on behalf of WAGE today. Also, as you mentioned, Justice officials who are here with us today are not making remarks but are here to field any questions you may have specific to the areas of the work they do.

The Chair: That's wonderful. Thank you so much.

We have all of our witnesses who are going to be here and able to take these questions.

This is going to be our first official meeting with witnesses for the 44th Parliament, so I'll once again give everybody a breakdown as we start these meetings. In the first round, everybody is going to be given six minutes. Those six minutes include the questions and the answers, and, of course, you're going to start seeing the green pen spinning around. In the second round, we have five minutes. It will be five minutes for the CPC and Liberal spokespersons, and two and a half minutes for the Bloc and the NDP. Then we go back to a five-minute round for the third round.

We're going to start today's questions. I'm going to pass the floor over to Dominique Vien.

Dominique, you have six minutes for questions.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm very pleased to be with you this afternoon. Sitting on a federal Parliamentary committee is a first for me. I'm a newbie, but I have had some very interesting experiences similar to the opening remarks we heard just now. Thank you very much, Ms. Butt. I thank you all as well for coming out today.

Substantial funding has been announced and, as I understand it, people are now starting to spend a lot of money. Other funding has been announced as well. You mentioned \$601 million that needs to be distributed.

What should we remember about what has been accomplished with this money? What measurable results can you share with us after implementing the strategy and spending the rather large funding envelopes that have been provided?

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Vien. Are you directing that at one person?

Ms. Butt, are you going to take the answer, perhaps?

You can direct it to whomever you want, Ms. Vien, or would you like Ms. Butt to answer that question?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Since she is the group leader this afternoon, perhaps Ms. Butt could answer my questions or redirect them to someone else.

[*English*]

Ms. Alia Butt: I can take the question, if that's all right.

There are two different things here that we might want to talk about. One is the strategy that was launched in 2017, "It's Time". That was the federal strategy that was launched to prevent and address GBV. In terms of that federal strategy, the government invested over \$219 million over six years and \$42 million ongoing. That was to make sure the federal family was coming together to move forward on that particular approach.

There were seven departments involved at the time: Public Safety; the Public Health Agency of Canada, from whom you will be hearing as part of panel two; the Department of National Defence; Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada; the RCMP; Justice; and us.

One of the key things that came out of that strategy in particular is the GBV knowledge centre, which is housed within WAGE. It is the focal point of the GBV strategy and is responsible for governance and coordination, reporting and evaluation, data and research and knowledge mobilization, so I can give you a bit more information in terms of the results you're asking for.

Since its inception, over 170 resources were added to this online platform, which was visited more than 64,000 times in 2020-21. During the same period, the knowledge centre hosted 11 webinars featuring researchers, GBV and knowledge mobilization experts, public servants and funding recipients. More than 1,400 participants attended from federal organizations, provincial and territorial governments, academic institutions, and national and international non-government organizations.

In addition, approximately \$50 million is being invested in roughly 60 projects to support the development and implementation of promising practices to address gaps in supports for victims and survivors and their families—

• (1320)

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Ms. Butt, I wish I had a more specific answer.

I understand that funding has been announced, but I am talking about concrete action that has produced tangible results. Some 44% of women experience violence.

Now that we've had these expenditures, announcements and strategies, when will we get that staggering number down? Are we getting there with all the money being spent?

[*English*]

Ms. Alia Butt: Thank you very much for that clarification.

I'm just going to ask my colleague, who's the DG responsible for research, results and delivery, to jump in and provide a response in terms of outcomes.

Dr. Lisa Smylie (Director General, Research, Results and Delivery Branch, Department for Women and Gender Equality):

As we all know, reducing rates of gender-based violence is going to take some time. On the road to that, we've achieved some concrete results. For example, with the funding from the federal gender-based violence strategy given to our department, WAGE, alone, we've provided funding to more than 1,600 organizations. Because of that, almost 2.6 million women gained access to programs and supports related to gender-based violence, such as counselling, court services and trauma-informed victim services.

In addition to that, nearly one million people gained skills and knowledge to help prevent gender-based violence and to support those who are impacted by gender-based violence.

Just during the pandemic, we've invested \$100 million in more than 1,200 organizations—shelters, sexual-assault centres and other organizations providing critical gender-based violence supports, and more than 1.3—

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Dominique Vien: Thank you very much.

That brings me to something of particular interest to me, the funding of organizations. It goes without saying that across the country and in Quebec, we have organizations dedicated to supporting and taking in women—

The Chair: Excuse me, Mrs. Vien.

[*English*]

I'm sorry about this, but I have to look at the time. This is where we all learn, in the first round, that the time can be taken up very, very quickly.

To both sides, your time has run out, I'm afraid.

I will move over to Sonia for her six minutes, and then we'll go from there.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Madam Chair, I think we have another person.

The Chair: Emmanuella, I'm sorry.

You have the floor.

Ms. Emmanuella Lambropoulos: Thank you to the witnesses who are here today to help inform this committee on something as extremely important as gender-based violence.

I agree that gender-based violence, violence against women, is not something that will end in just a couple of years. Of course, this is a long-term national strategy. I can see that there are three pillars: prevention, support for survivors, and legal—helping people navigate the justice system.

With regard to the funding of \$600 million that you mentioned, Ms. Butt, you said that about \$415 million recently went to support shelters, to enhance gender-based violence programs, and you mentioned programs including men and boys as well. I was wondering if you could maybe point us in the direction of what specifically is being done to help men and boys get involved in finding a solution to ending gender-based violence.

Could you let us know to what extent we're including education at a very young age as well? I think in order to stop this from being an issue in the future, we need to nip it in the bud when kids are still in school. Could you maybe let us know if there's anything being done at that level?

• (1325)

Ms. Alia Butt: You're right. The \$105 million that I mentioned that was provided in budget 2021 can be used specifically to do work with men and boys. However, I just want to mention that it is building upon work that was started back in 2018, when we held a series of round table discussions on how to engage men and boys in advancing gender equality. That led to a "what we heard" report that was published later on and is publicly available.

The report highlighted some main themes that were raised during those discussions, including identifying persisting behaviours that contribute to inequality; challenging and changing negative norms, attitudes and behaviours through accountability and healing; sustaining efforts to engage men and boys in equality, if you're building networks or sharing knowledge and taking action; and then sharing accountability and being aware of resource scarcity, meaning that engaging men and boys should not hinder funding to women and girls.

We did invest previously. Prior to this \$105 million that was announced in budget 2021, we provided funding to a key group of organizations. I'll give you a couple of examples and I'll just see if my colleagues can find any that are specific to education. If we can't, we can get back to you on that.

We did fund Next Gen Men, to build a network of pro-feminist leaders, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters to promote sports figures as role models to increase awareness of GBV, and Catalyst Canada to support men as disruptors of sexism in the workplace. We are currently funding the University of Calgary to identify strategies, practical approaches and supporting evidence on how to engage men and boys in advancing gender equality and preventing GBV. That work is expected to wrap up this fall.

Another important initiative is the funding of White Ribbon to support the development, implementation and evaluation of a social marketing campaign to inspire men and young men across Canada to change their attitudes and behaviours.

Those are just some key examples that I have with me today, but as I mentioned, you had a question specifically around education, and I will just check to see if we have anything handy.

We do. I'm going to turn to Lisa. She's been able to pull it up.

Dr. Lisa Smylie: WAGE recently provided nearly \$700,000 to the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada, which is taking action to ensure that sexual health education programs—comprehensive sexual health education in schools, for example—are more effective at addressing the harmful gender norms at a very young age, so influencing norms and attitudes that hopefully over the longer term will reduce gender-based violence, and intimate partner violence in particular.

Ms. Emmanuela Lambropoulos: I'm very happy to hear that. Thank you very much.

I have another question regarding the pandemic. Obviously more women have required shelters in the last few years because of the pandemic and being stuck at home with perpetrators of violence.

Has there been an influx in support from WAGE towards these shelters in the last two years, specifically since the pandemic started? I know that shelters are really at their wits' end, and they're not able to service the women who are currently needing their support.

Dr. Lisa Smylie: The short answer is absolutely.

Since the pandemic started, WAGE has invested nearly \$100 million in more than 1,200 shelters, sexual assault centres and other organizations providing supports to people experiencing gender-based violence. Because of that, more than 1.3 million women and children have had somewhere to turn during the pandemic.

With that funding, almost 450 organizations were able to hire new staff; 500 organizations were able to extend staff shifts to respond to increased demand; over 530 organizations were able to expand their programs and services; over 200 organizations were able to acquire new shelter beds, and nearly 100 organizations were able to implement child care services.

Our funding is having an impact.

• (1330)

Ms. Emmanuela Lambropoulos: Thank you very much. I see that my time is up.

The Chair: Thank you so much. You guys are right on time.

We're now going to turn it over for six minutes to Andréanne Larouche.

Andréanne, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank the officials from Women and Gender Equality Canada and the Department of Justice here with us today for the work they do every day to fight this scourge.

I'm from Quebec and, first, I would like to offer my condolences to the families and loved ones affected by the 18 femicides that occurred in Quebec last year alone 2021. Eighteen women were killed by their partner.

To prevent this from happening again, the Quebec government is closely monitoring this issue. An all-party committee has been set

up and it has produced an impressive document with many recommendations. All parties are working together on this critical issue.

Based on these recommendations, the Ministère de la Sécurité publique and obviously Quebec's Secrétariat à la condition féminine have invested a great deal in organizations that help women experiencing violence, including shelters. We know that money is transferred between Ottawa, Quebec and the provinces and territories to help these centres.

Where are we at on the transfers? Have all of the funds we were promised actually been transferred to the Quebec government?

I'd like to hear from somebody from Women and Gender Equality.

[*English*]

Ms. Alia Butt: I can confirm that since the onset of the pandemic, in terms of the emergency funding that we've been talking about, we've been working with three key partners to roll out the funding at record speeds. They are the Canadian Women's Foundation, Women's Shelters Canada and the Government of Quebec.

I can confirm that a portion of funding from the original \$100 million went directly to the Government of Quebec to roll out to shelters, sexual assault centres and organizations supporting women experiencing violence in Quebec. An additional \$44.4 million out of the new money, the \$200 million coming out of budget 2021, went directly to the Government of Quebec to roll out and to continue to provide emergency funding and support. The original money, the \$100 million, was for those organizations to simply be able to keep their doors open, to buy hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment, to be able to distance, and for hotels for women who needed to isolate.

Things are evolving. We're working very closely with our partners. The new money is flexible. It's being used for evolving needs. We had originally thought that we'd be moving to a postpandemic environment before we all heard about omicron. Unfortunately, the funding is still being used for some very, very basic needs. We're trying to be as flexible as possible to meet those needs.

But yes, I can confirm that the money is with the Government of Quebec.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Before anyone else responds, I'm going to ask you a secondary question.

We know that it took longer to transfer these funds to Quebec. There have been delays. I had the opportunity to speak with people from the department in Quebec City last year. Despite these additional delays for the transfer, have the anticipated results been achieved? Have investments or other public policy been considered by your department? Has your department really checked with Quebec, the provinces and territories to determine their real needs and avoid duplicate funding?

[English]

Ms. Alia Butt: Yes, absolutely. We're lucky enough at Women and Gender Equality to have a very great relationship through our federal-provincial-territorial forum of ministers responsible for the status of women. That FPT group was absolutely critical for us in even being able to identify shelters, sexual assault centres and organizations across the country at the onset of the pandemic.

Typically, WAGE is not the key funder of shelters across the country in terms of operating costs. It was identified as a need, so even just to be able to pull together lists of organizations across the country, we had to work with our provincial and territorial counterparts to make that happen. We have a great relationship. That work happened as quickly as possible to get the money out.

I have to say that in terms of the emergency funding, in terms of feedback from our stakeholder organizations, we probably received the most positive testimonials with respect to this pot of funding than any other. That was because of the speed at which it was disbursed through our third party organizations, because of the flexibility that was provided and because we reduced the reporting burden on the application process.

On the budget 2021 funding that was announced, I can confirm that the agreement was put in place with Quebec last summer, I believe in August. We're always working to put those agreements in place as quickly as possible. From our perspective, we have a great working relationship with the Government of Quebec and with all of the other PTs through the ministerial forum.

• (1335)

The Chair: We have only eight seconds left there, Andréanne, so I will add eight seconds to the next round for you to go longer.

Leah, I'm going to pass the floor over to you. You have six minutes.

Ms. Leah Gazan (Winnipeg Centre, NDP): Welcome to our committee today, guests.

My first question is for you, Madam Butt. You spoke about spaces for refuge for women and diverse-gendered individuals fleeing violence. How many of those spaces were low barrier?

Ms. Alia Butt: I'm sorry. I'm not sure I understood the question. How many of the spaces that we funded...? Do you mean the shelters—

Ms. Leah Gazan: The shelters, yes: How many were low barrier?

Ms. Alia Butt: Low barrier...? I'm not sure. I'd have to look into that and get back to you. We can certainly get back to the committee once we've done an analysis of those numbers. There are 1,200

organizations that were funded with that money, so we would have to look into that and get back to you.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Yes. I ask that because many women with addictions, for example, often aren't able to use shelter systems, and this costs lives. We know that, so I think it's important to identify how many shelters are actually low barrier, so that all women and diverse genders are able to access them.

Rates of violence—as you know, since this is your area—against women and the diverse-gendered have increased as much as 400 times in some areas. I know that my riding of Winnipeg Centre has seen a crisis of violence, particularly against indigenous women and girls. We still don't have a national action plan, even though we see a rapid, 400-fold increase in violence. When will the national action plan be released? On what date?

Ms. Alia Butt: Unfortunately, I don't think I'll be able to give you a date in particular, but what I can tell you is that in 2019, the Minister for Women and Gender Equality was mandated to build on the ongoing work of the Canada strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence. Since that time, a lot of work has been done, and some key milestones have been reached.

The national action plan means we're working with provinces and territories to develop this collaboratively. It was in January 2021 that the FPT ministers endorsed the joint declaration for a Canada free of gender-based violence, which really confirms the common vision, principles and goals for responding to gender-based violence. That was one of the key—

Ms. Leah Gazan: I ask this because that was 2019 and it's now 2022. Rates of violence have gone up 400 times, and we really need a plan quickly. I would really appreciate it if your department could get back to the committee to give a really clear timeline of when we'll see this national action plan. I think it would be helpful.

I have another question. It's no secret that indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to go missing or be murdered than the rest of the population—12 times. This was actually reported in the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. That was released in June 2019. It's now 2022. You still don't have an action plan in response to the 231 calls for justice that came out of the inquiry. The crisis persists. When will this action plan be released?

• (1340)

Ms. Alia Butt: On that one, there will be witnesses from Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Services Canada on panel two, so I would just maybe leave it to them to speak specifically about the MMIWG question you have, but what I can tell you in terms of the important work we're doing at WAGE is that we have been working very closely with our colleagues in those departments.

On the \$55 million that I mentioned earlier in terms of the call for proposals that's currently open, that is funding that is specifically targeted to indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations to bolster their capacity specifically to help in the prevention of GBV. That is one important piece that we're delivering at WAGE that does fit with the federal pathway in response to MMIWG.

More broadly in terms of the MMIWG plan, as I mentioned, panel number two will have two officials present from both Crown-Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Services Canada.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you very much.

In terms of findings regionally, how much funding was provided to Manitoba shelters?

Ms. Alia Butt: I can definitely jump in here. I don't have the number in front of me, but I can confirm that for the 1,200 organizations that were funded with the \$100 million, all the information is publicly available on our website. It's broken down by province. You'll see the name of every single organization that we funded in your province, along with the amount of money they received. We can follow up with the committee to give you the link.

The Chair: Absolutely, follow up with the committee. Perhaps at the end of the meeting, there are certain things we may request of some of our witnesses today. We'll speak to our clerk to ensure we get everything done.

I'm looking at the time. One of the most important things is that we will be switching over to another panel and we need to do sound checks.

I'm going to do this on the fly. For round two, I'm going to be reducing Laila to four minutes, Anita to four minutes, and Andréanne and Leah each down to a minute and a half, so we can get the entire round done.

I'm going to pass it over to Laila for four minutes.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I guess I'm going to have to speak quickly.

Ms. Butt, in your opening comments, you touched on the disparity in violence that you see in a variety of spaces. Is it fair to say that there is a rural-urban divide when it comes to gender-based violence? Yes or no.

Dr. Lisa Smylie: I can take that question, Madam Chair.

The short answer is yes, absolutely.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Fantastic.

I come from Fort McMurray, which is evidently a rural part of the world, especially in Canada, so it's something that is quite concerning. I would ask that rather than just sending us the website, please send documentation to the committee with all of the shelters across the country that have received the funds. If it's possible, could you also send us every shelter that applied that did not receive the funds? I think it would be helpful to be able to see how you are specifically trying to make things better for rural communities and the indigenous communities that tend to be in those rural areas.

I was also wondering if you could point us in the direction of best practices that exist either within Canada or around the world.

• (1345)

Ms. Alia Butt: We probably don't have enough time, so we will certainly follow up with the committee and send you the full list of the 1,200.

I want to mention something that's really important. We have worked really hard with our partners at Women's Shelters Canada and the Canadian Women's Foundation to make sure everybody gets the funding they need during this emergency period.

There will be another call for proposals in case absolutely anyone was missed. If you're worried about a particular organization in your riding, we can certainly make sure that they are not left behind if they're able to apply for those calls for proposals.

I don't know how much time we have left, but maybe we can get back to—

The Chair: There is a minute left.

Ms. Alia Butt: Do you have anything to add right now, or will we follow up on best practices?

Dr. Lisa Smylie: In terms of some best practices, WAGE has provided a million dollars in funding to Women's Shelters Canada, which produced an interactive map of shelters. Because of that, over 75,000 people were able—

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: I understand, but in our study, we are trying to find legislative and public policy solutions. It's not about funding at this point. It's about who is doing good things and what can we do to replicate it. It's not necessarily just spending the money.

Ms. Alia Butt: On the legislative side, I'll turn to my justice colleagues in terms of identifying any best practices.

Ms. Nathalie Levman (Senior Counsel, Criminal Law Policy Section, Department of Justice): Thank you for that referral.

I'm not sure how much time I have, but I'm here today to speak to what I know the committee is interested in, which is existing criminal coercive control legislation that's in place in various jurisdictions. The U.K. is one of them. Is that something that you would like to hear about? I see nodding.

Before I comment on the criminal coercive control legislation, I'd also like to note that the concept of coercive control has been used in other areas of the law as well, for example, in family law. My colleague Claire Farid is here today, and she can comment on that if that's of interest to you. I think it probably would be.

In the criminal context, coercive control offences criminalize a pattern of conduct—

The Chair: Ms. Levman, we are at four minutes already. I'm very sorry.

On that question, I don't know if we'll be able to have more opportunity here, but there could be some written requests later.

I'm sorry about the time. It's just so short, and I know how important it is.

I will now pass it over to Anita for four minutes.

Ms. Anita Vandenbeld (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): My first question is for you, Ms. Butt. When I was on this committee in 2017 and we did the gender-based violence against young women and girls study, there was a lot of discussion about whether we should be focusing on a federal action plan or a national action plan. The difference is that the federal one is for the areas that are specifically in federal jurisdiction and could be done immediately, whereas the national one means having to coordinate with all the other levels of government, including provinces and territories.

You mentioned in your opening remarks the gender-based violence strategy, the whole-of-government approach. I don't want to leave it to seem as though because we haven't launched a national action plan, this means there hasn't been anything done. I wonder if you could elaborate on the federal side, the gender-based violence strategy.

As well, how is it going with the provinces and territories? How receptive are they? How might COVID have impacted the ability to be able to do those negotiations in order to get to the national action plan?

Ms. Alia Butt: I had started to touch earlier on some of the achievements of the federal strategy when I was talking about the seven departments involved and some of the good work that's being done by the knowledge centre. In terms of other notable achievements on the federal strategy, we were able to launch three new national surveys establishing baselines on different forms of GBV and critical data gaps. We know how important that is. There is a need to continue to fund research so that we know what the issues are and we can appropriately target them.

In terms of funding for community-based research to better understand the impacts of GBV and prevention efforts, we've developed and tested promising practices in prevention and support for victims and survivors in areas that include sexual violence, child maltreatment, teen and youth dating violence, gender-based violence in post-secondary institutions specifically, and also human trafficking. We have enhanced cultural awareness training for RCMP officers and staff across the country. We're enhancing supports for victims and survivors of GBV within the Canadian Armed Forces. Those are just some of the good things that are coming out of the federal strategy.

In terms of the national action plan, you're right, we are working with the provinces and territories across the country, and that takes time. We're also engaging with many stakeholders. Since 2020 we've had a series of engagement sessions with approximately 1,500 individuals from civil society. We've engaged with the ministerial advisory council on gender-based violence. With our indigenous partners, our deputy minister has an indigenous women's circle, which has been critical to ensuring that there is an indigenous pillar within our national action plan. A lot of significant effort went into the development of this national action plan.

Overall, I want to say that the collaboration has been great with PTs. I will mention that Quebec supports the general principles of the joint declaration and the plan, but is wanting to continue the fight against gender-based violence by prioritizing its own actions and measures. I just want to make sure I'm clear about that point. They have been at the table and are supportive of the work we're doing. That work is proceeding.

To address the question you raised about the pandemic, absolutely we had to pivot. In March and April of 2020 we absolutely had to pivot with the FPT forum, and got the \$300 million that we're now rolling out. As I mentioned, \$100 million is already out to the network of shelters. It was really just making sure that the emergency needs were met while we continued to move forward on the good work we were doing on the national action plan.

• (1350)

The Chair: That's awesome.

We'll pass it over to Andréanne for 90 seconds and then to Leah. They will be our last two questioners.

Go ahead, Andréanne.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: It's great to have a national plan, but 10 years is far too long. I hope that the timeline can be shortened.

Having said that, Ms. Levman, I'd like to hear from you on what falls under the Department of Justice's purview. Quebec already has some ideas, and I would like to know if Ottawa will follow suit. I would hope so. We have pilot projects for the electronic bracelet and creating a specialized court, for example.

Could you then talk about coercive control to expand our conception violence against women?

[*English*]

Ms. Nathalie Levman: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to criminal coercive control offences, which criminalize a pattern of conduct that serves to entrap the victim who is a current or former intimate partner of the accused and thus eliminate their sense of freedom.

A broad range of coercive and controlling conduct may be employed, but the focus is on how the pattern of that conduct serves to subjugate, not the individual incidents by which an abuser has exercised control. That's because coercive control is concerned with the cumulative impact of the abuser's conduct on the victim. In this respect, coercive control legislation is unlike traditional criminal law, which generally responds to specific incidents of wrongful conduct, like assault, sexual assault or uttering threats.

Coercive control criminal legislation was implemented in the United Kingdom in 2015, in Scotland in 2018 and in Ireland in 2019. I can provide the committee with information on those offences and also on the Home Office's March 2021 evaluation of the U.K. offence.

The Chair: Thank you so much. I believe the entire committee would really appreciate it if you could do so. I would really appreciate that.

We're going to move on now to our last round of questions.

Leah, you have the floor for 90 seconds.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I know I don't have a lot time, but Madam Butt, you spoke about support for men and programs for men and boys to assist them with non-violence.

Could you provide an example of one of those programs and what they are doing?

Ms. Alia Butt: I have a couple of examples that I shared. One of the important ones that's in play right now is funding for the University of Calgary to identify strategies, practical approaches and supporting evidence on how to engage men and boys in advancing gender equality and preventing GBV. That one's going to wrap up this fall, so it will be an important one to watch out for.

There's also funding for White Ribbon to support the development, implementation and evaluation of a social marketing campaign to inspire men and young men across Canada to change their attitudes and behaviours, to seek help when needed, and to embrace their roles as allies and change makers.

Lisa mentioned an important one. I can go back to her, because that was specific to education.

Dr. Lisa Smylie: It was the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada that I mentioned previously. Since we have already mentioned that, I want to mention one more that's really important, which is the FOXY program in the Northwest Territories.

It's a phenomenal program that's won an Arctic award for the impact it has had. It's a program to engage indigenous youth, particularly men and boys, in gender equality. They bring folks together for a week and do education, and it has had a huge impact in the territory on gender norms and attitudes.

• (1355)

The Chair: This has been one heck of an incredible committee. Thank you so much. I know our time is very short.

I would really like to thank Alia, Annette, Lisa, Nathalie and Claire. Thank you so much for joining us at our committee today.

We are going to take a very short break, because we're going to be getting our next panel directly at 2:00. I will ask our witnesses to go ahead and log off, and we will get our new witnesses on.

Take that quick break if you need, but be back on for 2:00.

Thanks, everyone.

• (1355)

(Pause)

• (1355)

The Chair: I call the meeting back to order.

We're going to reconvene now. I believe everybody is on. It looks good. Everybody's available in the room.

We're coming to our second panel.

For some reason, my thing will not come up right now. It's being a little crazy, so I'm going to be reading from some other notes.

I would like to welcome our second panel. Today, we have three different people coming from Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs. We have Chantal Marin-Comeau, who is the director general of the missing and murdered women and girls secretariat. From the Department of Indigenous Services, we have Ian Kenney, who is the director general of the social policy and programs branch; and from the Public Health Agency of Canada, we have Karen McKinnon, who is the director general of the centre for health promotion.

To all of our panellists, I will be granting you five minutes each. I have my little Casio watch from the 1980s, so I will be timing you.

I am going to pass the floor. Chantal, you have the floor for five minutes.

• (1400)

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau (Director General, Missing and Murdered Women and Girls Secretariat, Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs): Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

First, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on a topic that is near and dear to my heart: ending gender- and race-based violence against indigenous women, girls and gender diverse peoples.

I join you today from Gatineau, which is located on the beautiful unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin nation.

My name is Chantal Marin-Comeau. As you know, I am the director general of the Secretariat.

[*English*]

The secretariat is the organization that coordinates the federal government's work regarding missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. It brings together over 23 departments involved in this initiative.

However, addressing this tragedy needs much more than the federal government. It needs a whole-of-Canada approach that puts indigenous families, survivors and communities at the heart of all of these efforts. It also needs efforts by every level of government—indigenous, federal, provincial, territorial and municipal—in order to achieve a substantial and transformative change.

[Translation]

So today, I am pleased to provide you with some perspectives of the work under way.

As you know, on September 1, 2016, the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls was launched. On June 3, 2019, the inquiry released its final report. This report includes 231 calls for justice. Some of these calls for justice are directly related to the issues this committee is studying, including current support and infrastructures for protection from intimate partner violence.

[English]

On June 3, 2021, the indigenous-led national action plan for MMIWG was released. It includes contributions by indigenous families and survivors, first nations, Inuit, Métis, urban, 2SLGBTQQIA+, data and research communities, indigenous organizations and the federal, provincial and territorial governments.

Some priorities identified by indigenous partners in the national action plan include those related to infrastructure, housing, shelters, violence-prevention programs, safe communities, public awareness and trauma-informed approaches to support families and survivors.

The Federal Pathway is the Government of Canada's contribution to the national action plan. It was launched on June 3, 2021. The pathway does acknowledge that colonialism, racism, sexism and ableism have really created systemic inequities for indigenous peoples, notably women, girls and gender-diverse people.

[Translation]

To deliver on its commitments, the government is taking concrete action through new investments, legislation, policies, initiatives and programs that address the root causes of this issue.

The federal government has made significant investments in recent years. These include investments made in response to the national inquiry's interim report: those in the fall 2020 economic statement, and the \$2.2 billion investment in the 2021 budget.

Key legislation has been passed, such as the Indigenous Languages Act, the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Child, Youth and Family Act and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.

[English]

The government has also adopted policies that contribute to ending gender- and race-based violence. These include Canada's strategy to prevent and address gender-based violence, the national strategy to combat human trafficking, the comprehensive violence-prevention strategy, and the distinctions-based mental health and wellness strategy.

Other strategies are also in development. As you know, there are the national indigenous justice strategy and the federal action plan on LGBTQ2.

In tandem, many initiatives and programs have been launched, such as the first nations child and family services program, mental wellness programs in communities, and shelters for indigenous women and their children fleeing violence.

• (1405)

[Translation]

For family members and survivors of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, a national crisis line was set up, and family information and liaison units were funded and established.

While the federal government is taking concrete steps, there is still much to be done. Families, survivors and communities want to see tangible results from these actions, results that demonstrate transformative change.

[English]

However, this systemic and transformative change will take time and will require ongoing collaboration with indigenous families, survivors, partners, organizations, provinces, territories and municipalities.

Meegwetch.

The Chair: *Meegwetch* to you as well. Thank you so much.

We're now going to pass it over to Ian Kenney from Indigenous Services. Ian, when you see this green pen start twirling, that means your time is coming, so please wrap it up.

I'm passing the floor over to you.

Mr. Ian Kenney (Director General, Social Policy and Programs Branch, Department of Indigenous Services): Great, thank you very much.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that I am speaking to you from the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe people.

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you about the important work that Indigenous Services Canada is doing to support indigenous women, girls, families and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people facing gender-based violence.

One of the programs offered by Indigenous Services Canada is the family violence prevention program. The underlying objective of this program is to empower indigenous communities to design and deliver services and programming that best meet their unique needs. While this program has long been limited to an on-reserve shelter focus, in 2021 we obtained authority to support shelters and transition homes to meet the needs of first nations both on and off reserve—Inuit, Métis, 2SLGBTQQIA+ people and indigenous urban communities.

Through this program, the Government of Canada supports the ongoing operation of a network of 46 emergency shelters for first nations on reserve. These shelters provide emergency support and a vital place of refuge for survivors escaping violent situations. The shelters we fund are independently operated and indigenous-led. We work with partners to identify priorities for violence prevention activities.

We have heard from our partners that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in an increase in both the number of cases and the severity of intimate partner violence, with a greater impact on indigenous women. Our most recent data shows that over 3,700 women and 1,800 children have been served by this network of shelters. However, the pandemic has seen a 20% to 30% increase in gender-based violence in all parts of Canada, as you know. As of yet, shelter staff have not been able to report on all of their critical activities through what the World Health Organization has dubbed the “shadow pandemic”. The work done by Women's Shelters Canada, for example, reinforces what we are hearing on the ground.

In addition to providing a place of refuge, some shelters directly offer wraparound services, including counselling, addiction services, employment and housing support, skills development, training and child care, while others coordinate access to these supports.

Indigenous service providers determine what approaches work best in their communities. There have been many innovations. For example, while most shelters provide only limited access to men, one shelter we support provides a multigender environment that uses traditional teachings to promote a holistic approach to support the entire family.

The family violence prevention program also provides funding for the delivery of culturally relevant violence prevention activities that are holistic and inclusive of communities, including men and boys. Violence prevention activities include trauma-informed care for youth and families, empowerment projects for girls, healing circles, and cultural and land-based activities that build community networks.

Since 2017, we have been supporting the Moose Hide Campaign, which engages indigenous and non-indigenous men and boys in activities focused on ending violence against women and children. The organization has successfully developed a network of partners and promotes awareness through promotional products and community activities.

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has highlighted the critical gaps that need to be filled to better address the needs of those victimized by violence. In May 2020, the Government of Canada announced it would support 10 new shelters in first nations communities and two shelters in the territories through a joint initiative between the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Indigenous Services Canada. While any additions to the shelter network are an improvement, the inquiry reinforced just how much more work has to be done to address the unique needs, particularly in the north, where the rate of violence is highest and shelter access is low.

Furthermore, in July 2021, the comprehensive violence prevention strategy was announced. This \$724-million initiative includes

expanding access to supports across Canada for indigenous women, children, families and 2SLGBTQIA+ people. This strategy will support 38 new shelters and 50 transition or second-stage homes for first nations, Inuit and Métis across the country, including on and off reserve, in the north and in urban areas. These new investments will be jointly implemented by ISC and CMHC.

Indigenous partners are essential in how our program evolves. For example, we were working with the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence to redevelop our funding formula and reporting tools in collaboration with shelter workers. New shelters and transition homes are realized through decisions made by both steering and selection committees comprised of representatives from first nations, Inuit, Métis, 2SLGBTQIA+ and indigenous urban communities.

• (1410)

In addition to infrastructure, this funding includes ongoing supports for culturally relevant violence prevention activities that broaden the continuum of care. Enhanced services include case management and programs to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation, as well as culturally appropriate mental health and addiction supports. With these new supports, communities will have expanded access to shelters and second-stage housing that enables survivors to transition to lives free from violence.

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

Because our time is getting so tight, I'm going to pass it over to the Public Health Agency of Canada and to Karen McKinnon.

Karen, you have five minutes.

Mrs. Karen McKinnon (Director General, Centre for Health Promotion, Public Health Agency of Canada): Good afternoon, Madam Chair. Thank you for the invitation to address this committee as part of your study of intimate partner and domestic violence in Canada.

I join you today from the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin Nation in Ottawa to speak to you about the Public Health Agency of Canada's role in addressing and preventing intimate partner and domestic violence, in light of the significant and long-term physical and mental health impacts of these forms of violence. I appreciate the opportunity to share this context with you today as you undertake this important study.

The Public Health Agency of Canada sees family violence, which includes intimate partner violence, as a serious public health issue. We are particularly concerned about violence in relationships, since these forms of violence are often repeated or ongoing and can lead to complex trauma. The effects of violence on physical and mental health can persist throughout the life course, and can affect future generations. For example, women who have experienced intimate partner violence face high rates of injury, chronic pain, sleep disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance use-related harm.

It is also important to recognize the negative consequences of intimate partner violence on children who are exposed to violence in the home, or who experience its aftermath. Children exposed to intimate partner violence are at increased risk of a wide range of psychological and behavioural problems including low self-esteem, depression and anxiety, and increased risks of aggression, delinquency, violence and risk-taking behaviours.

As my colleagues have already indicated, intimate partner violence is widespread, with particular prevalence for women, girls and gender-diverse people. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased risks for family violence as families face heightened stress and real or perceived challenges in accessing support or prevention programs.

At the Public Health Agency of Canada, we address family violence from a public health perspective. We support the design and delivery of interventions that promote safe relationships and support the health of survivors of family violence. Our programming seeks to fill a strategic gap in the field by testing the effectiveness of interventions and increasing the evidence base of what works for whom and in what contexts.

Through “Canada’s Strategy to Prevent and Address Gender-Based Violence”, the Public Health Agency of Canada is investing more than \$8 million per year to prevent gender-based violence. This includes initiatives that prevent dating violence among teens and youth, promote positive parenting, and support service providers with tools to recognize and safely respond to gender-based violence.

In addition to this investment, since 2015, we have invested over \$6 million per year to support the health of survivors of family violence through guidance and training for professionals, and through the delivery and testing of health promotion interventions. With budget 2021’s investment to work toward a national action plan to end gender-based violence, we have increased this investment by more than \$3 million per year for a total of \$9 million per year over the next four years.

Across our investments, projects are trauma- and violence-informed, meaning that interventions take into account the impacts of trauma on a person’s health, behaviour and ability to effectively seek help.

These initiatives help support survivors by equipping them with knowledge, ability and supportive environments to reclaim and sustain their health and well-being. For example, we are learning how interventions that use the body, such as trauma-informed sports or dance programming, can be an important complement or alternative

to traditional talk therapy. Some projects are grounded in indigenous knowledge and have demonstrated how traditional arts and culture can be used to foster healing and connection.

To help share what we are learning from these programs, we also support knowledge hubs and communities of practice. These connect funding recipients and other experts in the field and allow them to develop common ways to measure progress and share emerging findings with researchers and professionals in order to expand what we are learning beyond the direct reach of the funded projects.

When violence occurs in relationships, it has far-reaching and tragic effects. Communities and community organizations across the country are doing impressive work, and the investments we are making aim to increase the reach and impacts of these efforts.

Thank you for your attention, and I’d be pleased to answer any questions the committee may have.

• (14:15)

The Chair: Thanks so much, Karen. You’re at four minutes and 43 seconds, so that gives us a few minutes to spare.

We’re going to go on, and once again we’re at our six-minute rounds.

We’re starting off with Michelle Ferreri.

Michelle, you have six minutes.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri (Peterborough—Kawartha, CPC): I just want to say thank you to all the witnesses today. What important work you all do. This delicate subject matter is very challenging to solve and will forever be happening, unfortunately.

I have a few questions to start. I hope I get the names correct here. I think it was Mr. Kenney.

I’m just curious in the services provided if there are indigenous heads—indigenous-created, indigenous-delivered—taking care of this. Does the question I’m asking make sense?

Mr. Ian Kenney: I think so, yes.

What we do with the program is fund communities to put in place their own plans for either the operation and building shelters or the prevention programs themselves. The actual making of decisions about where shelters are constructed and the types of programming that get support is very much done by a steering committee of indigenous organizations across the country.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Is it mandated that indigenous organizations be part of that steering committee?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Yes, that’s how we approach it.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Okay. Fantastic.

For the next question, Ms. McKinnon, you talk a lot about the systemic trauma that can happen. I'm wondering, of all the money you are speaking of investing, is there money being invested into not only the media, in terms of how we're educating people, but also in terms of self-regulation dedicated to education, emotional regulation, and non-maladaptive coping mechanisms and stress. I heard you talk about dance and that, but are you working with other avenues in terms of self-regulation, to ensure that children from a very young age, in their cognitive years, are having access to the resources to know what a healthy relationship is and how to emotionally regulate?

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: While we don't necessarily invest in media per se, we certainly do invest in all those prevention areas you just named. I could give you a couple of quick examples.

We have a program called WiseGuyz that's run out of the University of Calgary. It's delivering and evaluating a community-facilitated, school-based, healthy relationships program for grade nine boys in Alberta. It is essentially aimed at helping participants identify and deconstruct both health-harming and gender-based norms and work on their own emotional regulation to be able to pursue healthy relationships. We have a range—

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Is there anything under the age of 10?

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: I'm not familiar with the age band for all of our programming, but certainly for teen dating violence we would be looking at the tween-to-teen years specifically. We would also, I guess, have a couple of other programs about building connections. That also is run out of Mothercraft.

• (1420)

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Okay.

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: We also have the program for ages two to 12, called SNAP, which is an evidence-based, multi-component, trauma-informed, cognitive behavioural model that provides a framework for teaching effective emotional regulation and self-control and problem-solving skills for kids.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Fantastic.

I have two questions left. I'm trying to run through them here so we don't run out of time.

Indigenous Services Canada's family violence prevention program provides operational funding to 41 shelters for women and children living on reserve across the provinces and Yukon. These 41 shelters serve approximately 330 first nations communities, which represents approximately 55% of all first nations communities. In a study done by this committee in the 42nd Parliament, it was revealed that shelters funded through the family violence prevention program received less operational funding than shelters funded by provinces and territories. Has the government taken any steps to fill the gap since 2019?

Mr. Ian Kenney: I think what you're referring to—that and an evaluation of the program that was done a few years ago—indicated the gaps in the program. The things we have seen, such as the expansion of the program over the last two to three years, are attempting to address just that. It's looking at what kinds of resources can be made available to close the gap both in terms of individual shelters, but also in the number of shelters made available across

the country. That's very much what we are trying to do, to expand the network and to improve the O and M that's available to these shelters.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: How are you doing that, sorry?

Mr. Ian Kenney: We do that by increasing our investments. The focus over the last little while has been on expanding the number of shelters. As I mentioned in my remarks, we're going from a network of 46 shelters that exist right now to just under 100. We plan to build 96 or 97 shelters across the country by 2026, if I'm not mistaken.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: How do you allocate funds for shelter services, like running the shelter versus the staff? In terms of sustainability, staff burnout and ensuring they are fairly compensated, what are you doing in that avenue?

Mr. Ian Kenney: We receive proposals from communities that are seeking to build new shelters and that sort of thing. For the proposals for the new shelters we are looking at now, as I mentioned earlier, CMHC is looking at the construction costs. The O and M looks at all of those costs, like the staff requirements and that sort of thing, knowing that there are higher costs in some of the more remote and northern regions.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Yes, of course.

Mr. Ian Kenney: There is a ballpark figure we look at to see what makes sense, but those are all notional allocations that we try to take into account.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: I'm going to try to squeeze one more question in.

The Chair: You have an awful chair who just won't let you, Michelle.

Ms. Michelle Ferreri: Darn.

The Chair: I'm sorry about that.

I'm going to now move the mike over to Sonia.

Sonia, you have six minutes.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the officials for being with us today.

My first question is for Mrs. McKinnon.

I see that in December, PHAC made a funding investment of \$100,000 at Western University to develop a free, evidence-based mobile app that will provide information to safely support survivors of intimate partner violence and those at risk.

Can you tell us what outcomes you expect to see from this service? Are you aware of similar programs in other jurisdictions that have been successful in helping women?

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: Yes, we are very pleased to have made that investment. The myPlan Canada app is, in fact, based on an international example of this. We have been able to import that into Canada and put this in place.

It's early days. We just announced the funding, but the objective of this will be to ensure that women have a safe ability to text in their own home via this app, and to seek assistance if and when they need that. Obviously you can't always use a telephone or a voice connection. Having that ability through a safe app that allows for texting support allows people to develop a plan for themselves should they need to get themselves to a safer place than where they presently are.

I hope that helps answer the question.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: PHAC runs numerous programs across the country directed at teens, to help them recognize, avoid and escape dating violence.

Could you provide an overview of the issues and barriers that are unique to this age group?

• (1425)

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: We know that teens who are at risk of dating violence are those who have grown up with a history of maltreatment, or who maybe have been bullied or are being bullied. They have friends who are aggressive. Perhaps they use substances. Some LGBTQ2+ youth also experience teen dating violence, including some who have not disclosed their orientation.

If you look at something like the health behaviour of school-aged children survey, which is a self-reported survey of around 30,000 young people, we see that approximately 30% of Canadian youth in grades 9 and 10 have reported being victimized at some point in their lifetime. About one in five have reported experiencing physical dating violence. About one in ten have experienced sexual dating violence.

Clearly this is an important issue. We know that younger women, in particular those aged 15 to 19, are eight times more likely than women aged 25 years and older to have been sexually assaulted by an intimate partner in the previous 12 months. It's that really critical 15- to 19-year age range. They are just getting into their intimate lives and are finding it very difficult sometimes to manage the amount of violence that they would be confronting.

It absolutely is a significant public health issue, because we know that when unhealthy relationships become entrenched, they can extend across a lifetime and have intergenerational impacts as well.

I'll stop there because I don't want to take all the time. That's just to give you a bit of an overview of the issue.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Thank you for that.

My next question is for Mr. Kenney.

Indigenous women and women experiencing violence have often relied on emergency shelters across Canada. Indigenous communities and other diverse communities in Canada require culturally specific support.

Can you speak to how these culturally driven services lead to better results?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Yes, as I mentioned, this is the underlying objective of the family violence prevention program. It's to actually put in place supports that allow communities to decide on the best

types of prevention activities, on what kinds of culturally appropriate services are available. There's a great deal of flexibility in what we offer. We work with both local and national level partners to try to put a frame around the kinds of things we might want to emphasize in our funding.

The assumption of the program is very much that what is culturally appropriate is also very regional, very local, and should be determined by local communities themselves. As I said, that's very much something that is built into the program. Over time, as we expand the number of shelters that are operating as a result of the program, I think we'll have a much better sense of just how that is translated into results.

Ms. Sonia Sidhu: Ms. McKinnon, mental health is another big component here. How is the government working to ensure that all women have access to mental health services, especially given the effects of this pandemic? What kind of awareness are you doing?

The Chair: Could we have just a quick response, please?

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: Essentially, I could just point to something that happens through our Health Canada colleagues as a really important piece, which is Wellness Together Canada, that phone-in chat line and email and online portal that allows people to seek a range of the kind of help known as stepped care. You can seek all kinds of different levels.

I see that I'm getting the wrap-up signal, so I will pause there. We're doing a number of things in the area of support.

The Chair: Thanks very much.

Andréanne, you have your six minutes. Go for it.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I thank the witnesses for being with us today to talk about this very important issue. When we talk about indigenous and first nations issues, we see how important it is to engage in a nation-to-nation dialogue to tailor solutions to cultural realities.

My first questions will be for Mr. Kenney or Ms. Marin-Comeau.

The national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls report really denounces the lack of affordable housing, but especially the lack of social and community housing and shelters having insufficient capacity. You talked a lot about shelters. However, some indigenous communities don't have any shelters.

Investments have been made and we're in the process of increasing the number of shelters. We know that shelters are one thing, they are a first step, but for women to regain some form of autonomy and break free of the vicious cycle of poverty and violence, social and community housing must be made available moving forward.

Are the measures introduced by your respective departments to address domestic violence in indigenous communities sufficient? How much more work should be done in the first and second stages?

• (1430)

[*English*]

Mr. Ian Kenney: Perhaps I can start with that.

You raise an excellent point, in that in the things that are leading to the need for women's shelters on reserve or anywhere, the causes are the things that also need to be part of the solution. I know that the Department of Indigenous Services Canada is looking at housing and looking more and more at infrastructure investments and things that can be done even in urban communities—that's something our branch is involved in—in trying to create truly a continuum of things that prevent family violence.

Just with respect to shelters, again, we've mentioned that we're moving more and more into the territory of transitional housing, which allows women and children and families to move from the shelter environment into something that allows them to reintegrate into a safer environment.

This is all part of a more holistic solution that we're trying to build into all of our programming at the department in looking at things out of the siloed type of perspective. Actually, it's one thing in the work that CIRNAC is leading through the MMIWG response, in that we can look interdepartmentally at some of these things more holistically.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: Thank you very much for your question.

I'd like to add a few things.

You raise an excellent point about housing. As you know, there has been a tremendous amount of investment in Inuit housing as well as housing for the Métis nation and for self-governing communities. Since 2018, better practices have emerged for managing these units. Initially, priorities are being set by indigenous peoples and partners.

We are making a 10-year investment in Inuit housing, and to date, as we move into the fourth year, 400 new housing units have been built in Inuit communities and many more are under construction. We are now at just under 50% of the target of 925 units.

So, to answer your question, a lot of work has been done on housing, but a lot more needs to be done. As an alternative to housing construction, we have also made investments in general costs and management. With respect to the Métis nation, we're using an interesting model because it's not just housing, but also subsidies to give communities access to adequate housing.

Ms. Andr anne Larouche: To sum up your answer, things have been done. The government has positively responded to part of the national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls report, but more could be done. We could carry out an even more in-depth study of the report, for example, because I imagine that some recommendations have still not been addressed.

In terms of infrastructure, I saw again recently in the news that in Manawan, they do not have electricity or clean drinking water. The cycle of poverty is being perpetuated too.

I'd like to hear what you have to say about the importance of taking concrete action, getting a bird's-eye view of the problem and bringing women out of the cycle of poverty.

• (1435)

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: Thank you for raising the issue of the underlying causes of violence against indigenous women, girls and people of all gender identities.

With respect to the response to the national inquiry, many things have been implemented. I mentioned investments and programs. Over 23 departments participated. In fact, you have two representatives of Indigenous Services Canada here, and the previous panel included representatives from some of the departments as well. So people are hard at work on this right now.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you so much. We're going to have to wrap that up.

I'm going to move it over to Leah. I'm sure she wants to hear more about this too.

Leah, you have six minutes.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I asked this to the previous panel. As you know, indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be missing or murdered than the rest of the population. This was reported in the national inquiry that was released in 2019. It's now 2022. There's still no national action plan. What date will that national action plan be released?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: I'm very happy to clarify. The national action plan on MMIWG was launched on June 3, 2021. It is an indigenous-led national action plan. There are chapters that are included in this national action plan. Chapters include families and survivors. Indigenous families and survivors created their own action plan. The urban group created an action plan. The 2SL group created an action plan. There were chapters by Inuit, first nations, M tis, the data and research community—

Ms. Leah Gazan: With all due respect, the former commissioner disagreed with the progress of the national action plan and in fact the federal government response. To quote her, the federal government seems to be either “unwilling” or “unable” to provide the necessary leadership to move ahead with a national action plan, especially without any concrete timelines. This opinion was actually shared by the former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, who gave the federal government a failing grade. They were so frustrated they came out with a list of recommendations in response to the failure of the federal government to act, including appointing an independent mechanism to report to Parliament annually on the implementation of recommendations.

Has an independent mechanism been set up?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: The national action plan was launched with indigenous partners and organizations, very broadly including provinces, territories and the federal government. The government is not waiting for these plans to be carried out. In this indigenous-led process, many of those chapters of indigenous partners are now developing their own implementation plan.

The federal government is also developing its implementation plan, but we're not waiting for the implementation plan before taking some concrete action.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Building on that, I've heard a lot about plans and meetings. How many calls for justice have been implemented to date out of the 231?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: The 231 calls for justice are very broad-reaching. Calls for justice, as you know, are addressed to the federal government, provinces and territories. They're addressed to civil society and they're multi-faceted.

For the underlying themes—and I'll come back to a question that was asked previously—what's important is the themes and the underlying root causes. That's what the government is acting on, the underlying root causes.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Thank you. I have a limited amount of time, and this is a very important topic. It's been identified as a genocide.

What is the total amount of funding that has been provided in this last fiscal year in response to the calls for justice?

• (1440)

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: In budget 2021, we invested \$2.2 billion specifically to address the root causes of gender- and race-based violence against indigenous women, girls and 2S+.

Ms. Leah Gazan: That's \$2.2 billion over how many years?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: It varies. It can be between five and six years.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Okay, so how much would that be annually?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: It depends on the initiatives.

Ms. Leah Gazan: If you break that down annually—and we know that it's a crisis—how much is being provided annually to address the genocide of violence against indigenous women and girls?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: I don't have the answers on the breakdown at my fingertips. Obviously there are 43 budget investments, but we can follow up with a written answer to your question. All of these are really to address the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and 2S+.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I'd appreciate that. Thank you so much.

Mr. Kenney, you said that infrastructure is one of the areas that were identified with respect to violence against indigenous women and girls. I know that in Winnipeg, after nine years of advocating at the place that the former minister of Crown-indigenous relations identified as ground zero for murdered and missing indigenous women and girls, we finally got an allotment of funding, which was not adequate, for a 24-7 safe space, in response to one of the calls for justice from the national inquiry.

How much money has been invested in infrastructure since the need to address it was identified as being critical?

Mr. Ian Kenney: To clarify the question, are you talking about investments for the initiative nationally or are you speaking specifically—

Ms. Leah Gazan: I mean nationally and also specifically to Manitoba.

Mr. Ian Kenney: It's probably best if I get back to the committee with the specific dollar values for those, both nationally and with the Manitoba focus.

The Chair: Fantastic. Thank you so much. If we could get those, that would be wonderful.

Laila is up next, but she's having some connectivity issues, so if it's okay with everybody, I will go to Jenna.

Jenna, I'll give you your five minutes, and then we'll come back to Laila.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds (Kanata—Carleton, Lib.): Excellent. Thanks so much to the witnesses who have joined us today and for all of their great work. I'll start with Madame Marin-Comeau.

Given the diversity of indigenous communities across our country, what funding is available specifically for northern communities, and how has that been deployed for the shelter network and then for other community partners for individuals who are trying to escape intimate partner violence?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: I don't have the entire spectrum of the northern investments; however, I know that there are some housing infrastructure investments through budget 2021. There are also, as you heard, shelters. There's also a northern focus for community-based prevention programs.

Perhaps what I can do is take that question and give a more thorough response for the northern aspect of investments.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Excellent, thank you very much. I'd appreciate that information.

Mr. Kenney, recently Senator Dasko commissioned an Environments poll examining the issues that concern women in Canada. The results indicated that 77% of Canadians believe that improving the conditions of indigenous women is a very important problem for women in Canada today. I'm sure that comes as no surprise.

You've alluded a bit already to some of the investments in shelters. I was hoping you could share more details with respect to what supports and resources are available for indigenous women who are fleeing gender-based or intimate partner violence, both with respect to some of the investments you've kind of touched on already in the shelter system and any other resources available.

• (1445)

Mr. Ian Kenney: We've talked about the shelter system that we are trying to expand and improve. I think what you may be interested in is some of the projects that are funded through the prevention component of the program. As I mentioned, those are very much community driven. If it would be helpful, maybe we could get back to the committee with a bit of a sense of what types of services and activities might get funded through our program.

As a general overview of things, there are a number of activities that are funded through the program, such as counselling. I think I mentioned a few: addictions training, child support programs, traditional teachings and those kinds of things. It's a very wide range of activities, and they're very much driven by community need.

If it's helpful, then we can maybe put a finer point on that and respond back to the committee, if that's suitable.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Those details would be great.

Another important part to perhaps highlight and drill down into today is the resources that are available or in place for indigenous women in the LGBTQ2S community, or for indigenous women who may be disabled. Can you speak to programs or services in place specifically for them?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Again, those communities are part of the prevention programming that we have available. We try to notionally keep an eye open for proposals, so that we make sure those types of initiatives aimed at those groups are covered, but there isn't a dedicated set of funding or a basket of services that we target specifically for those groups.

Again, maybe just a bit more of a sense of the types of activities we have funded through the proposals we have funded so far might give you a better sense of what kinds of things are supported through the program.

Mrs. Jenna Sudds: Obviously where I'm going here is the importance of that and knowing that there's been some good work done that we should really be discussing and highlighting.

You mentioned growing the number of shelters. There are 46 now, and I think you referenced almost 100 within 2026. Can you speak to that trajectory?

Mr. Ian Kenney: In 2020 there was an immediate initiative to expand the network to an additional 12. There were 10 more announced for first nations communities, plus two in the territories. Finally, after that, we have moved into the most recent initiative in 2021, whereby we're expanding to an additional 38 shelters plus 50 transition homes. All told, that should bring us to a doubling of what is in place right now.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I'm going to take the floor back to Laila.

Laila, you have your five minutes.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: We know that many indigenous women and girls fleeing violence leave their home communities. While you were talking about the shelters, what specific actions are you doing to support these vulnerable women, girls and 2S+ members of soci-

ety who are in urban centres or in off-reserve settings? Specifically, how are you putting into play the calls to action?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Again, moving to the transitional homes is a big piece for us. That's not just going to be limited to first nations communities, but that's an important piece of the puzzle. Yes, it's great to have shelters in place for people to seek refuge when it's absolutely necessary, but there needs to be some sort of step that allows people to transition back into some sort of different environment.

The transition homes are going to be an important piece for us as part of that puzzle. Again, the work that a lot of these communities do—and we'll be able to support more urban communities—

• (1450)

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Thank you. I'm sorry. We just don't have very much time.

Could you provide this committee with a list of all the transitional housing stock that is available coast to coast, so that we can see where there are deficits in some of our communities and where perhaps more investments need to be made to ensure that we are really taking care of this?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Just to be clear, the transition homes are a new element for us, so we're just moving into that direction now, but—

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: How many transition homes exist currently?

Mr. Ian Kenney: None of them have been set up yet. It's a new element that was just announced last year.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: What is the timeline to have the first transition home operational?

Mr. Ian Kenney: It was announced in 2021. We're starting to receive proposals now, so we're hoping to have these in place, at least some of them, within the next year or two. We can provide more details on that.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Yes, please provide more details around that.

As well, you highlighted that there are 10 new shelters being built. Where are they, and where are the two that are being built in the territories? If you could just provide that in writing, that would be spectacular.

To go one step further, what is being done to ensure that an intersectional lens is being applied and that all the supports being delivered are culturally sensitive and responsive, to make sure we are not further traumatizing or adding vulnerability to these people?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Again, we work really closely with the communities themselves and through the organizations nationally. Our regional offices at ISC are working really closely with communities to identify what those needs are and to try to build that into their proposal. Again, it's very much a bottom-up type of approach, but intersectionality and a number of considerations are definitely the things that we try to bring to the review of our proposals.

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: Just to touch on it, what jurisdictions specifically—or first nations, Métis or Inuit communities—are leading the edge on this, which we could look to as potential places to expand on those?

Mr. Ian Kenney: Again, I will get back to the committee, but I would think some of the shelters that we have in place.... We could benefit from the existence of those first nations shelters. There are a number of initiatives going on in Ontario that we probably can—

Mrs. Laila Goodridge: If you could really put that precision on, that would be much appreciated.

I'll give the rest of my time back to the committee.

The Chair: That's fantastic. Thank you so much.

Emmanuella, I see your committee member has joined as well. We have the cat. Anyway, it's wonderful.

We're going to pass this on.

For two and half minutes, Andréanne, you have the floor.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

Once again, I thank the witnesses for coming out today to comment on this important study on violence against women and domestic violence cases.

I would now like to address Ms. McKinnon.

Ms. McKinnon, you've provided a window on what's happening internationally that could inspire what we do. You talked about the app to ask for help. Have you seen any other initiatives in other countries that could influence public health policy or public policy here in Canada?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: There are a number of countries that have done some great work in this regard. Australia would be one of them.

What I could definitely offer to the committee is for us to take that question away and provide some answers in terms of what we see as those international best practices that may be helpful for the committee in its study, particularly from the point of view of family, gender-based and intimate partner violence. This would be the best way to approach this question, so that we give you a fulsome look at that.

• (1455)

[*Translation*]

Ms. Andréanne Larouche: Yes, I've had discussions with representatives from the Australian Consulate, who are looking at the importance of expanding the definition of abuse to include psychological abuse, among other things. I'm opening the door here to something called coercive control, which is a much broader term than sexual or physical abuse.

I'd like to hear from you on that. How important would it be to legislate on the issue of coercive control and broaden the definition of abuse?

[*English*]

Mrs. Karen McKinnon: Yes, this is an important issue. I would suggest that for the Public Health Agency of Canada, we would not necessarily be in the best position to answer that. It's likely a ques-

tion for the justice department. We would see the impacts here in terms of coercive control from a health perspective.

Like any other form of control, sexual violence or physical violence, we see incredibly profound health impacts that will last across the life course and often can even extend into the next generation. It's extremely important to address all forms of control.

The Chair: Thank you, Mrs. McKinnon.

We're going to go to Leah, for two and a half minutes.

Ms. Leah Gazan: Just going back to the national action plan, part of the reason I'm indicating there is no plan.... I want to share a couple of quotes.

Shelagh Day, chair of the Human Rights Committee of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, responding to what was released, said this:

We were looking for and expecting concrete action with responsibilities assigned, timelines, and resource allocation. Instead what we have is a collection of federal, provincial, territorial statements that were issued to us this morning.

Chief Judy Wilson, from the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, said, "Justice delayed is still justice denied."

We really don't have a national action plan. It's been highly criticized. There is no plan. There are no timelines.

The federal government also committed to implementing all 231 calls for justice out of the national inquiry. That includes call for justice recommendation 4.5, to implement a guaranteed livable basic income, because it was very clear in the inquiry that there was a direct correlation between poverty and higher rates of violence.

Is your department currently looking at a plan with timelines to implement call for justice recommendation 4.5 for a guaranteed livable basic income?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: The 23 departments are collaborating on an implementation plan with concrete timelines, etc., for the federal pathway. That's the first answer to your question.

The guaranteed livable income has been identified as a priority by indigenous partners throughout all of their chapters and throughout the national action plan. The government is committed to looking at this in the future.

Ms. Leah Gazan: When will the government be implementing a guaranteed livable basic income? It did promise to implement all the 231 calls for justice recommendations that came out of the inquiry, which includes 4.5. This is why I'm asking. Are there plans to implement a guaranteed livable basic income?

Ms. Chantal Marin-Comeau: This is a question for our colleague at ESDC, so we'll take that back.

Ms. Leah Gazan: I appreciate that. Thank you.

The Chair: I'd really like to thank Mrs. McKinnon, Mr. Kenney and Ms. Marin-Comeau. This has been a great panel today.

Our next meeting is going to be held on Tuesday, February 8. It's from 3:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. We'll be hearing from the Sudbury Women's Centre, Women's Shelters Canada, West Central Women's Resource Centre, the London Abused Women's Centre and the Fédération des maisons d'hébergement pour femmes.

I'd like to thank everybody for the great work today. Have a great weekend, everybody, and thank you so much to our clerk, Stephanie, for filling in. We'll see everybody on Tuesday.

The meeting is adjourned.

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