



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

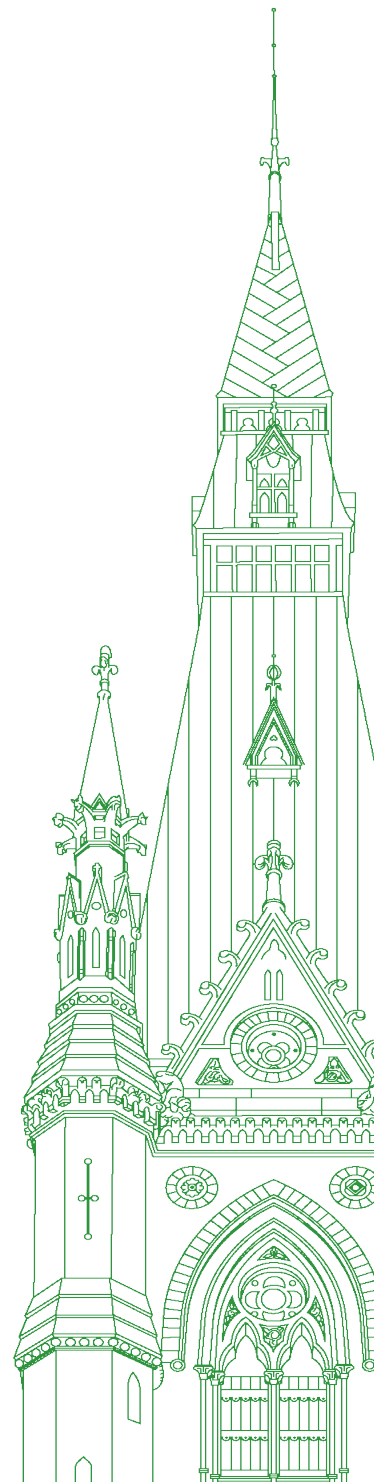
Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

EVIDENCE

NUMBER 034

Monday, October 31, 2022

Chair: Mr. Ali Ehsassi



Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

Monday, October 31, 2022

• (1540)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.)): Good evening, everyone.

Allow me, first of all, to apologize. I'm losing my voice, so I ask for your indulgence.

I want to welcome you to meeting number 34 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the House order of June 23, 2022. Members are attending in person in the room, as well as remotely using the Zoom application.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. Those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. Interpretation for those on Zoom is at the bottom of the screen, and you have a choice of either the floor, English or French. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. I will remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted by the committee on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, the committee is resuming its study of the extreme flooding in Pakistan.

It is now my pleasure to welcome, from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, the Honourable Minister Sajjan, Minister of International Development

We also have here with the minister his officials: Mr. Christopher MacLennan, deputy minister of international development; Ms. Tara Carney, acting director general, international humanitarian assistance; Ms. Cam Do, director general, innovative and climate finance bureau; and lastly, Mr. Christopher Gibbins, executive director, Afghanistan-Pakistan division.

Minister, you will be provided a maximum of five minutes for your remarks, after which we will proceed to a round of questions. I will signal to you when you have merely a minute remaining.

Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan (Minister of International Development): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the members of the committee for having me here today. I appreciate all of your highlighting what's going on in Pakistan with the extreme flooding

there. Since mid-June of this year, extreme monsoon rains and flooding have taken a devastating toll on more than 33 million people in Pakistan. I will be happy to explain later on to you what the Pakistani leadership told me and how it took place.

This has left over 1,700 dead, including more than 600 children. As you know, protecting human life and dignity is a fundamental tenet of Canada's approach to the global community. Our humanitarian efforts are aimed at saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining the dignity of people affected by natural disasters.

Our early response to this flooding crisis included assistance on the ground in Pakistan through the Canadian Red Cross Society's emergency disaster assistance fund, and contributions to the United Nations central emergency response fund, meaning via things that were already in place.

Given the magnitude of the flooding and the slow pickup internationally, I authorized an initial amount of \$5 million in humanitarian assistance on August 29.

Mr. Chair, we remain extremely concerned about the magnitude of this crisis, and that is why in mid-September I led a Canadian delegation, including three members of Parliament, to Pakistan to observe first-hand the humanitarian response under way and to gain a better understanding of what the people of Pakistan were going through and what the needs were. I can tell you that large parts of southern Pakistan are still under water. Almost 8 million people are now homeless or living in emergency shelters with little or no access to food and clean drinking water. Hundreds of thousands of homes and infrastructure have been destroyed. Crops, livelihood and livestock have been ruined. Food is scarce. Hunger is also looming. The need for assistance is dire.

Mr. Chair and members of the committee, while we remain committed to fighting climate change and advancing women's empowerment and promoting regional peace and stability, we also recognize the dire plight of the people of Pakistan.

On October 4, the latest joint government of Pakistan and United Nations appeal was launched, increasing the original appeal figure from \$160 million U.S. to \$860 million. Anticipating the scale of needs, on September 13, Prime Minister Trudeau announced additional Canadian support and increased our total flood crisis response recovery assistance to \$33 million, including a matching fund of up to \$7.5 million with the Humanitarian Coalition. This enhanced response means that our government will match dollar for dollar donations made by individuals to the Humanitarian Coalition up to a maximum of \$7.5 million. This funding that was generously raised by Canadians will contribute to essential rehabilitation efforts of flood-damaged areas like the girls' high school that I visited in the upper Chitral district in Pakistan.

While in Pakistan I also spent time assessing the needs of frontline workers and announced existing polio eradication programming, specifically the \$20 million eradicating polio from Pakistan project, and to advocate for the support for female frontline workers who have been impacted by the floods and who are responsible for the unpaid care and care-related work.

Mr. Chair, we will continue to work with our partners to provide urgent, life-saving humanitarian relief on the ground, including clean drinking water, medical supplies, food and other essential services. We have a history of over 70 years of successful development co-operation with Pakistan. In the year 2020-21, our overall international assistance to Pakistan was over \$100 million.

Canada's bilateral development support targets the following priority areas: women and girls, reproductive health and rights, girls' access to education, women's political participation and economic empowerment, COVID-19 relief and polio eradication.

We remain committed to this humanitarian effort to support the people of Pakistan in the days ahead and we know that there's much more to do.

Thank you.

• (1545)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Minister Sajjan.

We now open it to questions. I understand Mr. Genuis is first.

You have six minutes, Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan, CPC): Thank you, Chair. It's good to see you, Minister.

I suppose you may have anticipated this question. I've been repeatedly raising concerns about some of the issues with the matching programs and how they're structured. We've heard at this committee specifically about how your decision to match dollars to some organizations and not others leads to challenges for good organizations—often small, diaspora-led organizations—actually being able to fundraise, because people tell them, why isn't the government matching contributions to you? I know the argument we hear back is that we want to move quickly so we thought it would be easier to pick organizations that we've worked with on things in the past.

The problem is that this concretely hurts the ability of small diaspora-led organizations, and there are alternatives that could be pur-

sued that would be just as quick and would take a more inclusive approach. I've raised this issue with respect to Lebanon and Ukraine. I raised it in the context of the Atlantic floods here in Canada, as well, and I raise it here in this context.

But the government isn't responding to the concerns I and stakeholders have raised. Why not? Why is there not openness to reconsidering how you do matching so that a broader range of organizations could benefit?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, the member asked a very good question. It's a question that I have also asked myself.

Having said that, first of all, to get a quick response is very important to making sure that we get the money flowing to what the actual needs are, depending on the disaster.

This does not preclude our supporting other organizations. Keep in mind, though, that when we do a matching fund, we have existing relationships and already have a system in place so we can move very quickly. There are a bunch of options we can take a look at, like organizations that we can have pre-existing agreements with.

Probably the most important thing that I want to emphasize here, Mr. Chair, is that even though we do a matching fund, let's keep in mind that we do provide additional support. This does not preclude any organization from looking at applying for funding for long-term projects.

I'll give you one example. One organization that I met wanted to look at matching funds, but when they talked about the support they could provide, it was for reconstruction of various schools. I told them that those things can be done afterwards and that right now, we're focused on saving lives.

We're guiding them to the right place.

We want to work with anybody who actually has the right mechanism and the right system in place, and try to find ways that we can best support them.

• (1550)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Okay. Thank you, Minister.

You've said that providing this matching program over here doesn't preclude your offering funding to smaller or other organizations outside the Humanitarian Coalition. Of course that's true, but the point I'm making is that your decision to match funding to some organizations and not others actually hurts the private fundraising of those other organizations that are not included. Even if they have, theoretically, available opportunities to apply for government funding elsewhere, you are hurting their ability to raise money privately.

We've heard as well from these organizations that sometimes there is even some suspicion from their long-time donors and a perception that if the Government of Canada is not matching their funding, maybe there's something wrong with them. Of course, that's not the case.

Are you aware of the damage done to private fundraising by the nature of this policy?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: First of all, we're not in any way trying to damage anything. In fact, we actually love the fact that Canadians and many organizations are coming together. There are so many causes out there. We want to encourage Canadians to do so.

However, when it comes to an emergency like the flood here, for example, we need to make sure that the right resources get to the right place at the right time. That's very important. For the first thing, especially in an emergency, that's probably the most important.

I'll give you an example, Mr. Chair, if you don't mind, to kind of outline it. The most important thing is actually trying to prevent it in the first place. In fact, I was told when I visited Pakistan that funding that was put into place for the early warning system, especially in the north, actually saved lives.

Then, you want to put systems in place for emergencies. That way, when an emergency occurs, it doesn't even require us to make a decision. The systems that are being put into place automatically respond.

The \$5 million that we put into place—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: This is a bit afield of the matching issue.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I understand that, but what I'm trying to get at here is that the main priority is who can get the best resource to the right area. Trying to assess which organization can do what when you have lives that you have to save on the ground....

When an organization says it can and it can provide the emergency...we need to have those dialogues a lot sooner. We encourage people to have this conversation. Any time a new organization comes forward, we're happy to work with it.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I think one of the issues, though, is that often these smaller organizations are just not in the business of dealing with government very often. Some organizations may be focused on engaging a particular country or countries. They're not like the larger humanitarian organizations that you would deal with in any disaster, anywhere in the world. You have organizations that are looking at specific countries. They're not dealing with governments on an ongoing basis. Nonetheless, they're doing great work and they lose out on these matching programs.

What was suggested to me by one of the stakeholders as an alternative—and I believe this was done previously under a Conservative government—was that we would match any dollar donated to this effort, but that doesn't necessarily mean the same dollar will go to the same organization. Any dollar contributed will be matched. We get information from organizations about the dollars they raise and then we put that into a fund, which they can then apply to.

You can announce that kind of matching program right out of the gate. You can start dispensing money from that program right out

of the gate. It doesn't mean you have to necessarily fund these small organizations. It just means that they're not penalized in terms of their own engagement with donors.

Why not pursue that model, Minister?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: We actually did look at that model, in terms of what the analysis was. In some cases, it has its merits, but it also has its drawbacks.

For example, one key thing was that it took 200 days, originally when the matching fund was done, for the money to really start flowing to those organizations. It's because you're raising money. One of the key—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Why did it take that long?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Hear me out, Mr. Genuis.

For the matching fund that we had here, we had money flowing within 30 days. The key thing is that you have to do the assessment. As you know, at the end of the day, for any dollars we sign off on, we're accountable to Parliament. We're accountable to the taxpayer. For any organization that we give money to, we do have to do the due diligence. This is where we need to...for anybody who wants or any organization that wants to, it's easier to work and get the process sorted out early on, but again—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Spend it fast but match for any organization. That's my point: Spend it fast.

Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Mr. Zuberi.

You have six minutes, Mr. Zuberi.

• (1555)

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you.

I'd like to thank you, Minister, and all of your officials for being here with us for this extremely important issue about flooding in Pakistan.

First off, I was in Pakistan in June for four weeks. I did see the initial aspects of these monsoon rains and how it was impacting the country very early on, with felled bridges and roads being filled with rocks and whatnot because of landslides. I appreciate very much how you and three other parliamentarians went to Pakistan in mid-September. I applaud you for that. I think that is very important.

Could you very briefly outline the assistance we have given thus far to Pakistan, and how that has hit the ground?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll also highlight the fact that we knew that the monsoons were going to be a little bit more severe, but the thing is that the situation actually got worse. There was slow pickup inside the country, as I was briefed on, but also even in the international community. Normally, when it comes to....

What I try to focus on is what the actual needs are and where to move the money very quickly. We visited places where we had warehouses already in place with stores that actually had an impact immediately. Before anything, we already had systems in place. The \$5 million was to look at the immediate needs to the various organizations. The next step was to do a very quick needs assessment based on the reporting that came. That's what we did in adding the additional \$25 million of funding. That buys you enough time, as you work with other organizations.... Now, keep in mind that, proportionately, Canada did much higher than other countries.

The next step is that now that this gives us a little bit more time, there are still more emergency things we need to do. For example, we need to prevent disease, given the waterborne diseases. Some of the schools have to be rebuilt. We need to look winterization. We're looking at that now. Funding is already moving towards that. The Government of Pakistan has just finished their own needs assessment. We're reviewing that now. Then we'll look at the next tranche of funding to support them.

The next portion of it will be the longer term. How do we look at climate mitigation, adaptation and some of the bigger measures?

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: You touched on climate, and I'd like to touch on that too. That's been a major conversation with respect to the flooding and how Pakistan has only contributed 0.4% of the world emissions, whereas for other countries, such as America, it's 21.5% of world emissions to date; for China, 16.5%; and for the European Union, 15% of world emissions. I'm curious about the equity around the impacts of how the emissions and climate change have impacted the country in question.

As well, it's my understanding that there is international climate financing being delivered within Pakistan. Is any of Canada's \$5.3 billion for that being delivered there? Could you speak on this theme?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Thanks. I'll give you the wave-tops view, and then I'll have Chris and the team get into a little more detail on it.

On this, first of all, I do want to state that even I publicly went out and stated that the most vulnerable on this planet end up suffering the impacts of a climate change that they had nothing to do with. Pakistan is in that situation, so we do need to support them.

I'll give you an example. Right now there's the Green Climate Fund. Canada contributed \$600 million to that. Of that, \$220 million went to Pakistan for this. This is funding that's already going. We will look at additional funding or additional support from the climate adaptation side to look at the long-term aspect of things.

Chris, do you want to add anything to that?

Mr. Christopher MacLennan (Deputy Minister, International Development, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Sure. Thank you.

Canada over the past 10 years has contributed to numerous large multilateral funds. For example, the creation of the Green Climate Fund was one of the principal outcomes coming out of the Copenhagen COP back in 2012. The purpose of that is absolutely to do exactly what you've noted, which is that there are countries that have contributed very little to greenhouse gas emissions but do not have the fiscal capacities to respond to both the adaptation and the mitigation.

Canada has been one of the major donors to these funds. There's the work of Minister Guilbeault, for example, along with our German colleagues, to outline the contributions that all donor countries have given to the \$100-billion goal. This is one of the examples of that.

• (1600)

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Thank you.

My last question is about the following. On August 17, 2022, our foreign affairs minister, Mélanie Joly, whom I know you work very closely with, spoke with Pakistan's foreign affairs minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. That was the first interaction between ministers.

Can you speak a bit about the bilateral relations and sources of co-operation and concern?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Actually, I had the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister, as well, when I was there, and I met with many other ministers. We need to look at what type of support to provide, but we also need to look at supporting them in other ways as well. This, I think, was an opportunity for me to get a first-hand look at not only what they're going through but also what the opportunities are.

I think there are a lot of opportunities that will come up, and I think that through this tragedy will come a greater opportunity for us to have greater people-to-people ties and even greater economic opportunity.

The Chair: Thank you. We'll now go to Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to continue along the same line as Mr. Zuberi. As well, I have to say I am very happy to see him back again, since it is somewhat thanks to him that the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development is studying this issue.

First, I would like to thank the Minister and officials who are with us today.

In a few minutes, we are going to discuss the situation in Haiti. I am sure, Minister, that you want to follow the committee's work on the situation in Haiti. I hope that this time we will be up to the job of helping Haiti, unlike what we did at the beginning of the pandemic.

You are aware of committee members' interest in Pakistan. I think it is unfortunate that you chose to be accompanied only by government members. It might have been useful to also be accompanied by opposition members, since we try to speak in a united voice on the international scene, particularly on humanitarian issues like support for Pakistan, which is facing an unprecedented natural disaster. That might have meant that we did not need to ask certain questions, since it would have enabled all political parties to have more insight into the situation on the ground.

With that said, I am going to come back to the question Mr. Zuberi asked.

Canada's international climate finance program commits to providing \$5.3 billion to developing countries over the next five years. Global Affairs Canada told the committee, in connection with that program, that Pakistan can make an application, but that to his knowledge, Canada had not yet received an application. As has just been pointed out, three projects from Pakistan have been submitted to the multilateral and regional green funds to which Canada contributes. We were told this by officials of the department on October 26.

How can the fact that the \$5.3 billion international climate finance program has not received any applications from Pakistan be explained, when the multilateral programs Canada contributes to have received applications from Pakistan?

Does it mean that the \$5.3 billion international climate finance program does not meet the expectations of countries like Pakistan? Is that the reason there have been no applications to the program?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Thanks, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the member for that question.

I also want to say that I'm so appreciative of this committee's focusing on Pakistan. Pakistan's flood did not get the attention it deserved from what was actually taking place there.

I want to let you know that I, too, am following Haiti very closely, and look forward to the work this committee does on it.

If members of Parliament are interested in [Inaudible—Editor] certain parts; I'm happy to take a look at those opportunities as well. In this case, just because of the time, we had to move very quickly. We have a few members of Parliament who are from Pakistan, so I was happy to work on that.

When it comes to the funding, the certain requests, there has been the needs assessment that recently came in. Requests come in different ways. Sometimes it's a case of working from our high commission directly to the high commission here through our multilateral organizations. There are many different ways that is done. In fact, we had a laundry list of things that were needed. This is one of the reasons why, when we do the initial providing of support...

Normally, that initial amount is actually a lot lower than what we provided, but because the pickup wasn't there, we went considerably higher. Also, by making that visit, one of the key things I also want to highlight is that Canada does care. We have a few members

of Parliament who are of Pakistani descent. I also know everybody in this committee is for this.

We will continually take a look at where the needs assessments are. When it comes to our larger \$5.3 billion, remember that was put into place for what we're doing internationally; so that work was already going on. We will take a look at what we can do for Pakistan, but as the needs assessment continues, we will look at a long-term adaptation piece. What is it down the road? We have to get the emergency piece out of the way first.

The reason I say this is that I was very happy with some of the work that was done after the previous flood. The money that was put in previously helped to save lives. I don't know how many times people came up to me and said, "Thank you very much for the funding that created the early warning system. It has saved lives." They practised those drills in those villages in northern Pakistan, and hundreds of lives were saved. They appreciated that Canada listened to what those needs were, and we will continue to do just this.

We'll look at the next tranche of support. I know there's a key issue. We need to make sure that the vulnerable communities within Pakistan also get the appropriate support. We're going to take a closer look at that.

Then we need to take a look at not just what we can do from our own department, but at others as well, and more importantly what the international community... I would say that Canada has been a very strong voice to bringing support to Pakistan, because it hasn't been highlighted. I was very happy that the Secretary-General from the United Nations also visited as well.

• (1605)

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Chair, how much speaking time do I have left?

[English]

The Chair: You're out of time, Mr. Bergeron. My apologies, but you're over six minutes.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I would be happy to meet with him offline.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Finally, we will go to Ms. McPherson.

You have the floor for six minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to welcome the minister to our committee. I have many questions for him. He won't be surprised to hear that.

We had the opportunity to hear from CSOs and from experts and from members of his department about the humanitarian response in Pakistan. I'm very grateful for their testimony.

But I do want to ask some questions with regard to some of the other outstanding issues. The first one I want to ask him about is the humanitarian carve-out that we have still not seen for Afghanistan—again he won't be surprised to hear this.

Minister, this has been well over a year. It's very desperate. There are millions of people whose lives are at risk.

Could you be very specific on where the holdup is on that? I know you have said that you are working on this, but we are really running out of time. I'm wondering if it's your ministry, if it is another ministry. I'm wondering where civil society, where advocates, should be putting their pressure to push to make sure that this humanitarian carve-out finally happens.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I'm happy to answer these questions because, I guess, Afghanistan is next to Pakistan, so we can talk about it.

Mr. Chair, the member raises again a very good point. One thing I have stated is, yes, the current legislation does put constraints on us on how we spend that money. That's a reality.

I can tell you, just as I stated before, there hasn't been one dollar that we have held back in support. In fact, we have actually put forward \$156 million. Nonetheless, those concerns are currently being addressed by my colleagues and we're looking at various options. When those options are developed, my colleagues and I will be able to say more.

Having said this, we are also looking at support for the Afghan refugees who are in Pakistan as well. We're going through some of that work before we can make public what we'll be supporting.

Thank you.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Which colleagues are those? It has been since August 2021—

• (1610)

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

I know that the committee processes have a lot of latitude when a minister is appearing for estimates or supplementary estimates.

This is a very specific study that is very limited to one issue, which is Pakistan, the flood and the disaster relief. I have every confidence the minister can answer these questions, but the committee's time is very limited and very valuable. We're trying to get the most we can about Pakistan.

I think it would be appropriate to advise the member that we should be trying to talk about Pakistan and the flooding.

Afghanistan's an important issue and we can do a study on it, but this is a very important issue that we've been asked to study.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Oliphant.

Yes, given that we have limited time to focus on the issue of Pakistan, I would ask all members to keep their questions relevant to the study at hand.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Yes, Mr. Genuis.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: On the point of order, Mr. Chair, I would just say that each member controls their own time. I would think that members should be able to ask the questions they want to ask that relate broadly to the topic.

I think the line of questioning was very reasonable. If you want to sound out the committee's view on it as a whole, I think you'll find a majority of the committee wants to allow this line of questioning.

I certainly am interested in the answers.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Genuis.

Ms. McPherson, the floor is yours.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would just like to point out that the minister is here with our committee and we don't have very many opportunities to ask these questions. This is a very pressing question.

He did bring up Afghans who are in Pakistan, so perhaps I will touch on that next.

It has been since August 2021 that we have been trying to get people here. It does continuously sound like a "yep, we're working on it" sort of answer. I don't think that's sufficient when we are so far into this particular crisis. It's not fair to Afghans who worked for our country. It's not fair to Afghans who depend on Canada to stand up for them.

I can turn to another line of questioning, which is climate financing.

Could the minister tell me how much the climate financing will be part of our dedicated ODA? Will it all be considered official development assistance?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I'm happy to elaborate on the Afghan refugees who are in Pakistan because they were affected by the floods.

I actually did speak with the Prime Minister and other ministers about the situation. There are some people who are actually ready to leave, but Pakistan has to give them exit permits. We asked them to expedite that and I was assured by the Prime Minister that they will look at this. Then we'll look at the other support that we can provide.

When it comes to some of the budgetary considerations and what's within our ODA, I'll turn to Chris on that.

Mr. Christopher MacLennan: The very short answer, Mr. Chair, is that all of our climate finance is considered official development assistance.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

Mr. MacLennan, could your department possibly provide us with a little bit of written information? I don't want to waste your time as you may not have those numbers right now, but what are the amount of funds that have actually been spent to date and have they gone bilaterally or multilaterally?

I have one other question for you, Minister.

This fund does not appear to have any mechanisms or any way for small and medium organizations to access it or for the partnership branch to access it. It is all multilateral and bilateral. How are you ensuring that these funds go to those groups that most could use them?

We know that indigenous groups and women's groups tend to develop more appropriate on-the-ground climate mitigation and adaptation projects. When we are giving our money at the top level, how do you ensure that's actually happening on the ground?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I'm actually really glad the member raises this issue.

One thing is that just because we have a \$5.3 billion, it doesn't mean the other funding that we provide—whether it's for agriculture—does not include support to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Actually, something I'm really proud of is that through FIAP, which we launched in 2017, we're seeing the positive impact. For example, there's women entrepreneurship in agriculture. We have gone to many different countries—

Ms. Heather McPherson: I'm sorry, Mr. Minister. I don't want to interrupt you, but does any of the specific climate financing... Obviously, Global Affairs funds projects that support agriculture, but I'm looking at this climate financing.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Yes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Is there a mechanism to ensure that it can support indigenous and women-led initiatives?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Yes.

Chris, do you want to answer that?

Mr. Christopher MacLennan: I would maybe turn it over to our director general.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Yes.

Go ahead.

Ms. Cam Do (Director General, Innovative and Climate Finance Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Good afternoon, Chair.

Yes, there is a \$300-million targeted program for women-led organizations as well as a \$15-million initiative for indigenous organizations.

• (1615)

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

Could you provide written details on how that's been spent or distributed to date?

Ms. Cam Do: Yes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

Mr. Chair, am I done?

The Chair: Yes. You're over six minutes, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

The Chair: We will now proceed to the second round.

Mr. Genuis, you're up first. You have five minutes.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Chair.

Just as a brief follow-up on the issue of Afghanistan, I agree that there is an urgent need for legislative or policy change to address this issue to allow Canadian organizations to be involved in the humanitarian effort. The perversity of the current situation, I think, is that the Canadian government ends up funding international organizations that aren't subject to the same strictures, while Canadian organizations face limitations.

Could you give us a timeline of when we can expect the results of that work, allegedly being done, to be made public?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Unfortunately, Mr. Chair, I can't give a timeline for it. Obviously, my colleagues are working on it.

This is one the reasons that, when any legislation is put forward.... When the previous government put this in, it wasn't taken into account to take a look at this. No one anticipated that the Taliban would have come back into power. This is one of the reasons that now my colleagues are making sure that once the legislation goes in, you look at all aspects of things so you don't get into another situation—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Minister. I was hoping to get a timeline. I'm sorry that we don't have that available.

Minister, the floods underlined the fact that Pakistan and other developing countries in Asia have a great need for infrastructure. There are various ways that we can respond to it. The Government of Canada has about \$400 million in the Chinese state-controlled Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The Chinese government seeks to have significant influence in Pakistan. This bank is part of the belt and road initiative and uses infrastructure as a tool for increasing Chinese state influence.

When it comes to our efforts to support reconstruction in Pakistan, why is the government continuing to have money in this Chinese state-controlled development bank? Why not instead fund those efforts directly or through independent organizations that share our political values?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, when it comes to infrastructure or supporting any countries, we'll look at all options. We'll look at all options of where we can provide support. We're going to be looking...whether it's any development banks, from bilateral support to multilaterals. We're looking at any options we can to make sure we provide support.

When it comes to providing humanitarian support to the most vulnerable, my thing in coming into this role was that we want to stay focused on the people and put the geopolitical dynamics out of this.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Why are Canadian dollars still in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, though, given the impact on real people that the extension of Chinese state neocolonialism has on those people?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, right now, in terms of Pakistan, we are focused on real people and the most vulnerable. We'll continue to support them.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I don't think that's an answer, but the record will show the exchange. People can conclude what they like from it.

In the past I have raised with you concerns about corruption and sexual exploitation at the World Health Organization. You said at other points that you had raised that issue with WHO leadership, but you couldn't point to any specific steps. It's been, I think, a couple of years since we last had that exchange. Obviously, the WHO is operating in Pakistan and many other places. Further scandals have come out since around corruption in Syria, with further revelations around sexual abuse in DRC and other places.

What further steps have you taken to hold the WHO accountable for corruption and sexual exploitation? What is the point at which this goes beyond simply raising verbal concerns?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, it's not only about raising concerns with the WHO but with any organizations. We stay steadfast.

As you know, our feminist international assistance policy is focused on women, on everything from sexual reproductive health all the way to making sure that there's women entrepreneurship. In fact, I've seen—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Minister, I am going to jump in there. I want you to just maybe address very specifically the issues of the WHO. What are you going to do to hold the WHO accountable?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'm trying to answer the overall question, especially—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Minister—

The Chair: Mr. Genuis [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I think it's important that, since we're talking about Pakistan, I'll share an example of how important that work is. I'll give you the example of the polio teams that go out. This is probably one of the most important things I learned there. They're made up of women going into some rural areas, including dealing with violence—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Minister, what are you going to do to hold the WHO accountable?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Okay: You've got to hear me out in terms of how we're making a change in many different—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: That wasn't my question.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I answered your question regarding the WHO and what we're doing in many other organizations. You also want to hear about the work we're doing in Pakistan at the grass-roots level for supporting women.

• (1620)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Minister—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: It's [*Inaudible—Editor*]

Mr. Garnett Genuis: —the WHO is an organization that receives money from Canada. The scandal was multiple cases of sexual exploitation, of threats towards women involving WHO employees.

Specifically, what are you going to do to hold that organization accountable? We keep hearing revelations out of this. It's great to say, “we're doing some good work over here”, but what are the steps you are taking to hold the WHO accountable?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: It's not about saying that we're doing good work over here. Our government, when it comes to the supporting of women, we're seeing tangible results.... The examples I was trying to give involve Pakistan, since this committee is studying that, right?

Mr. Garnett Genuis: The WHO: That's the question.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: But that's the point: I've already answered your question regarding the WHO.

In terms of all our funding that we provide to any organization—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: So the answer is that you've raised the issue verbally—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: —we hold people to account, and if there is.... We'll take other steps when it comes to this and—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: What steps will you take?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: —when it comes to the exact examples.... Listen, if you do care about supporting women, I'm trying to give you examples of a clear example from Pakistan—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I want you to tell me what steps you have taken and are prepared to take to hold the WHO accountable for this increasing pattern of corruption and abuse. It's a very simple question.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'll make it very short. On my first meeting, I raised the issues, asked my team in terms of exactly what is taking place, heard and looked at those results, and our teams on the ground will take a look at—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: The funding continues. There are no additional conditions to funding. There are no additional requirements around funding to say that we are not going to fund programs unless we see a higher standard.

Have you imposed additional conditions on funding?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: We have a high standard when it comes to all the organizations, including the WHO.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: What additional conditions have you imposed on WHO funding?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: When it comes to—

The Chair: Mr. Genuis, you are out of time.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I suspect none. If you—

The Chair: Mr. Genuis, you are out of time.

We now go to Mr. Oliphant.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you.

I'm going to split the time with Mr. Sarai.

Thank you, Minister, deputy and officials for being here.

I'm trying to figure out the scope of the appeal that is going on right now. I know that under the OCHA documents, about \$472 million is being requested. Then I read a press release from the UN in Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan that it has been revised to over \$800 million. Do we have a working figure?

All that is telling me is that this is a mess and it is a humanitarian disaster and we're still grappling with what's going on. Do we have an idea of not what the long-term redevelopment is about, but the next mid-term phase?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: In a second here, I can have my folks talk about the UN and the next steps.

One of the things that we also learned during this visit is that the flooding has taken under their agricultural land. Not only the crops that were there but also the next year's crops are going to be damaged, so we're looking at how you support the livelihoods of people to make sure that we prevent the waterborne diseases.

Those are some of the things that we're looking at, but I know that there are teams on the ground, including the UN. Tara can explain details about that.

Ms. Tara Carney (Acting Director General, International Humanitarian Assistance, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Indeed, from the humanitarian perspective—so emergency response only—the needs assessments have been completed to date.

The overall figure is \$816 million, the appeal carrying us from the onset of the flooding until May 2023. The discrepancy in the numbers is that \$472 million is required to take us to the end of December. The remainder will flow from January until May. They've done the lookout to how to continue these until the medium- to longer-term work can take hold once waters have receded.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Are we going to be able to be revising our contributions in line with that as well?

Ms. Tara Carney: Our contributions took into account the entirety of the appeal, but of course in an emergency context we always continue to revisit as information becomes available.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: When I look at our ranking among countries in terms of humanitarian assistance, on one, we're number five in the world, and on one we're number seven. Well, we're there, and people in my riding of Don Valley West, particularly in Thorncliffe Park—Pakistani origin—want us to be there, but my appeal to you is that we keep this open, that we keep our matching contributions as something that could change in the future. That is my appeal to you today on behalf of those constituents. It's that we do that.

I'll turn to my colleague.

Mr. Randeep Sarai (Surrey Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Minister.

I want to thank you first for going out there to Pakistan. Among my constituents, I have a considerable diaspora of Pakistani people and people from Punjab, which is a heavily affected region there. Our city raised over half a million dollars, and they were very happy with the matching funds. I want to applaud you for that and also for the aid the government gave in that regard.

What I would like to hear and what a lot of them want to know is where Canada's funds went. Where did that help in terms of humanitarian help and on the ground? Could you elaborate on that and tell us where that funding went?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Sure, absolutely.

I'll just explain the previous questions regarding the additional funding. In fact, one key thing for me is making sure of where the needs actually are.

We've provided the initial emergency funding and then, once the needs assessment is done, we'll provide more. We'll start looking at how we get into the climate adaptation and prevention stage. More funding will be coming, and we'll make sure that the members know about it.

In terms of where things have gone, I'll give you examples, if you don't mind, of a few areas. A key area that we wanted to focus on was the immediate need when it comes to shelter. We wanted to put funding directly into preventing waterborne diseases.

In fact, the point I was trying to get to was on the national emergency centre in Pakistan. The polio teams they have are already best suited for that, because they are already going out. They are made up of women. Because they had to focus on looking after their families, we're providing care funding for them so they can go out and continue their work. They have now been transformed into health teams. We're helping to fund them.

Does anyone have the list of what exactly we're providing? I can get that to you afterwards, if you like.

• (1625)

Mr. Randeep Sarai: That would be great.

Also, did Pakistan or Canada identify areas that Canada can help in the future to mitigate flood-related damages? This seems to be something that may happen again and again due to climate change.

Where can we help, infrastructure-wise, with civil engineering, placement of people, construction methods, etc.? Have they brought up that, and are there places where Canada has identified that they can provide assistance?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Not only have they raised it, I raised it myself. We will be providing support. However, we can't get into that just yet, because we don't know what the exact needs will be.

One other thing we're looking at almost immediately is that the water in the south right now has no place to go. We're trying to figure out the engineering solution on how to get the water flowing. The rivers were already flowing, so it can't go anywhere; plus, the ground is completely saturated.

Those are the areas we're looking at. Once we have a better assessment, we'll have a better idea of what we'll do in the long term.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Now we go to Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron, you have two and half minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

On October 28, the United Nations Development Program, the UNDP, published an assessment of Pakistan's damage, losses and needs as a result of the floods, estimating the total damage at over \$14.9 billion U.S. The total economic losses come to about \$15.2 billion U.S., and the estimated needs for rehabilitation and reconstruction are at least \$16.3 billion U.S. My first question is this.

Minister, do you think the amounts promised at the international level will meet the needs the country has as a result of the floods?

Having been the minister of public safety in Quebec, I think I know that Quebec and the provinces can be useful when it comes to the needs that have been determined when it comes to strengthening risk mapping, surveillance and early warning systems, and integrating disaster risk reduction, disaster risk management and climate resilience into planning process systems and assessment system upgrading systems.

My second question is very simple. Did you ask Quebec and the provinces to contribute to Canada's effort to come to the aid of Pakistan?

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: To answer the question very directly on whether the international community currently will meet the needs, the answer is no. What I'm hoping to do, and also with the work that your committee is doing, is highlight what the actual needs currently are. The needs are great.

We've been there providing probably greater proportional funding support. We will do more. I'm happy to work with any province that would want to make a connection to work with us directly in providing that support. I think it's going to be needed. I think every province has a unique experience to offer.

I appreciate the offer. I would love to be able to follow up on it.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Mr. Chair, do I have any time left?

[English]

The Chair: You have 20 seconds left, Mr. Bergeron.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Right.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Shehbaz Sharif, commented that Pakistanis had become climate refugees in their own country. Observers are stressing the role played by climate change in the flooding in Pakistan. We are used to talking about climate refugees, people who have to leave their country because of climate change. We are dealing with a unique category.

What do you say about the statement by the Prime Minister of Pakistan?

• (1630)

[English]

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Well, indeed climate change is real, and if we don't do something in our own countries, it's going to be the most vulnerable around the world who are going to suffer, so we need to do something about it.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

We now go to Ms. McPherson. You have two and a half minutes, Ms. McPherson.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to follow up on the questions that Mr. Bergeron was just asking. We do know that Pakistan has contributed just a fraction of the greenhouse gases that impact climate change, and yet it is having to wear the challenges of climate change. We do know that the climate funding we have put forward is part, now, of our ODA.

Minister, do you believe that Canada's ODA should be increased?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, as you know, our government committed to showing growth within our ODA budget. You've seen that already.

One thing we're doing is making sure that we continue to make every effort so that it's in line with our feminist international assistance policy. We're seeing a direct impact on the ground.

One example, which I was trying to talk about earlier, is that because we always make our policy by looking to women, we're actually having a greater impact on the ground in supporting the most vulnerable through those polio vaccination teams that are made up of women. Providing support for them so their families can be looked after means now—

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Minister. I don't have very much time. I'm so sorry.

In terms of ODA, how are you advocating for those increases? As you know, right now Canada is at about 0.3%. We had promised to get to 0.7%. We have never gotten to 0.7%. In fact, right now at 0.3% we're well below what many similar democracies in the world are doing. I'm wondering how you're advocating. What are you, as Minister for International Development, doing to advocate for more ODA for Canadian organizations?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, I can assure the member that I'm advocating extremely strongly among my own colleagues.

Ms. Heather McPherson: How?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'm not going to get into the exact details of how I speak with my colleagues, but I welcome the support from the member and any others as well. Thank you.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now go to Mr. Genuis.

You have two and a half minutes.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Thank you, Chair.

I want to get this in, Minister. According to a report in the Associated Press, UN operations in Syria have dealt heavily with regime-affiliated human rights abusers. The report suggests that almost half of the procurement contracts involve companies involved in or profiting from human rights abuses.

Incredibly to me, about one-quarter of contracts went to companies owned or partially owned by individuals directly sanctioned by us or our allies. We have a situation where, on the one hand, our development assistance has stringent conditions associated with it for Canadian organization, which limit our ability to do good work in the context of Afghanistan, as we've talked about, but at the same time, we're giving money to the UN and other multilateral organizations with serious corruption problems, and also they are doing business, procuring goods, from one of the world's most heinous regimes and its enablers.

We need to put a stop to this. I want to ask this specifically: Will you commit to withdrawing funds from organizations, UN-affiliated or otherwise, that don't have acceptable human rights standards? How will you seek to challenge these kinds of procurement practices in the context of Pakistan and in other contexts, to make sure we are no longer, through our contributions to the UN, giving money to people we're supposed to be sanctioning?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Mr. Chair, do you want me to take questions that are not related to Pakistan? I'm happy to—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: It is related.

The Chair: Yes, please.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I don't think it is related to Pakistan, but I'm happy to.

First of all—

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Let me just clarify—

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Let me answer your question now.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Please.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: Okay. Thank you.

First of all, I haven't seen that report. Now that I've been made aware of it, I'll have to talk to my team to see if they've seen it and take a look at it.

One thing I can commit to when it comes to human rights violations—something that we not only take seriously but take a very aggressive approach on—is that we will work with organizations to support the most vulnerable. We'll do this all over the world.

We'll help improve the United Nations assistance. We'll help improve any other organizations that are out there. One thing is clear: When it comes to the funding we do provide, we want to support the most vulnerable and we want to make sure it's done in a transparent way.

This is one reason we actually have very strict conditions when we look at providing money, so when something is done we can actually learn about it and take further action on it.

• (1635)

Mr. Garnett Genuis: Minister, I'm sorry you haven't seen the report. I'd welcome a follow-up on that. If we're giving money to organizations that are procuring from sanctioned individuals and entities, that clearly is not good for people. That clearly is not advancing the values we're supposed to be standing for.

It's relevant in Pakistan. It's relevant anywhere we operate. How are we making sure, if we're giving money to UN-affiliated organizations that have this kind of track record in Syria, that they're not procuring from sanctioned individuals or from individuals who are involved in human rights abuses? That's really important and really relevant to the conversation we're having.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: It is. Absolutely, it is.

Mr. Garnett Genuis: I hope you would take a firm line on that.

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: In fact, I not only do, but I can also show you great examples. When you visit the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya or many other places, and the World Food Programme and many other organizations, they are working to save many lives. When it comes to the work, absolutely we need to do it, and we need to deal with any issues that come up.

Thanks for identifying that.

The Chair: Thank you.

The last slot goes to Mr. Oliphant.

You have two and a half minutes.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Minister, thank you again for being here.

I want to stick to Pakistan and the emergency crisis at hand, and the over 30 million people who have been affected by this, and perhaps a whole country, frankly, not just the 30 million. We have up to 100 million people who are really affected by this. I think that is critical for this committee to deal with at this time. I think that is also what people in our ridings want us to deal with.

How do we get our information on the ground? It's a fluid situation—I don't mean a pun—a difficult situation that is constantly changing. Is our high commission able to handle this? Do we have outside sources? How do we get on-the-ground information, which is constantly changing, in difficult areas to reach?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: I'm glad you raised that.

When it comes to difficult areas, this is one of the reasons.... We have those long-standing relationships with many organizations that work in different areas, for example, the Humanitarian Coalition. In my first briefing with them, they talked about how, with the earthquake in Pakistan that took place in remote areas, they had the ability and the connection within those communities—the Islamic Relief coalition—to be able to get that information.

We have many links through our long-term partners, but also working directly with the Pakistani government, the national command centre, which our folks are directly connected with. There are multiple different sources that can get that information.

Pakistan set up a good system, which we saw from the national and provincial levels, right down to the municipal level. The information does get fed and decisions are appropriately made. This is where our high commission folks are directly tapped into.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: That's very good.

Is there anything you want to leave with the committee that we have not had a chance to ask you about?

Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan: There is one thing, Mr. Chair.

When it comes to this portfolio, I think we can all agree that we want to support the most vulnerable. Again, I want to take this opportunity to thank the committee for raising this.

We heard about the Pakistani floods, but it did not get the attention it deserved. I've been to a lot of conflict areas, a lot of floods, in areas in Canada and other places, even in South Sudan. This was atrocious.

Imagine taking one of our provinces and one-third of it is under water. There are a lot of things that are going on, horrible things going on in the world, and we need to support all of that. We have to make sure we're there for the most vulnerable.

I also want to say thanks for some of the work that was done in the past. I don't know how many times someone has come up to me to say that the work that was done from the previous flood saved a lot of lives. By working together, we're able to continue that work for people. Thank you again for this opportunity.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you, Honourable Minister. Thank you, Deputy Minister MacLennan, Mr. Gibbins, Ms. Carney and Ms. Do. We're very grateful for your testimony and for making yourselves available to the committee.

We will suspend briefly before we proceed with the study on Haiti.

Thank you.

• (1635)

(Pause)

• (1645)

The Chair: Welcome back, everyone.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), and the motions adopted by the committee on Monday, January 31, 2022, and Wednesday, October 19, 2022, the committee resumes its study of the current situation in Haiti.

It is now my pleasure to welcome, from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, Mr. Sébastien Carrière, Ambassador of Canada to Haiti; as well as Mr. Sébastien Sigouin, executive director, Haiti.

I'd like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses who just joined us by video conference.

Please click on the microphone to activate your mike, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking. Interpretation is at the bottom of your screen. The three options consist of the floor, English or French. Those in the room can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

You will be given five minutes for your remarks, after which we will proceed to a round of questions. I will signal you when you only have one minute remaining.

Now, Mr. Ambassador, the floor is yours for five minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Carrière (Ambassador of Canada to Haiti, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am going to try to keep my opening remarks as brief as possible, to encourage discussion.

Haiti has had chronic political problems for many years. The situation was exacerbated by the assassination of President Moïse in July 2021, which created a constitutional and institutional vacuum that led to the current security, humanitarian and political crisis.

More recently, gangs supported by a certain segment of the Haitian elite have extended their territorial control over the country. They now occupy the port of Varreux, the country's main oil terminal, blocking the distribution of fuel in the country, most importantly, and preventing hospitals from operating normally and responding to the resurgence of cholera, among other things.

We need only look at some data to understand the extent of the ongoing crisis in Haiti. First, 4.7 million people are facing acute hunger, and over 113,000 people have been displaced within the country. The latest figures on cholera show that there have now been 52 deaths and almost 3,000 suspected or confirmed cases. The age category most affected by cholera is children aged nine and under.

On October 9, 2022, faced with this crisis, the Prime Minister, Ariel Henry, wrote to Canada, the United States and the Secretary General of the United Nations to request military aid to secure the country's critical infrastructure and reopen road access between the capital and the rest of the country. In the days that followed, the Secretary General of the United Nations proposed the deployment of a rapid intervention force to the United Nations Security Council.

● (1650)

[English]

Canada has played a leadership role in Haiti for decades. We have invested close to \$2 billion since 2010, including significant investments to strengthen security in Haiti. Canada's leadership is not only about our investments or foreign aid; it is also about the sustained engagement of our Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in mobilizing international partners, as you will have seen with the various high-level events and engagements chaired by Canada over the last few months. The international community seems clearly committed to support Haitian authorities' efforts to restore order, allow the flow of fuel and goods and ensure that critical humanitarian assistance is provided to the population.

To ensure that we make the right decisions, the Government of Canada established an interdepartmental mission and has been consulting with Haitian stakeholders, regional partners, the UN, CARICOM and others to assess options for the international response and the role Canada could play in finding a solution. The mission has just returned from Haiti and will be discussing its findings with partners to identify a path forward for the international community.

[Translation]

As Ms. Joly stated on Sunday morning, yesterday, on *Les coulisses du pouvoir*, impunity is not imaginable. The Government of Canada is now thinking of imposing sanctions and taking other measures against the people who support the armed gangs and arms trafficking in Haiti, including any who might be residing in Canada. The sanctions follow on the sanctions resolution that was adopted by the United Nations Security Council ten days ago.

Canada is in well placed to work with its key allies to support the efforts of the Haitian authorities, to find a solution to the humanitarian and security crisis and, in the longer term, to establish an inclusive dialogue that would lead to free and democratic elections.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

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

We now open the floor to questions. The first slot goes to Mr. Epp.

Mr. Epp, you have six minutes.

Mr. Dave Epp (Chatham-Kent—Leamington, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Ambassador, for your testimony.

Whenever I think of the island that Haiti is situated on, I'm reminded of the importance of governance in the differential outcomes for people: for the Haitians and for those on the other end of the island.

Governance is important, so I want to start there, Mr. Ambassador. You mentioned Canada's long-term leadership position in Haiti. Canada and the U.S. are the number one and number two donors to that country internationally. What are the international expectations of Canada in this crisis?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Thank you for the question.

The expectations are fairly high, I would say. I think we all saw the media coverage of the visit by Secretary Blinken to Ottawa and some of the articles before and during the visit. Indeed, people expect Canada to take on a leadership role.

We have a very good reputation in Haiti. We're well respected. People come to us seeking our advice and our views on what they could do. It's important to leverage that in favour of a good resolution to this current crisis for Haiti, but also, I think this has to be a group effort. No one country can swoop in here and solve problems that have been going on since the fall of the dictatorship, and, some would argue, even before. I think it's important to be modest and to consult and that this be a group effort.

One of the things we did two weeks ago, I think it was, was that the Prime Minister had a call with CARICOM leaders. It was a leader-level call, I believe, to seek the views of countries in the neighbourhood. You mentioned the Dominican Republic. The Dominican Republic was on that call as a member of CARICOM. It was to see how we can leverage the regional alliances in the Caribbean towards helping Haiti.

Mr. Dave Epp: Thank you, Ambassador.

I hear you saying two things. Can I ask you to be a little more specific? What is Canada's position on the potential United Nations resolution versus the initiative being floated by the United States and Mexico?

● (1655)

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Yes, there are two resolutions. One has been adopted. That one is the sanctions resolution. We're 100% behind that. We worked really hard behind the scenes to make that happen, and we're glad it did.

Then there's another resolution that's on the table this week, I believe, in New York, about a force resolution, and no decision has been made on that. That was part of what the assessment team came here to do last week. They're continuing their consultations this week. They're briefing up in terms of what their findings are. The discussions continue in New York.

It's very much a fast-moving file, so we'll see what today, tomorrow and the next couple of days bring.

Mr. Dave Epp: Sir, you referenced sanctions. Who are those sanctions targeting?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: There's one individual who was actually named by the resolution, Jimmy Cherizier, a former police lieutenant. He's known as "Barbecue". That's his gang name. He was specifically named by the UN Security Council. That doesn't really help, because this man is a criminal, of course, and lives in the cash economy and doesn't have holdings outside of Haiti. I think it was the symbol that was important. That's why he was included.

What we really want to get at is sanctioning gang leaders, yes, but also the people who facilitate and finance their work. It's a well-known fact in Haiti that sometimes there are demonstrations that are real demonstrations, where people come out and express their disagreement with the government or with the policies, but there are also demonstrations that are bought and paid for and that aim to destabilize the country because somebody doesn't like one decision or another. It's that we're trying to sort out.

There are links between the political level and the gangs, and there are links between the political, the gangs and some members of the economic elite—not all of them, but some—so those are the people we're trying to get at in sort of breaking the quote-unquote system.

Mr. Dave Epp: Thank you, sir.

Following the meetings with Secretary Blinken last week, it was reported that our foreign minister made the statement that Canada wanted to get it "right".

You mentioned that our assessment teams are just back from Haiti. Addressing wanting to get it right, my understanding is that Canada did support and did back the previous administration after the assassination of President Moïse and did support Ariel Henry. Am I correct in that? If so, does that mean that Canada didn't get it right, because of the allegations of the association of that regime—or this regime—with gang activity?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: There are a lot of allegations out there. I think those need to be looked at carefully and be evaluated. I think you're correct that the Government of Canada, along with a group of other countries, supported Ariel Henry last summer. I would just say that the sitting president, Jovenel Moïse named him. Then of course he was assassinated a couple of days after that. What Canada has been promoting for over a year now is an inclusive political dialogue that leaves no one behind and in which everyone can agree on a transitional government that can take the country back to an election and democracy.

Unfortunately—

Mr. Dave Epp: In that dialogue, how big a voice does the Montana group carry?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: I would argue that they have a very big voice, maybe more outside of Haiti than in Haiti. They do represent a vast coalition of civil society organizations, some of which are very important. They clearly have a seat at the table. We think they need to be part of the solution. They're a constellation of organizations. I'm not sure how homogenous it really is. For me, it has to be all hands on deck. It can't be politics as usual, where one faction tries to outweigh the other and so on and so forth. It shouldn't even be about politics; it should be about Haiti. You heard the numbers I gave earlier.

Mr. Dave Epp: Yes.

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: I don't think the country can afford to itself the luxury of a sustained political crisis. I think everyone needs to get together. I think that includes Ariel Henry, and that certainly includes the Montana group.

Mr. Dave Epp: If that consensus—

The Chair: Mr. Epp, you are considerably over time.

We will now go to Mr. Dubourg.

You have six minutes, sir.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg (Bourassa, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I would like to welcome our witnesses. We have both Sébastiens with us.

Welcome.

● (1700)

[Translation]

Ambassador, Your Excellency, I am very pleased that you are here at our committee today.

I would like to ask you several questions. I'm going to be succinct, and if you can answer the same way, I will be grateful.

My first question is this.

In the current context in Haiti, from the political, humanitarian and security perspective, how are your staff in Haiti doing?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Thank you for the question, Mr. Dubourg.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate you on your statement in the House of Commons two weeks ago. It made quite an impression here in Haiti and we are all grateful.

The embassy staff are doing well, in the circumstances. Obviously, these eight weeks of crisis have been trying. People are tired, but the Canadian employees and the local staff are able to take short breaks and take it in turns.

Clearly the situation is harder for our Haitian employees; they have seen their country paralyzed for nearly two months. On the other hand, we are well stocked in terms of fuel, food and water reserves, and so on. We are not lacking anything. Certainly everyone would like the current episode of the crisis to be resolved as fast as possible.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Thank you, Ambassador.

I would like to know why Canada, of all the countries on the international scene, is considered to be in best placed to intervene in Haiti, in the event that it were to be necessary.

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: That is really more a question for a political scientist than the ambassador, but I will still try to answer it, without putting my foot in my mouth.

I would say we have a relatively positive history in Haiti when it comes to doing a good job of balancing our involvement. Canada's solidarity with the people of Haiti is well known, and has been for years. Before that, there were missionaries who came to build schools here, and so on. There is also the general history of the country and the relations between the two countries, obviously. You know Haitian history better than I do. There was the occupation by a former colonial power, there was the American occupation, and there have been all sorts of episodes that mean that some countries kind of bring up the ghosts of the past.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Thank you.

In terms of intervention, you know that in the diaspora, as in Haiti itself, people are very divided on the possibility of intervention. The Prime Minister of Canada made a statement in which he said that before sending any mission to Haiti, a certain number of conditions must be present. One of the conditions he mentioned was the level of support among the Haitian people.

How would you describe that support?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: It is very difficult to measure, because we do not have many tools for doing surveys or organizing focus groups, as is done in Canada.

First, I don't like the word "intervention"; I prefer "assistance". I think that is also what Haitians in general prefer, and it is certainly the word used by the people we talk to.

I have had the privilege of travelling a lot in the country over the last year, and I can tell you that not even to mention security assistance, Canada is very active there. I visited people in different regions of the country, and most Haitians were still happy to see people from the embassy of Canada and talk about projects and the needs on the ground and the support we offer in that country. So we enjoy a good reputation and we are doing good work. I am not saying it's perfect. Significant amounts of money have been invested. Of course, we could have done some things better, but in general, Canada is very well regarded.

My impression is that Canada's relatively measured response to Mr. Henry's request two weeks ago and the fact that we are taking the time to speak and meet with people before making a decision is part of the equation.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: In your opening address, you also talked about openness, corruption—and I would add "systemic"—on the part of the gangs, the economic elite and politicians. Canada wants to impose severe sanctions on those people.

Do you think sanctions could have a significant effect, particularly on the economic elite?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Absolutely. It may be the missing ingredient. For several weeks, when we have talked about the possibility of an assistance mission, it has often been said that we have to avoid the errors of the past. You have heard this from Bob Rae, from Justin Trudeau and from Mélanie Joly.

One of the errors of the past is that we have intervened in a massive way but without tackling the structural problems in the economy and the fact that a small group of players controlled an enormous part of the Haitian economy. These are people who sometimes do business in a not so clean way. We absolutely have to tackle that right away. If we apply the same solutions as in the past, we can't expect a different result.

• (1705)

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Thank you.

You know that here, we have systems that do not exist in Haiti, like Elections Canada and Elections Québec.

At what point do you think elections could be held in Haiti?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: To have elections, there first has to be a political accord on the transition. Prime Minister Henry has one, but he needs more partners, to get to the next stage, appointing a provisional electoral council, or CEP. That is a body that has somewhat the same function as Elections Canada and is composed of nine members from specific sectors. The people appointed are businesspeople, trade unionists, politicians, and so on.

The purpose of the political accord is to agree on the composition of the CEP. Elections experts tell me that it would then take about a year before elections can be held. Today is October 31.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Thank you.

My next question will undoubtedly be the last.

Do you take a favourable view of participation by Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, countries in a possible intervention in Haiti?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Yes, absolutely. I have had a lot of discussions with CARICOM partners and regional parties, not just in the last few weeks, but for a year. Canada is making a lot of effort to get more commitments from countries in the region. We can learn a lot from our partners in the region. We have to listen to them and work with them.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: You have been the Canadian ambassador in Haiti for over a year. When do you think the proliferation of gangs in Haiti began? There are said to be 200 of them. When you first took office, how many were there?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Yes, I think there were that many. I would say it started in the last ten years. A history course could be taught on the use of violence in Haitian politics. We need only think of the Tonton Macoutes during Duvalier's time, or the "chimères", the ghosts, for example. The use of violence in politics in Haiti is not a new phenomenon. As to its current manifestation, I can't give you a precise year, but we have seen the emergence of these gangs starting a decade ago. It is absolutely tragic.

You know this, since we talked about it at my last appearance, but I will repeat it for everyone's benefit: the area south of the capital is blocked, so no one can get out. That also means that the entire southern peninsula is blocked. The people in that area cannot come to Port-au-Prince, and so goods can't move, nor can assistance be delivered. The way out to the Dominican Republic, the road to Dajabón, has also been blocked for a year. We are 64 kilometres from the Dominican Republic here. Before, at least, we had the road going north, but for several months that has been extremely dangerous. I don't want to say it is blocked, but it too is virtually blocked. So the capital is surrounded. The only side that is not blocked is the sea.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Ambassador, do you think it would be possible for an intervention to take place in Haiti without any blood being spilled?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: In my opinion, that must be the absolute priority, so every effort has to be made to ensure that providing security assistance in Haiti is done as peacefully as possible.

Mr. Emmanuel Dubourg: Ambassador, the gangs are said to be heavily armed.

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: The gangs are heavily armed, in fact.

The fact that all sorts of weapons and ammunition coming from the United States, in particular, are getting into Haiti is extremely problematic.

Illegal arms trafficking takes place throughout the Caribbean and in Central America, not just in Haiti.

The gangs are heavily armed, but some people who work in this field, including experts on gangs, could tell you what they tell me, which is that the desire...

[English]

The Chair: Sir, you're considerably over time.

• (1710)

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: ... to fight against professional soldiers is another matter.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

We will now go to Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron, you have six minutes.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to welcome the witnesses and thank them very much for being with us today.

Ambassador, you are aware that we are facing a lose-lose situation, given that no one is eager to see an intervention by the international community, whether or not led by Canada, if only to try to support the Haitian government in breaking the deadlock and ensuring security in the country, which is a prerequisite for organizing elections.

There is also the opinion of Haitians and the Haitian diaspora who are asking us to do nothing, since every time the West sets foot in the country it makes the situation worse.

The ambassador to the United Nations, Bob Rae, referred to this: we have to take the pulse of the people. Haitians have to be involved, to determine future solutions. The problem is that we don't really know whom to deal with, as you said. The government is asking us to intervene, but what legitimacy does this government have?

On October 7, you told *Le Nouvelliste* that Haiti was a few minutes away from having an agreement between Ariel Henry and Fritz Alphonse Jean.

What is the situation at present?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: From what I understand, talks resumed a few days ago among the various parties. You mentioned the prime minister and Fritz Alphonse Jean, the president elected under the Montana accord, but there are other actors in the equation.

The good news is that there are still tables in Haiti, whether they are small, medium-sized or large. People are talking to one another. The bad news is that the discussions held for the last year have led nowhere. The example you cite, from October 7, is the last one on the list. We are continuing to promote that dialogue.

Last week, the assessment mission was here with us. We met with the main political actors. The message was meant for everyone, and it related to the importance of listening to one another.

Playing politics cannot be allowed to happen as it usually does.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: You referred to the assessment mission. I believe it has ended now.

Who made up the mission?

Do we have an idea of its conclusions?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: The members of the mission came home on Saturday. They are now in Ottawa to take stock of the situation, hold meetings, and write a report.

The team included two people from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the director of the peace and stabilization operations program, and the director of humanitarian affairs. There was also a representative from the Department of National Defence and a representative from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. The mission was led by Daniel Jean, the former deputy minister of foreign affairs and national security advisor to the Prime Minister, who himself had two postings to Haiti over the course of his career.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: On October 27, on *L'heure du monde* broadcast on ICI Première, Gilles Rivard, the former ambassador of Canada to Haiti, said that we should start by imposing sanctions on certain private sector actors and corrupt Haitian politicians to regularly travel abroad, including to Canada, and I quote, to make their investments prosper.

You seemed to agree with that statement when you answered a question asked by my colleague Emmanuel Dubourg. On October 21, a few days earlier, the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution providing for sanctions relating to Haiti. That resolution allows a travel ban, an asset freeze, and an arms embargo targeting designated individuals who engage in criminal activities in Haiti. Those activities include arms trafficking, attacking United Nations personnel, abduction, obstructing delivery of humanitarian assistance, and violating human rights, including the commission of sexual and gender-based violence.

There is a desire to impose sanctions, but at this point, nothing is happening. Can we hope that Canada will shortly impose sanctions, particularly when the whole idea seems to be viewed favourably?

• (1715)

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Yes, work is proceeding very intensely. You can therefore hope that something will happen soon.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: I take it from this that we will have news soon. Stay tuned!

In addition, the United States and Mexico are preparing another draft resolution on Haiti. According to the United States representative at the United Nations Security Council, that resolution would authorize an international security assistance mission that was not under the aegis of the United Nations with the aim of improving the security climate and facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance that is desperately needed by the population. While the proposed mission would not come under the aegis of the United Nations, the United States and Mexico have proposed that it be led under chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

Do you know where that draft resolution, that the United States and Mexico are working on, stands now?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: I know there were pretty intense talks about this in New York last week and they are continuing this week.

Our ambassador to the United Nations, Bob Rae, is participating in those talks, as are several of my colleagues.

I won't presume to say they are inventing something new. However, from what I know, a mission under Chapter VII has never been carried out that was not under the aegis of the United Nations. This means that everyone has to explain the concepts a little better,

and then the permanent members, in particular, will take a position on what is presented. That work is going on very intensely in New York this week.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: What reason do you think there is for wanting to lead a mission that was not under the aegis of the United Nations but came under Chapter VII of the Charter?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Well, there have been a lot...

[English]

The Chair: Give us a short response. You have less than 15 seconds for your response.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: To answer in 15 seconds, I will say there have been a lot of missions in the past. I think there has been a lot of bad publicity or bad moves in certain past missions, so they are perhaps trying to avoid those kinds of events, which damage reputations.

Having said that, I will add that it is pure speculation on my part.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

We now go to Ms. McPherson.

You have six minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the ambassador for sharing this information with us. I want to express my sympathies to him, his staff and all Haitians as they go through this very difficult time.

I know, from the many Haitian Canadians to whom I've spoken, that this is an incredibly painful time. Obviously, Haiti is facing a horrendous humanitarian, political and economic crisis. Humanitarians to whom I've spoken have told me this is the worst...they have ever seen in Haiti. Of course, Haitian Canadians are very worried about their friends and families. Quite frankly, some are opposed to Canada's position.

Mr. Ambassador, I'm sure you're aware of the many criticisms of the Core Group. Many Haitians don't trust the intentions of the group and have accused it of interference in Haiti's domestic affairs. I'm sure you read Evan Dyer's piece last year on the resignation of Daniel Foote, who called it "international puppeteering" and said it was hubris for us to pick leadership in Haiti.

Ambassador, the Global Affairs website says the Core Group has a mandate to serve as the voice of the international community to the state of Haiti. Could you give me some sense of who gave the Core Group this mandate?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Maybe we need to update the website.

First, I want to thank you for your kind words. I just want to say that the Haitian people are extraordinary. They get up every morning and face challenges that we can't even imagine as Canadians. I don't deserve to breathe the same air they do. It's a honour to serve both Canada and the Haitian people.

With regard to the diaspora, I hear them. I hear them. I have relatives and friends. I grew up in the suburbs of Montreal with a Haitian uncle and a Haitian stepdad there for awhile, so I hear it. I sometimes feel it, too, although I'm not allowed to say that as an ambassador. I know it's a very delicate issue for very right historical reasons.

Now the Core Group.... I get this question a lot. I'm going to try the short version; I don't want to eat all your time.

I did a panel with some diaspora members this summer, and we talked about it for half an hour or something. It started on their previous UN missions, where the SRSG.... They were chapter VII missions, right? In a chapter VII mission, the state gives a bit of its sovereignty to the United Nations. The special representative of the Secretary-General kind of becomes sort of a "president bis", right. There's a lot of power with a chapter VII resolution. The Core Group was created to sort of diffuse that power and help manage it. It was formed, basically, by countries that contributed troops to the missions, so the membership sort of evolved as the group of contributing nations changed over the various missions.

Now the last troops left, and MINUSTAH became MINUJUSTH. Then it became BINUH. BINUH does not have peacekeeping troops. It does have a strong police contingent but no peacekeeping. The Core Group stayed behind. I always say that there's a Core Group in every capital. It's perfectly normal for like-minded ambassadors to get together and share views and exchange and say stuff. What is maybe less normal is the importance we give it here. Frankly, I think it's a bit exaggerated.

Does the Core Group meet? Yes, it does. Sometimes we invite others. There aren't that many diplomats left here on the ground in Port-au-Prince, so we have to coordinate. We share information. We exchange contacts and knowledge. That's perfectly normal and healthy. You need to do that as a diplomatic community.

What we don't do is come out and express public opinions about everything that's going on in the country. There have been two Core Group communiqués in the last.... Let's go back to when the president was assassinated. There was one about Ariel Henry, and there was one about the fuel crisis we had in November 2021. That's it. The rest of the time we just compare notes and mind our own business.

• (1720)

Ms. Heather McPherson: That is, I think, one of the big concerns, of course: when the Canadian government website says that they have a mandate to serve as the voice. That's problematic. When we see a country desperately trying to push for its own sovereignty, I think that it's important that we recognize that.

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: I think you're right, and I thank you for flagging it. I was not aware of this. I see Sébastien nodding. I think we're going to have a look at that.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thanks.

One other question I have for you is, I guess.... You know, some of my colleagues brought up the Montana Accord; we've talked about the Montana Accord. Does Canada support the Montana Accord? I know you said it is complicated. You mentioned that you think that their voice or influence is not as strong in Haiti as it is

outside of Haiti. Does the Canadian government support the asks within the Montana Accord?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Let me just clarify, you know, because I actually have friends in that accord, and I don't want to lose friends. I should have said "loud". Their voices may be not as loud.

To me, it's not about supporting an accord or a party or someone else, frankly, at this point. To me, it's about supporting a Haitian-inclusive solution. They bring a very important part of the solution to the table. I talk to them all the time, all of them, because the Haitian political scene is pretty fluid. I think they are absolutely important, but they're not the only actors. I think the current government has to be part of the solution. There are multiple political parties here. Some of them are very important with large bases. They have to be part of the solution, too.

We talked a lot about the transition. There's going to be a campaign at some point. Maybe people who are not interested.... It's kind of like when you guys have a leadership race. Maybe whoever gets to lead the transition shouldn't be running for leader. Maybe that's a good model. Ariel Henry says he doesn't want to run for president. If others don't want to run for president, you know, why don't they all get together and organize the transition?

There are folks who do want to run for president. They aren't being shy about it. They are campaigning already. They've said they're staying out of the transition because they want to be president.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I have one last question for you.

This is a humanitarian crisis. You've talked about how horrific it is on the ground.

The Chair: Ms. McPherson, we're well over six minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to Mr. Epp.

Mr. Epp, you have four minutes.

Mr. Dave Epp: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Before I go on, Mr. Ambassador, thank you for your time. I cannot imagine the stress you're under.

Picking up from where we left off earlier, if there is a consensus coming from the assessment team, from discussions with our international community, that Canada should intervene with military aid, are both options on the table, both peacekeeping forces and interventionist forces? We've long supported, as I understand it, the Haitian National Police. Where will Canada go? What would be your recommendation?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: This was obviously a big topic with the assessment team last week, right? Again, learn the lessons of the past.

I think what's really important is that whoever comes in can't be substituting themselves for the Haitian National Police. You're right. We have heavily invested in the Haitian National Police. It's a very strong core around which we can continue to build.

I would see it as us coming behind the HNP and strengthening them even more. I think if you do that, then you avoid the mistakes of the past, where you come in and do everything for them and try to bring them along. Obviously, it didn't work, because when MINUSTAH left, what happened, happened.

I think that's the key. In any scenario, we have to build it around supporting the HNP. The sustainable solution to Haiti's security problem is the Haitian National Police.

• (1725)

Mr. Dave Epp: Thank you.

I want to echo the comments of my colleague across the way, MP Dubourg, that none of us want to see blood spilled.

To that, then, may I ask, what was Secretary Blinken's ask of Canada relative to your immediate comment?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: I was not in that meeting. I can't tell you exactly what he asked for.

I did read the Miami Herald the day before the visit, where it was fairly obvious that the State Department is looking for Canada to take leadership of this force. However, I don't think they've defined exactly what shape or form it would take.

They're quite aware that at the same time that the secretary was in Ottawa, the assessment team was here looking at options. I should take it as a compliment that they want us to lead, but I think we have to do things our way, the Canadian way. Look at Canada's interests in doing this, and do it with regional partners. It's very important that we talk to the right people before we make any decisions.

Mr. Dave Epp: Mr. Ambassador, I want to take my remaining time and shift a bit over to aid to Haiti.

I think it's \$1.87 billion that we, as a country, have donated.

Can I ask, is Canada right now supplying some aid bilaterally, or is most of it, or hopefully all of it, flowing through our organizations here in Canada and to their partners on the ground? Can you give me a rough split on what's being done bilaterally and what's being done through partner organizations?

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Mr. Sigouin, can you answer that question?

You may have the figures in front of you.

Mr. Sébastien Sigouin (Executive Director, Haiti, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

Thank you very much for your question.

Indeed, the Canadian assistance is a mix both of multilateral funding, for example, response to humanitarian needs, but also working with bilateral partners in a number of fields, whether it's gender equality, health or education. The Prime Minister recently announced a Canadian contribution of \$20 million for reconstruction in Haiti. He made that announcement a few weeks ago. Canada is also strongly supporting strengthening the security system in Haiti.

With regard to numbers per se, from a bilateral programming perspective—and it's a mix of Canadian and international partners and multilateral partners—our funding last year was about \$50 million. Then the other half, just for last year—we had about \$98 million to \$100 million last year—was a mix of humanitarian, as well, and other partners.

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

We will now go to Ms. Vandenberg.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg (Ottawa West—Nepean, Lib.): Thank you very much. I will be splitting my time with Mr. Zuberi, so I'll be quick.

First of all, Ambassador, thank you so much for being here to talk about Haiti. This is a crisis that, I believe, is not getting the kind of attention it should be getting. We hear the stories from diaspora communities but also from our development partners on the ground, and it is absolutely heart-wrenching to hear what is happening on the ground.

We've talked a lot about what to do in the immediate crisis right now, the lack of rule of law, amongst other things. Obviously there are deep underlying issues here. I wonder, Ambassador, if you can talk about the long term and how we address the issues of governance and corruption and a lot of things that have led to the current crisis. To be honest, when we speak with development partners, many of them actually say that in some ways the prioritization—they call it the “projectization”—of development is being set by international development partners that have projects that people then respond to, as opposed to actually reflecting the needs of the people on the ground in Haiti.

I wonder if you could give us some recommendations about how we can make sure we're really responding to the core issues on the ground.

• (1730)

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: That's a great question. Thank you for that.

We're really good at diagnostics, right? When I say "we", it's everybody who works on Haiti. We spend so much time figuring out what's wrong. I think we know what's wrong and how we got here. I think we know that if Haiti's going to have long-term success, it needs to restructure, to reform the economy. It needs people to pay their taxes and their customs fees. It needs a judicial system to enforce that. The judicial system has pretty much collapsed.

In order to do that, it needs to fight what is Haiti's biggest, number one problem since the dictatorship, and that is impunity. Everything stems from impunity—corruption and impunity. We've tried, over the course of the last 30 years, every time there has been an assistance mission, to fight impunity from the inside—with some success. The country has been going up and down. It's in a pretty big low right now, but there were some things that really worked.

What we didn't do is fight it from the outside in, and that's where the sanctions piece comes in. Sanctioning sounds short term because it's new, but it's not. To me it's fundamental. It's long term. What you do is stop the flow of all this illicit capital out of the country. You change the behaviour of the economic elite. You change the way the country works at a macroeconomic level. Then we can start doing the other stuff and actually have a lasting impact. That's why it's very important.

We can actually do it because we're Canada and because we're the U.S. The links between the North American economy and Haiti's economy are obvious. That, to me, is the long-term part.

I think your question also deserves a longer answer—frankly, a whole seminar—on how we plan better as an international community once stability comes back, how we approach our assistance better, how we coordinate ourselves better. I would hope we'd bring in new donors. I have to say the first time I worked on Haiti was right after the earthquake in 2010. There were several countries that were very active at the time that have left, that are no longer active. Some have just closed down and are gone, and that's a shame. We have to show these donors, these countries, that it's worth coming back.

Ms. Anita Vandenberg: Thank you.

Sameer.

The Chair: We're out of time, Mr. Zuberi. Thank you.

We now go to Mr. Bergeron.

You have two minutes, Mr. Bergeron.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I may, Your Excellency, I would like to come back to the draft resolution that was being prepared by the United States and Mexico.

The Haitian ambassador in Washington has called on the international community to speed up the talks on deploying an armed intervention in Haiti, when efforts to ratify a United Nations resolution supporting such a force seemed to have stalled.

While we hear through the grapevine what is going on in the negotiations for that resolution between Canada and the United States,

does Canada intend to take part in such a mission in one way or another?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Canada plainly intends to engage with the problem and contribute to solutions. I mentioned the political leadership relating to this situation that has been exercised for what will soon be a year. Intense talks are continuing. Ambassador Bob Rae, who plays an important role in New York, even came here in August. We went to the Dominican Republic together after that. It goes without saying that we are not about to stop playing that role this week.

In addition, if I may, I am going to come back to the effect of the sanctions. When the United Nations resolution was adopted ten days ago, the effect was immediate in the streets of Port-au-Prince. There has not been the slightest violent demonstration or violent blockage since then. The Varreux terminal is still blocked, as are the exits from the city, but in the metropolitan area in Port-au-Prince, we have seen an immediate effect, a change in behaviour. That is very important. It is a short-term or long-term effect.

In my opinion, that may create a space in which talks can take place. These are serious, difficult and important discussions. As the saying goes, things must be allowed to take their course. We also have to take the time to consult the appropriate people, to avoid making the same mistakes we made last time.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

I would also like to thank the embassy staff.

Going forward, you can count on our collaboration, and in this way we will be able to help the Haitian people. Let us hope that this will be effective and lasting and our support helps them make their way out of this crisis, which comes on top of all the previous ones. We have to enable that country to find a degree of stability and, we hope, of prosperity.

● (1735)

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Bergeron, you're considerably over time.

[Translation]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms. McPherson, you have two minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the ambassador for being with us today.

Ambassador, I would like some more information about the humanitarian efforts being undertaken.

What steps is Canada taking to ensure that humanitarian organizations working in Haiti to deliver services in a neutral, impartial way aren't going to be drawn into a military or security operation? Can they continue to work to deliver services to people on the basis of need, not based on political priorities or security interests?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Absolutely.

I think it's an important question. It's very much top of mind at all times for us, particularly these days...with the intensity of the security crisis in these last couple of weeks.

They have good access here. They've been able to maintain that access. There's a strong fellowship among the agencies. If there are ever issues, a government will always cooperate.

Right now, what's important is.... We're trying to focus on cholera. We want to nip this thing in the bud before it happens. I think there's a flash appeal being prepared by OCHA, or somebody else in Geneva. We're tracking that very closely. There are regular meetings between my humanitarian officials and the various UN agencies to make sure we're tracking everything and addressing problems, if and as they arise.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

I think the humanitarian community will be happy to hear that. They've certainly been reaching out to us about concerns around that.

My last question for you, very quickly, is this: Yesterday, Brazil chose new leadership. We have President-elect Lula's election. Considering Brazil's involvement in the past, do you think this may change the direction the international community takes? Do you feel it will have any impact? What would be your assessment of that?

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: It's early days.

Clearly, Brazil stepped back a bit from their leadership on Haiti. They're still here. The ambassador is a wonderful man. He's a friend. They play a positive role. Perhaps the position of the new Brazilian government will change. I guess we'll have to see. Time will tell.

Ms. Heather McPherson: I'll finish by saying that I appreciate your testimony today. It's been very informative.

All of us have said this here in this room: The Government of Canada needs to listen to Haitians and let Haitians have the ability to take their country forward into the democracy and thriving economy I think they deserve. They should thrive in a community that is safe and does not have the suffering we're seeing in Haiti right now.

Thank you very much for being here.

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Thank you.

Let the record show that I was nodding the whole way.

The Chair: On that point, Ambassador Carrière and Mr. Sigouin, allow me to thank you on behalf of the entire committee. We're very grateful that you made yourselves available. You are certainly serving under very difficult circumstances. We hope all the best for you and your staff. Keep well and keep safe.

Thank you very much for being with us.

[Translation]

Mr. Sébastien Carrière: Thank you.

[English]

Mr. Sébastien Sigouin: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Before adjourning, if I may, there a couple of really, really minor issues for the members.

Last week, in our haste to get out of here, we overlooked a couple of details with respect to the human rights subcommittee report we are adopting. I want to make sure that there is unanimous consent that the report be entitled "The Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Journalists and Media Organizations".

I don't think there's any disagreement there.

I also want to make sure of the following:

That the chair, clerk and analysts be authorized to make grammatical and editorial changes as may be necessary without changing the substance of the report.

There is full agreement there. Thank you.

That pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.

I see unanimous consent to that. We're almost there.

That dissenting or supplementary opinions be in Calibri 12-point font, left aligned, single spaced, and be submitted electronically, in both official languages, to the clerk of the committee, not later than 5:00 p.m. eastern time on Friday, November 4.

● (1740)

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Did you say calligraphy?

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

The Chair: No, I said Calibri.

An hon. member: I would have preferred calligraphy.

The Chair: There is consent.

Finally, there is that the chair present the report to the House.

Okay. Thank you very much.

The meeting is adjourned.

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

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

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

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>