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**Wednesday 23 September 2015**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Mercredi 23 septembre 2015**

**Select Committee  
on Sexual Violence  
and Harassment**

Strategy on sexual violence  
and harassment

**Comité spécial de la violence  
et du harcèlement  
à caractère sexuel**

Stratégie de lutte contre  
la violence et le harcèlement  
à caractère sexuel

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**SELECT COMMITTEE  
ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AND HARASSMENT**

**COMITÉ SPÉCIAL DE LA VIOLENCE  
ET DU HARCÈLEMENT  
À CARACTÈRE SEXUEL**

Wednesday 23 September 2015

Mercredi 23 septembre 2015

*The committee met at 1600 in room 151.*

**STRATEGY ON SEXUAL VIOLENCE  
AND HARASSMENT**

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Good afternoon. The Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment will now come to order. I would like to welcome all of the presenters and guests who are here with us today.

Let me just very quickly share with you the mandate of this committee. We are here to listen to the experiences of survivors, front-line workers, advocates and experts on the issue of sexual violence and harassment. You are going to inform us on how to shift social norms and barriers that are preventing people from coming forward to report abuses. Your advice is going to help guide us as we make recommendations to the government of Ontario on dealing with systemic sexual violence and harassment.

**ONTARIO WOMEN'S DIRECTORATE**

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Welcome. We thank you for adding your voice to this very important issue. You will now have up to 20 minutes to address our committee, and that will be followed by questions from our committee. Please begin by stating your name and who you represent.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Thank you. My name is Juanita Dobson. I'm the assistant deputy minister with the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. I have with me as well Susan Seaby, who's our executive director from the Ontario Women's Directorate.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** I understand you have a video you want to share with us.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** We do. Probably partway through the presentation, if we could, we would like to show a video of our ad.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Okay. Please begin with your presentation.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Thank you. Good afternoon, members of the committee. Thank you very much for inviting us to present here to the select committee. We've been watching the work you've been doing and certainly have read your interim report, and we're happy to be here

today to speak to you about some of the work we've been doing.

I'm going to provide a little bit of background today on what the OWD and our priority focus areas are in the area of violence against women, as well as give an update on the action plan, It's Never Okay: An Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment.

I'd like to begin by providing a little bit more context on the range of activities and work that are under way in the various ministries on violence against women.

The priorities of the Ontario Women's Directorate are the prevention of violence against women, as well as increasing women's economic security. Those are big portfolio responsibilities for us, but we don't do that alone. We certainly work extensively in partnerships across government, but also with organizations across social services, health, justice and the education sectors. These partnerships support the development and delivery of the programs, services and policies that the OWD works within for women in Ontario.

This committee is very aware, of course, about the need to prevent violence against women. Some of the key facts that I just want to mention again are that violence can take many forms, as we know, including domestic violence, sexual assault, abuse, human trafficking, sexual exploitation, cyber harassment, sexual harassment and stalking, just to name a few. It's estimated that about one in three Canadian women will experience sexual assault in their lifetime. That's a Stats Canada stat that people are quite familiar with. Also, sexual assault victimization rates are five times higher for women under the age of 35, so that's a primary focus area for the OWD. In many cases, women know their sexual attacker—in three quarters of the incidents—and 45% are a casual acquaintance or a friend. In 17% it's an intimate partner; another 13% might be a non-spousal family member.

Those are some of our realities and statistics that we deal with.

Ontario funds a number of programs and services across a number of ministries. I'll give you just a few examples that many of you are probably familiar with. One is the Victim/Witness Assistance Program through the Ministry of the Attorney General.

The Ministry of the Attorney General also has programs like Victim Crisis Assistance and Referral Services, a Victim Support Line and a Partner Assault

Response Program. They're also responsible for things like the specialized domestic violence courts and the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, to name a few things.

We reside actually in the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. The women's directorate and the seniors' secretariat are in that ministry. That program area, citizenship and immigration, is responsible for language interpreter services. So we work closely with the other part of our ministry around that, and that is providing translation and support for women whose first language is not English.

Sexual assault centres through MAG—certainly we've heard a little bit about them in the news lately in terms of the investment there and the sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres that are centred in hospitals and funded through the Ministry of Health.

There are also support services for male survivors through the Ministry of the Attorney General, and the shelters for women are certainly funded through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, as well as counselling services. It's a big investment through that ministry.

The Ontario Women's Directorate funds women's centres, which also provide information and resources for women. We also support training programs for women who are experiencing or are at risk of domestic violence. So there's a real range of services and programs across a number of ministries that the OWD is involved in, but that certainly cut across a number of areas.

We also do some, I guess, non-direct service programs; for example, the domestic violence community coordinating committees, which some of you may be familiar with. Those include representations from women's services agencies, and justice, health and education sectors, and as well, training professionals in order to improve their skills in responding to victims. Those are a number of things that have been worked on in the last several years.

Certainly we also know that aboriginal women in particular are disproportionately affected by violence and often experience the most severe forms of violence. So a few years ago the government put in place a Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women and identified priorities with the caucus—the groups representing the aboriginal community—around programs and services to prevent violence against aboriginal women. This joint working group is comprised of 10 ministries as well as five provincial aboriginal organizations working on a long-term strategy to end violence against aboriginal women.

That proposed strategy will build on a number of current initiatives that the Ontario Women's Directorate has been involved in supporting, such as the Taking Care of Each Other's Spirit program, which is raising awareness about violence women in aboriginal communities. Another program, which is called I Am a Kind Man, is encouraging aboriginal men and boys to speak out against violence. As well, the Building Aboriginal

Women's Leadership program is training aboriginal women to take on leadership roles in the community.

OWD's role in these and other action plans that cut across government is to provide a coordinating role, track implementation and communicate some of the progress on these things. We know that changing public attitudes takes a sustained effort over a long period of time, and the OWD supports a number of public education efforts with our partners. These are targeted toward sexual violence in particular. One of the programs we've had a relationship with for a number of years is Draw the Line. This is a bilingual, bystander social marketing campaign that challenges commonly held myths that perpetuate sexual violence, and equips those closest to women and girls with the skills to intervene safely and effectively.

I've already mentioned the I Am a Kind Man program with the aboriginal community. Another program—It Starts with You. It Stays with Him—is a campaign engaging men to be role models to boys and young men in promoting gender equality and teaching them about consent and healthy relationships.

In addition, we in the OWD have done a lot of work around domestic violence with our domestic violence action plan and the Neighbours, Friends and Families campaign, which many of you may be familiar with, and that has been a very successful campaign that has been ongoing through that. It's an ongoing province-wide campaign, and has been adapted to diverse communities as well, so the aboriginal community as well as reaching out to other cultural and multilingual communities with that campaign.

This year, of course, there has been lots of public discourse around the goal of ending sexual violence and harassment, several high-profile incidents and so on, and this select committee coming together as well. The high priority that was given to this issue resulted in the OWD being asked to lead, on behalf of the government, pulling together an action plan across government; really, a whole-of-government approach to sexual violence and harassment and ending that.

This plan—the focus around it—was about changing attitudes and behaviours, seeding generational change in schools, and raising awareness that sexual violence and harassment is a social and criminal issue for all of us to prevent.

The plan itself—I've left copies for all of you to take a look at, if you haven't read it already—is a mix of shorter- and longer-term initiatives. These are designed to provide supports for survivors, make workplaces and campuses safer, and improve the overall legal and medical response to incidents of sexual violence and harassment.

Some of the key things that are included in there are—and we're sort of on our way to starting to implement a few of these areas already:

—to continue to raise awareness about sexual violence and harassment through public education campaigns and projects, because we know from research how important sustained public messaging is on that;

—enhancing training and resources for service providers so they can better assist survivors and those at risk of sexual violence;

—increasing supports and developing an enhanced prosecution model to improve the experience of survivors who are navigating the justice system;

—inspiring generational change by helping students gain a deeper understanding about the root causes of gender inequality and issues around healthy relationships and consent;

—creating safer environments for our college and university students, including private colleges; and

—introducing legislation that will enable some of these things to happen, which will strengthen provisions that relate to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing situations and also through the civil claims process.

So there are some details within the action plan. You'll see particular areas that we're focusing on in that regard.

#### 1610

I think I'll take a few minutes just to talk quickly about the ad campaign and then maybe we'll show the ad shortly. You may have seen this ad; it's been a multi-media, multilingual public education campaign that was launched in the spring to raise awareness among young people and bystanders, and it's a key part of the action plan.

Just a few numbers that we are hearing that are quite phenomenal to us: The Twitter hashtag, which is a unique way to drive people to a hashtag versus a website of government, was a way to engage young people in particular because we hear that that's how they do these things—I actually don't know how to use Twitter hashtags, but that's okay; my eight-year-old will teach me how to do that. But the #WhoWillYouHelp hashtag has reached more than 83.5 million people, not only in Ontario but around the world. We've heard from places in Europe—we've had big numbers of people looking at it, I think, in Turkey and Brazil, so it's been interesting.

There have been, I think, 1.9 million or so hits on our Facebook page, so it's just been something that's been quite phenomenal. I don't think we've ever seen something like that.

This is a campaign targeted at bystanders, which, again, based on the research and the information that we have available to us, seems to be the way to go on these kinds of campaigns, and we've had about two million views on YouTube.

With that, I think we'll just show the ad and then I'll be able to finish.

#### *Video presentation.*

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** So that's our campaign. Now, we will be continuing this fall with a number of other targeted campaigns, particularly on campuses. With the frosh week kits, actually, we sent material out to every university to be included in frosh kits around the #WhoWillYouHelp hashtag, and also pushing out ads in washrooms in bars and restaurants etc. So we're targeting

areas where we know young people may be able to see this.

As we get closer to moving from the introduction of the action plan and all of the pieces that we've committed to, we're actually moving much further into implementation now. You will have seen that we've had a couple of announcements recently that ministries have had, rolling out key components of the action plan. One is the public education campaign, but also the Ministry of Health announced their investment of \$1.1 million a year for the next three years in hospital-based sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres. That's going to enhance some of the specialized counselling and services and the community outreach support for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. Also, the Ministry of the Attorney General is providing an additional \$1.7 million per year in annualized funding for the province's 42 sexual assault centres so that they can enhance their services to survivors of sexual violence.

We have a commitment, and we'll see in terms of timing, but there are amendments to several pieces of legislation that I mentioned earlier. Some of those are related to the workplace, like the Occupational Health and Safety Act; the Residential Tenancies Act, so that you can end your tenancy with a shorter amount of notice period; changes to the Training, Colleges and Universities Act—both private colleges and publicly funded—around stand-alone sexual assault plans for those campuses; and also changes to the Limitations Act and also to the criminal injuries compensation scheme to allow for sexual violence victims to be able to put their claims in without a limitation period. Currently, there's a two-year limitation, and sometimes it takes longer than that for people to decide to go back through the system. That is something that was committed to in the action plan.

Looking ahead, ministries are going to continue to work together to make implementation happen. We have an assistant deputy ministers' and directors' coordinating committee that we are keeping track of—the various commitments and timing around how we can move ahead on those and actually deliver. We continue to engage with our stakeholders.

We have a permanent round table on violence against women that has been convened, and you'll be hearing, I understand, from our co-chairs on that shortly. That group has ongoing work on a number of emerging issues. I'll just say that the government folks sitting there were always struck by the richness of the advice and the level of commitment and participation of the members of the round table. It's quite interesting and heartfelt to hear and see the fact that everyone is coming there from a number of organizations, sharing their best knowledge and advice. It has been very helpful for us.

I've had three or four meetings already, and I know that they're very eager to get on with a number of things on their agenda. There will be also additional opportunities for more engagement on specific violence against women issues as we move forward, of course. The OWD:

Half of our mandate—it feels like almost all of it, sometimes—is the violence against women file. So that’s an area where we are committed; that’s what we work on every day. That’s not going away, certainly, and our commitment is to continue to provide our best public service advice on that file.

This November, we’re also going to be having a provincial summit on sexual violence and harassment. That’s going to bring together hundreds of community leaders, and many more on a live webcast. Right now, I think we’re at—about 1,000 people want to come. We’re limited to about 650, so we’re actually trying to work through a very daunting task in terms of invitations. We’re looking for international initiatives; things that are happening across the country; certainly our American colleagues—there’s lots going on down there. So we’re trying to bring people together to have a couple of days of really great interaction and sharing and have a bit of a legacy after that of information we can share across our service sector. We’re trying to find the best way to bring as many people together as possible on that.

Just generally, we, like I say—the reflection on the impact of the public ed campaign is one thing, but we’ve just had such strong public support on the initiatives and the rollout of the action plan. It has been very positive and consistent in that regard. That speaks to the acceptance of people knowing the timeliness of this and the public belief that there’s more to do.

I just want to thank you all for the time. Certainly I’m happy to take your questions, if you have any.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you very much for offering an insight into the important work that you are doing. We’re going to begin now with our PC caucus. MPP Jones will ask you some questions. Each caucus will have about eight minutes for their line of questioning.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thanks for appearing at our request today. I’ve got a couple of questions. I’ll start with a general one, which is: How do you see the work we’re doing here, on this select committee, augmenting, assisting—how do you see those two working together—the Ontario Women’s Directorate?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Thanks for that question. Actually, I’ve read your interim report. It’s very well written. I think that a number of the issues there are in line with some of the things that we’ve been talking about and, I think, some of the things that the round table talks about as well. So I think it’s complementary, certainly, to some of the work. I think there are some things in there that are recommendations that we’re still in the implementation stage of the action plan, and there might be an opportunity to look at that and see how that lines up with some of the things that we’re already looking at in terms of implementation.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** So will you have the ability in the directorate to take our recommendations in mid-December and look at those and see how they line up against what you have already started and where you also need to focus?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** The violence against women file for the women’s directorate is an ongoing file that we have, so we’re always looking for ways to improve the situation. In terms of whether I can say that to each recommendation that the select makes we’re going to say, “Yes, we’re going to do that,” I can’t answer that, but I will say that we take all information that we get, and where it has come from. This committee is getting this information from your deliberations and the people that you’ve met with—similar stakeholders that we have—so I think it’s going to inform us as we go forward on all of our work.

1620

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Okay. The last question is related to—you specifically mentioned aboriginal women. In your report, you talk about women with disabilities being at a much higher rate. But I don’t see anything, in a really fast read, where you talk about numbers with the aboriginal community. Can you share that with the committee? Do you have that detail?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** We may have some specific statistics we can share, but certainly I would say that the reason the joint working group has been put together as a separate process is because of the recognition that it is work that we need to do with the aboriginal partners. That’s a long-term strategy with some specific things, I think, that they are particularly interested in.

I don’t know, Susan, if you have any other statistics in terms of the number of aboriginal women.

**Ms. Susan Seaby:** I’d rather get back to you with actual statistics. There are some broad statistics. I think they’re three times more likely to be victims of violence and so on.

But the work of the joint working group has been really quite important, and I think the government’s very committed to developing a strategy.

I actually just came from our meeting. We have 10 ministries at the table, and leaders from each of the aboriginal provincial organizations: Chiefs of Ontario, Métis Nation, Independent First Nations, the Ontario Native Women’s Association, and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. Together, we’re collaborating on trying to identify the solutions to the problem, which is quite serious, not only in Ontario but across the country.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Yes, absolutely. If you could give us that data, because if it is three times—which sounds like some stuff that I have read—that’s right in line with the same kinds of much higher rates that we are experiencing with women and young ladies with disabilities. So if you could provide that to us, that would be very helpful.

I don’t know if you wanted to carry on.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Sure, if that’s okay. Thank you very much for coming here, because as my colleague has alluded to, it’s kind of like how do all these activities—we have the round table; we have the select committee, and what you’re heading up—how are we all interwoven, so that we can have input but also to hear from you how that coordination is going.

I have some specific questions. You mentioned, for example, that the frosh kits are out. We had the universities and the colleges—they were to provide plans. Do you oversee that they've done that? Do you follow up with each college and university? I'll throw that one sample out as a question.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities would work more directly with the universities themselves. I know they've brought in, and had many discussions with, the senior leadership of the universities and the colleges. The legislation that we talked about will actually put a requirement on the colleges and universities and private colleges to have a stand-alone policy in place, and there will be a requirement to report on how they're doing in terms of those.

It also requires the meaningful consultation with and involvement of students. TCU will be working more directly, but the women's directorate is responsible for the rolling out and coordinating and making sure that we're on track on the things that we've committed to. But the actual relationship with the universities is through MTC.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Right. Do we have a timeline for when that's happening? I guess I'm going to ask that maybe of a few ministries here. Do you say, "Okay, there is a timeline when it needs to begin"?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** I know that we've heard that some of the universities and colleges are already under way. Some of them have already begun the process, and they're doing it even without a mandatory requirement. Many of them are starting.

The legislation itself: All I can say is, publicly, I know that the Premier has said, and it's been said, that in the fall, she was hoping to introduce some legislation. Certainly, following that—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** So it's not mandatory right now. I know they have been very good. They've come to the table. No dispute there.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Yes.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I just wondered—it's kind of the follow-up. We're writing the final report. I want you guys to be inclusive of what we've heard and recommend, but also how we are chasing that. When the Premier said "the fall," so that goes for—it cuts across many ministries, one being the Attorney General. You can't enlighten us as to possibly when that might be coming?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** I think it's up to the government House leader to pick the date that they might want to introduce that, I would just say—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Good line.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It is a good line.

We've got done some input, but, yes, that's what I was trying to say. It's legislation. Is some of it even regulation? Can you even tell us this much?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** There may be, depending on what gets introduced. If passed, there may be some elements that are regulation, right?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Okay.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** But some of it may not be. It just really depends on what the final bill ends up looking like. But I think the commitment is through the action plan—pretty specific about what the Premier asked each of the ministers to put into legislation.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Okay, so we can keep chasing somebody. Can we chase you to see if it's coming—the House leaders?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** I think it's the government House leaders who really determine the introduction dates for bills.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Okay. Just quickly, it says "in fall 2015"—I think in your remarks, you commented about a summit that's being held. You will send that, and maybe we'll somehow be included?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Yes.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thirty seconds.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Yes, the date of the summit is the 19th and 20th of November. We are working on invitations and so on on that. We've noted their interest in the summit and we'll work on that.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Okay. Thank you very much for coming.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you. Our next line of questioning for you is from MPP Sattler.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you very much for coming here at short notice and providing us with that overview. Certainly we heard a number of witnesses commented on their support for the It's Never Okay action plan, which is a good sign. I'm sure it was encouraging to you if you read the transcript of the Hansard—a sign that you're moving in the right direction.

There was a series of very high-profile events in the fall which sort of triggered the formation of this committee. The action plan: You didn't really talk about the process that led to the action plan. Could you give us some of the background as to how these specific recommendations came together? Were these things that you had been working on for a number of years that, given those high-profile events of the fall, it seemed like a timely way to move forward on them? Or were they developed in a very short period of time immediately following those high-profile events?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Certainly we've had prior sexual violence action plans. Building on those and the history and the work that the OWD has been doing over many years in this area, working closely with stakeholders, a number of these ideas have come up in different forums—maybe not in a formal submission, but perhaps through meetings and those sorts of things. There are a number of ideas that have been generated over time, and some of those are building on our previous action plans. Others came up through discussion in those early days between a number of stakeholders directly to political folks, the Premier and others, around things that they thought were really important. For example, the students: The Premier was really open and went out and met with a number of student groups and had some meetings with them about some of the things that they

were particularly interested in on campuses. I think that you'll see the reflection—it confirmed things that we had heard as well at the OWD, but it certainly took it a step further in terms of direct interaction and advice given on some of those things.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Another question: The Auditor General did her review of the violence against women programs offered by the OWD, and one of the concerns that she raised was around measures of success, indicators, these kinds of things. For these specific commitments in the action plan, do you have indicators on how you will know that you have been successful, timelines and all of that that you would be able to share with this committee?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Those are actually under development. We have a multi-ministry team working on that in terms of the outcome measures, performance measures etc. I think in future, there's been a commitment to do some sort of reporting on that as well, so we certainly will be able to share. We don't have that work completed yet. As we're working through the implementation of the various components, there will be performance measures developed in relation to those things.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay. My final question: One of the concerns that is consistently raised by women's groups when these kinds of initiatives come forward is around the resources to support them. Are you able to share with this committee some of the budget allocations that have been provided to support the implementation of each of these measures that are outlined in the plan?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Two things have already been announced. One would be the \$1.1 million over each of three years for the hospital-based, and then the other is the \$1.7 million announcement related to the sexual assault centres. So those are the two that have rolled out so far. I think there will be others as we get decisions on the implementation and the funding that goes along with those that will be coming out.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** So there was no predetermined budget amount to go along with these commitments? The amounts are being decided as you go?

1630

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** There was a commitment in the 2014 budget—I think \$41 million was the reference—around the action plan itself, but it breaks out in various ways, and through implementation we'll be working through what the exact amounts would be. So, one of them is the \$1.1 million for hospitals; the other is \$1.7 million. Those are the two that have rolled out so far, and the others will be rolling out shortly.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you very much. Our final questions for you are from MPP Malhi.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** Thank you for coming, and thank you for sharing all the great work that you do.

I do want to talk a little bit more—we all have very diverse communities that we represent, and coming from Peel we've got hundreds of languages in our community. I wonder if you could tell us a little bit more about some

of your public education campaigns that you're running within our diverse community groups.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** We have worked with a number of community organizations, particularly on the #WhoWillYouHelp campaign. We're reaching out to the multicultural community. I think we put it in 20 different languages, the action plan itself. Some of our ad campaigns are also targeting the multicultural community. The other thing is the investment in language interpreter services. That's at the service level as well as the public education component.

I'm just thinking, Susan, if there are any other public ed campaigns we want to highlight.

**Ms. Susan Seaby:** We've also been funding our community partners to engage in public education, so it's not just the government's campaign but it's also being supplemented by different community organizations representing different constituencies, because we know we need to take a targeted approach in our public education.

**Ms. Harinder Malhi:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Any further questions? MPP McMahon.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** A quick question for you—it probably belies my marketing and advertising background: Have you got a sense of how the ad campaign—have you got any metrics or have you taken a look at how the ad campaign has been received and whether or not it's having an impact? Because changing behaviour is often what advertising is all about. Do you have a sense of that? And, may I ask a supplementary, a follow-up? Are there any other ad campaigns that we've got in the hopper that you're thinking about doing and, maybe as a consequence of what we originally saw, changing the nature of it a bit? Go ahead.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Yes, so we did look at our starting point of where attitudes are at around some of these issues, and we want to be able to go back then and see if the ads have had a change in impact. So I think there were some focus group reviews of that. We have seen that there's been some positive upswing in terms of the impact of the ads themselves.

In terms of the future ads: I think looking at focusing on areas that we know need further attention, so things like consent and healthy relationships and those kinds of things, and focusing again on the youth area. What we're hearing is that young people's attitudes are surprisingly not where we would want them to be around healthy relationships and interaction. It changes as you get older, maybe as people age, changing how they view things. Maybe now they've had children, they're married—different attitudes versus when they were very young, and it's both men and women. So we've been looking at that information and using that to help inform future public education efforts.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** More time, Madam Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Yes, you do.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** The interesting part of all that is that because in our conversations around the province, we certainly heard from campus leaders and

student leaders about the issue of consent, and the level of confusion that's still prominent, that's still present. Those conversations aren't very clear. So I would think that that would be a rich area for you to think about.

I also wanted to ask you two things: Number one, are we looking at workplace harassment in particular? Because we heard about that, especially amongst young people who are in the bar and restaurant industry, for example, and are entering the workforce. Secondly, I wanted to ask you if you'd seen that Lady Gaga has a very powerful video about sexual assault on campus. It's difficult to watch, extremely powerful—Til It Happens To You. I just thought I'd share.

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** Yes, thank you. In terms of the workplace, certainly an element of the commitment on the legislative change is around the Occupational Health and Safety Act, particularly around workplace sexual harassment and better training and a code of practice for employers as well in relation to that, because it is something that we've heard it is very important to do.

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Thank you.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Do we have enough time for another question?

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Yes. MPP Dong.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Just very quickly, I see that changing the culture or perception on a social phenomenon takes a long time. You are a year ahead of us. So based on that experience, could you share some of your experiences with this committee on what, in your observation, has been effective and should be kept in the long term or should be a continued practice, whether it's policies or whether it's the funding side?

**Ms. Juanita Dobson:** If we stick on the theme of public education and awareness, what we've heard from stakeholders and where we've been focusing on is bystander education and bystander intervention, how to intervene safely, and to be focusing on youth, so young people in particular. Within the youth, there are different certain groups: LGBTQ, multicultural areas and so on. I think that's been something that the OWD has already started on, but certainly it's reinforced through this work that we've been doing, that that's a really important area to focus on.

I don't know if Susan has anything to add.

**Ms. Susan Seaby:** I think that's true. We've heard repeatedly and we know from the research that it needs to be a multifaceted campaign that does engage different population groups directly. Sustained campaigns are important, to not keep changing gears constantly, and then nobody gets the message. Certainly, the research has pointed to bystander interventions as one of the key components.

One of the things that we're going to be doing at our summit is highlighting some of the successful campaigns that have been researched, both here in Ontario—because there have been some really terrific campaigns that are under way that community organizations are engaged in—and also outside of Ontario, particularly with a focus on young people, where we know we need to focus a lot

of our education in terms of changing attitudes while people are young. Because of the population surveys where we've looked at attitudes, we know that particularly young men have a lot of the rape myths incorporated into their thinking. We need to change that in the longer term.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you.

**Mr. Han Dong:** We do receive over 100,000 immigrants every year, so having that—

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thirty seconds.

**Mr. Han Dong:** —reputation is very important for Ontario, that this subculture is not accepted here in Ontario.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Ms. Dobson and Ms. Seaby, we want to thank you very much for coming and informing this committee of the work that you are doing. We're very grateful for that.

You mentioned that you would be looking at a submission to this committee. Just a reminder to you that our deadline for accepting submissions is Monday, September 28, at 5 p.m. Thank you very much.

#### ROUNDTABLE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** I'd now like to call on our representatives from Ontario's Roundtable on Violence Against Women. If you could please come forward. Welcome. Make yourselves comfortable. You're going to have 20 minutes to speak to our committee, and that will be followed by 25 minutes' worth of questioning. Please begin by—getting your chair to the right level? Is that what you want to do? There's a secret lever under there somewhere. There you go. You don't want to feel like you're the kid at the adult table, right?

Please begin by stating your names and begin any time.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** My name is Farrah Khan.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** And my name is Sly Castaldi.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** We're really glad to be here to present to the committee as the co-chairs of the Roundtable on Violence Against Women. We thank you for your interest, and also thank you for the invitation.

The Roundtable on Violence Against Women is the first permanent round table for the government of its kind in Ontario. As you know, it was established last March as a part of the It's Never Okay, the new Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment. Creating a standing advisory forum of experts on violence against women to provide continuing advice on government on this crucial issue is something that the VAW community has been requesting for a long time, and many were very pleased that this round table was created.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** As I said, my name is Sly Castaldi. I'm the executive director of Guelph-Wellington Women in Crisis. You may remember that a staff member from my organization, Jessica St. Peter, made a presentation to the select committee when you were in Kitchener during this past summer.

I'm pleased to speak to you here as one of the co-chairs of the round table. I've been involved in the violence against women sector for the last 24 years—I think it's 25 now, but I'm losing track a bit.

I'm the chair and founding member of our legal clinic in Guelph, as well as the Guelph-Wellington Action Committee on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence. It's our DVCCC committee. I serve as an executive member of the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres, and I believe that our coalition also made a presentation to you in Toronto.

1640

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Sly and I are both honoured to be asked by the minister responsible for women's issues to be the co-chairs of the round table and lead this group of prominent experts and advocates in the field of violence against women in providing advice to the Ontario government on gender-based violence.

My name again is Farrah Khan. I have 16 years of experience addressing gender-based violence. I'm a survivor, and I hold a master's degree from the University of Toronto Faculty of Social Work.

I have spent most of my adult life working to raise awareness of violence against women through art creation, education, counselling and community work. As a counsellor and advocate at the Barbra Schliker Commemorative Clinic, I support survivors who have experienced violence—young Muslim women—through the Outburst! young Muslim women's project. Sorry; I'm a little bit nervous.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Thank you.

The purpose of the round table is to provide advice to the minister responsible for women's issues and the Ontario Women's Directorate partner ministries on ongoing and emerging issues of gender-based violence.

The round table is building on past and current work to address violence against women, and acts as a forum for experts to provide guidance to the government on issues of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment. More specifically, the round table members provide advice on broad issues related to violence against women, provide advice on priority areas for government action to address against women, and inform the government initiatives related to violence against women. We do a lot.

The round table also offers a regular space for the member organizations to connect as a community, which is really important for the violence against women movement. It's particularly important to facilitate knowledge exchange and further our collective expertise.

It's also important for the government to have a permanent and diverse group of experts who can provide valuable, practical feedback on initiatives to address gender-based violence in a quick and efficient manner.

The mandate of the round table is not limited to the sexual violence and harassment action plan; however, there's certainly a strong interest among members to help

the government successfully implement the action plan's initiatives.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Our objective is to provide advice related to all forms of gender-based violence, and our broad vision is Ontario becoming a place where all women and their families are safe and free from the threat, fear or experience of violence.

It may be useful to note that the round table is using a very inclusive definition of the term "woman" and recognizes that gender is self-identification and is not necessarily correspondent with assigned sex at birth. It represents all those who self-identify as a woman, including but not limited to cisgender women, transgender women, intersex and two-spirited persons.

Our definition of violence against women is also intentionally broad and includes all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women. In this way, the round table is not limited in its ability to provide advice on a wide range of issues and initiatives related to making Ontario safer for women of all backgrounds.

As we're only in the beginning of our work, we are still working out some specifics of our terms of reference, vision and principles. However, one thing is clear: There is a desire among members to be as inclusive as possible and to ensure that a diversity of perspectives guides our advice to government.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** The membership of the round table has been really thoughtful. The round table currently consists of representatives from 21 provincial umbrella organizations in the violence against women sector, other provincial organizations that deal with violence against women issues, and two co-chairs, myself and Sly.

The membership involved many discussions and deliberations, as both the minister and we, the co-chairs, wanted to be as inclusive as possible, but at the same time have a membership that is manageable in practical terms. The minister requested that executive directors, presidents, or co-chairs of the board of these organizations select a representative to participate on the round table on the organization's behalf.

Our round table also includes experts that represent specific populations—for example, women workers, francophone women, college and university students—as well as representatives of organizations that advocate for marginalized women, such as aboriginal women, immigrant women, LGBTQ community, sex workers and women with disabilities.

The round table also invites guest speakers with specific expertise to speak to issues affecting different populations. For example, at our last meeting this past Monday, we had four presentations—which seemed very timely in light of what just happened yesterday—from rural and northern regions of Ontario to speak about specific issues and solutions for women in their communities.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** There is certainly a recognition that we need to incorporate as many voices as possible into

the round table's work. I think we all recognize the value of having so many dedicated professionals and advocates assembled as one permanent body to work side by side with government to prevent violence against women, support survivors and advocate for the necessary changes.

Our work to date: The round table held its inaugural meeting on March 31, and two days ago, on Monday, September 21, we had our fourth meeting.

We are just in the beginning of our mandate and, to date, the round table has been doing the necessary ground work on the terms of reference, our vision and principles in setting priorities for future work. As you can imagine, with 23 members it is quite a job to coordinate this advisory body and balance everybody's interests.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** We've done some brainstorming and identified the following eight broad priority areas of focus. These are: inclusive initiatives for women with disabilities, deaf and hard-of-hearing women; sexual harassment; sustainable funding for the VAW sector; education, research and data availability; access to services for diverse communities; violence in the workplace; enforcement of legislation; and the role of the round table.

These priorities took a lot of work for us to come together with, but are really broad and encompass a lot of the far-reaching spectrum of violence against women that we are working towards.

Obviously this is a first step, and over the next two to three months we'll be having more conversations to refine these priority areas.

Setting agendas for the round table meetings involves continuous dialogue between members—we have a very diverse group of people whom we work with—the minister and government representatives, and so far, we've had four successful and productive meetings.

Members are also very interested in the initiatives under the action plan on sexual violence and harassment, particularly in helping the government with their expertise to make these initiatives as relevant and as effective as possible.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** As the OWD and partner ministries continue to advance the initiatives under the action plan, the round table has been asked to weigh in on some of them on rather tight timelines. For example—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Yes. I'm not used to reading. I'm more—

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Just go for it. It's fine. Just go.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Yes. We ad lib a little bit more.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Thank you.

**Mr. Han Dong:** Just so you know, most of us are like that too.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Okay. We have given input on the legislative commitments under the action plan and provided feedback on the development of the creative engagement fund and the innovation fund. These two funds were both included in the action plan.

We've also asked representatives of the Canadian Federation of Students to present to members regarding measures for strengthening responses to sexual violence on campus. The round table saw this as a priority over the summer in the view of the upcoming new school year.

As well, members have provided input on the Ministry of Attorney General's work on the enhanced prosecution model—also a commitment under the action plan.

At future meetings, we envision to continue this important work. For example, members expressed interest in having a discussion on the needs of francophone women, as well as another session focused on priority-setting.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** We look forward to working with Minister MacCharles, the OWD and other ministries to advance our common goal of a safer Ontario. We know that through our combined expertise and our work side by side with the government, we can advance concrete, pragmatic and innovative solutions to prevent and respond to violence against women in Ontario. Thank you so much.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you. Our first line of questioning for you is from our NDP caucus. MPP Sattler.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Thank you so much for that presentation. You've accomplished a lot in a very short period of time. I think you're playing a vitally important role.

One of the things that this committee heard repeatedly throughout our process of public input was that sexual violence and domestic violence co-occur, so almost all victims of domestic violence experience sexual violence, and intimate partners are often the perpetrators of sexual assault. So as you look at the domestic violence action plan, are you distinguishing between those two forms of violence? Are you looking at providing advice and recommendations that would cover both of those issues?

1650

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** I can answer first and then Sly—because Sly has experience on DVAC. I can say that we, as the round table, have named violence against women in a very broad spectrum. It captures the spectrum of sexual harassment, stalking; we talk about domestic violence as well as sexual assault. We understand that survivors that we work with—and both Sly and I work with survivors every day, day in and day out—experience violence in a multitude of ways. It's not sometimes just one or the other.

Obviously, we're very excited about the sexual violence action plan, and so that is something that's been discussed in the round table. But it's not the sole piece that we have had discussions about.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** I would just add that we are very intentional. Even if the circumstances brought us through this sexual violence action plan, the intent and the spirit of the round table is to deal with violence in its entire continuum.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay. When you make recommendations, though, I guess you're saying one recommendation might be particularly effective in dealing with one form of violence, but you're really looking at the broad spectrum. Okay, that's good.

Second question: Can you just repeat your eight areas of focus? I think I got the first four, but then I—

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Yes. Sure. Let me go back.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** So I got women with disabilities, and you mentioned deafened and hard-of-hearing; sexual harassment; sustainable funding for the violence against women sector—

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Which is a very important one.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Yes.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Education, research and data availability, because we want more availability of stats that are not from the 1990s around violence against women. The other one is access to services for diverse communities, and then violence in the workplace, enforcement of legislation—because there's one thing to have legislation, but the other one is how we enforce it— and then the role of the round table.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay. Thank you. My final question is about—you mentioned that, as you look at the role of the round table, you have the ability to identify what issues you would like to have presentations on and to call in experts. Are you also looking at other jurisdictions?

We heard from the OWD about this conference that's happening where they're going to have some international presentations. Is that something that the round table is also looking at: to see what kinds of initiatives have proven successful in other jurisdictions?

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** We're still in the early stages of the round table, so it's definitely something that maybe we can look at in the future, but we're not right now at a place to name that.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you very much. Our next questions for you are from MPP McGarry.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you very much for coming today. There's been a tremendous amount of work, as my colleague across the way said, in a short period of time.

One of my questions would be regarding sexual harassment in the workplace: It takes on very many forms, from the PSW or the nurse who's working in community care, for example, who's with a potential victimizer alone in a home, to an image that we see in the ad, which is somebody just rubbing somebody's shoulders in a very open workplace. It takes on many forms, and I think the perception of the victim can indicate in future how traumatized they may or may not be from those things. What would your priorities be in order to address this? It really costs us all.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** That's a great question. We consulted with members of our round table who are experts who are doing amazing work—most of them from London—

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** A good shout-out there.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:**—and who are leading this work in the province, actually.

I actually thought of her—I told her we were presenting here and we asked her what would be the single most priority as they see it based on their expertise. They said, "Mandatory training and either legislation or regulation." It's one thing to have policies; it's another thing if they're working and being adhered to. And Farrah, please—but I think that that's where we would land on that.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you. In terms of training, would it be just for the professionals, or would it be to all workplaces, small and large? Because I think some of the worst cases that we heard about were really from small businesses.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** I think it's absolutely important. We've talked a lot about how in precarious work positions, there's no training there. When you talk about young people receiving training as well, not everybody is permanently in a position, so definitely doing it across the board is really important.

**Mrs. Kathryn McGarry:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you.

MPP Lalonde.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Thank you very much. Thank you for being here.

My colleague sort of stole half of my thunder regarding domestic violence and sexual violence. Based on your four successful meetings in your round table—I applaud this initiative very much—what would you recommend or suggest to the government that we could do right now that would help prevent, or maybe treat sexual violence? What would that be?

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** That's like asking me for a Christmas present.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** That was my first question when I first started in this committee. I said this is the million-dollar question.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Yes, it is the million-dollar question.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** I wouldn't say it's that much, but what would it be? Give us some examples.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** I think the first one that—one of the buckets that we have is sustainability for the VAW sector. I think that's something that's been raised as a bucket, that the round table has named, so I would say that's one of the major pieces because we are providing those services. The round table has named that as a priority, so I would name that as ours.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Yes, and I would add, too: ongoing public education. If we're going to really change attitudes in this province, it has to be ongoing work and years of work and investment in public education, and early—for kids, too.

Farrah and I are big supporters of the changes to the curriculum because that's seen as a huge step. And ongoing, long-term support for survivors: This is not an issue that you can heal in 16 sessions, and I can't stress that enough. It's long-term work, and Farrah, as a counsellor, would support that.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you very much. Our final questions for you are from MPP Jones.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you. Now, don't take this the wrong way, because I understand that you've only had four meetings and you've got a lot of things you want to accomplish based on that list; I think there were eight. There was one specifically related to data—research and data.

I wonder if you could share with the committee: What was the motivation for putting that as one of your “We need to do more on”? Because we're obviously struggling with the same thing.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Yes, and I think it speaks to what we don't have. We don't have Stats Canada-broad research, and so as a violence against women sector, sometimes we have to rely on statistics that come from the United States. That's a huge issue—and they don't have strong stats.

I can give you an example. I work with survivors who are experiencing forced marriage. We have the South Asian legal clinic, which is on the round table. They created a fantastic report two years ago. But I think we need more far-reaching and intersectional too, because I think, as you've said, violence against women is so intersectional that sometimes we don't have those statistics that speak to that depth.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Of course, the Auditor General also referenced that, right? That there wasn't the follow-through, there wasn't the detail that she had hoped to be able to see when she was reviewing the providers.

I'm going to ask the same question that I asked the Ontario Women's Directorate. How do you see the work that we are doing here, in the select committee, complementing the work of the round table?

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Do you want me to start?

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Sure.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Obviously we're really excited about the work of the select committee. Members of the round table have spoken at the select committee. Sly's organization has. We're submitting something. I think for us, it's really important to have it and it's important that we know that across the government there is a commitment to end violence in the lives of women in Ontario. For us, that is one of the most important pieces.

We're committed, as a round table, to know what is happening in the select committee and to look at the recommendations coming from it and to work together.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Okay.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** I would just add that I think that as the select committee has been travelling the province, you've gotten such a wide scope of information and you've heard lots of presentations—which is great, which is something the round table can't actually do at the same level. I think that it's a really complementary kind of process, and I think it will be great to be able to work together on this massive issue.

Our round table is small by comparison, but—

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Small, but mighty.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Mighty; but mighty, yes.

We're all committed. It takes a multi-pronged approach to deal with violence against women. I think that we all have a part to do. Just as you guys have your part, we have our part, and then they merge.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Thank you. I cannot remember, because my memory is not as good as it used to be, the eight areas that you're going to focus on. Did you reference justice? Because obviously you made reference to the tragedy yesterday. There was a lot of justice things overlaid with that.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Absolutely. Let me just go back so I can have the pieces and the buckets in front of me. But definitely, justice is something that we are going to be looking at—just give me a sec.

Yes, so I think it goes across the board for us in the eight buckets. We have people who are from legal; we have, I think, three legal experts. We have Luke's Place that is there, the Barbra Schliker Commemorative Clinic and the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, which are represented. Definitely, justice goes across all of them. That's something we literally talk about at every meeting, so it's something that we definitely see as part of—women accessing safety is about accessing justice, as well, for some survivors.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Yes. Well, thank you for your work.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Thank you very much for coming and appearing before this committee today and for the important work that you are doing. I am sure that we will intersect again in the near future.

**Ms. Farrah Khan:** Thank you.

**Ms. Sly Castaldi:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Committee members, thank you all for your hard work today, and to let you know that next week we are meeting to begin our report writing. That begins next Wednesday at 4 p.m. so please come with your red pens, your erasers, whatever else it is you need to help us make corrections and move forward.

We have one housekeeping matter that our Clerk would like to talk to you about.

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Katch Koch):** Yes, this housekeeping matter is for committee members. Yesterday, I sent out an email of an electronic version of the document that you have in front of you. This is the document on the review of recommendations.

The email I sent out with the electronic version is complete. It was just brought to my attention that the hard copy I put down on your desk is missing some pages, so I will re-photocopy it and make it available to you in hard copy.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** And we will have to for you next week. Any questions? Yes, MPP Sattler?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'd just like to ask a procedural question. So report writing is in camera. Does that mean only MPPs, or are MPPs' staff able to sit in?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Katch Koch):** Only MPPs, the researcher and the Clerk.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay, so no staff?

**The Clerk of the Committee (Mr. Katch Koch):** No staff.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** Okay, thanks.

**The Chair (Ms. Daiene Vernile):** Any more questions? This meeting stands adjourned.

*The committee adjourned at 1704.*



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