

# Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) Roundtable Discussion

19 July 2016

## Defence Policy Review 2016

**Host:** The Honourable Patricia A. Hajdu, Minister of Status of Women

**Moderator:** Ms. Nicole Pollack, Hill and Knowlton Strategies

### Participants:

Dr. Karen Breeck, Physician and Retired CAF Major  
Ms. Judi Fairholm, Director of Respect, Prevention and Safety, Canadian Red Cross  
Dr. Stéfanie von Hlatky, Director, Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University  
Susan Johnson, Deputy Secretary General and Senior Vice President, Canadian Red Cross  
Ms. Louise Mailloux, Partner, Goss Gilroy International  
Mr. Todd Minerson, Director, White Ribbon  
Dr. Marika Morris, Adjunct Research Professor, School of Canadian Studies, Carleton University  
Ms. Kristine St-Pierre, Research Analyst and Gender Advisor  
Dr. Nancy Taber, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Brock University  
Ms. Kathryn White, President and CEO, United Nations Association in Canada  
Ms. Beth Woroniuk, Independent Consultant, Women's Rights and Gender Equality

### Minister's Advisory Panel Observers:

Gen (Ret'd) Ray Henault  
Ms. Margaret Purdy

### DND/CAF Observers:

General Jonathan Vance, Chief of the Defence Staff  
Mr. John Forster, Deputy Minister of National Defence  
MGen Tammy Harris, CAF GBA+ Champion

### Summary

The Gender Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) roundtable was hosted by the Minister of Status of Women, the Honourable Patricia Hajdu on behalf of the Minister of National Defence. The discussion was organized around the same broad format and themes as previous roundtables, but participants were asked to use GBA+ as the lens for examining issues.

The roundtable discussion focussed on the following five key areas as they considered the core scope of the Defence Policy Review (DPR):

- How to best assess gender implications in the development of Canada's new defence policy;
- Methods for applying GBA+ in the planning of new operations;
- How to ensure a career within the Canadian Armed Forces is appealing to all, regardless of gender;

[Gender-based Analysis Plus](#) (GBA+) is an analytical tool the federal government uses to advance gender equality in Canada. The "plus" in the name highlights that Gender-based Analysis goes beyond gender, and includes the examination of a range of other intersecting identity factors (such as age, education, language, geography, culture and income). GBA+ is used to assess the potential impacts of policies, programs or initiatives on diverse groups of women and men, girls and boys, taking into account gender and other identity factors. GBA+ helps recognize and respond to the different situations and needs of the Canadian population.

*Source: Status of Women Canada.*

- How to apply best practices to ensure Canada remains a leader in promoting human rights and gender equality, particularly in settings where cultural norms differ widely from our own;
- How best to promote the strategy of taking gender and other factors (including age and education) into account during the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and military operations.

### **Key Takeaways:**

There were five key takeaways highlighted during this roundtable discussion. They are outlined in detail below.

- The DPR should include clear language addressing how equality, respect, and gender implications will be assessed and incorporated in all aspects of defence planning, and the management and care of DND/CAF personnel.
- DND/CAF must strive to be an “employer of choice” that represents and attracts the diversity of the Canadian population.
- Canada should leverage its “brand” and reputation to provide normative leadership on issues of gender and equality, both in international fora and in the conduct of operations.
- DND/CAF should institute training on the GBA+ framework. To be successful this training must be a genuine, ongoing activity across all levels of the organization.
- The defence enterprise should have a greater focus on conflict prevention and understanding conflict and privilege participation in peace support and humanitarian operations when interventions are required.

**Defence Policy Review and GBA+:** Many participants directly recommended that the DPR should include clear language addressing how equality, respect, and gender implications will be assessed and incorporated in all aspects of defence planning and the management and care of DND/CAF personnel. Participants acknowledged ongoing efforts to address these issues including OP HONOUR, personnel support, gender advisors and gender analysis in operational planning, but signaled the importance of outlining the overarching DND/CAF approach in strategic policy. One participant questioned what the policy corollary would be to efforts launched by the CDS under the OP HONOUR.

**Security Environment:** Many participants noted the value of applying GBA+ analysis to the security environment and suggested that the security of women is intrinsically tied to broader international security given the impact of conflict on women and other marginalized groups. Participants felt that this consideration is largely absent from most discourse and analysis of the security environment. It was noted that women can also be powerful agents to empower in helping to resolve conflict as recognized by UNSCR 1325. On the other hand, a number of participants noted that the role of women in conflict is clouded by gender norms, and as a result may be understated and misunderstood. One participant noted, for example, the role that women have played in some conflicts radicalizing their children and partners. Another participant suggested that GBA+ assessments need to be conducted for operations and incorporated into pre-deployment training to give personnel a more fulsome understanding of the situation on the ground.

**International Leadership:** Participants were unanimous in recommending that Canada leverage its “brand” and reputation to provide normative leadership on issues of gender and equality both in international fora and in the conduct of CAF operations. A few participants noted that the rule of law is under challenge internationally and there are certain actors that are showing increasing willingness to disrespect already established norms and international law, signalling a need for Canada to play this role. One participant cautioned that while Canada does indeed enjoy a strong reputation on these issues internationally, the downside is that expectations would be very high, and Canada would need to deliver

concrete results. One participant suggested that Canada consider hosting an international conference to champion and further develop norms that support gender and equality.

**CAF Operations:** Participants suggested that most Canadians, particularly women, are unsupportive of CAF participation in combat missions but would be more supportive of participation in Peace Support Operations (PSO) and humanitarian missions. Some took the point further arguing that these are also the types of operations in which the military would be able to address issues affecting women and other disenfranchised populations and could also help in recruiting women in the military. There was broad recognition in the room that PSO has changed and is now a difficult, complex and dangerous undertaking, but participants were unanimous in recommending further contributions to PSO. Most suggested that providing leadership and modest troop contributions would be suitable and provide opportunities for the CAF to mentor and share best practices with troop contributing nations on gender issues.

A few participants cautioned that UN Peacekeeping has been tarnished by incidents of sexual exploitation by UN peace keepers, but others countered that this suggests a requirement for more Canadian leadership and involvement in PSO. Others noted that enhanced Canadian contributions to PSO would very likely result in Blue on Blue sexual violence and DND/CAF would have to take this into account and plan accordingly.

**Conflict Prevention:** In discussing operations, many participants recommended that greater efforts be placed on conflict prevention and better understanding conflict using a GBA+ approach. It was mentioned that enabling and undertaking greater conflict prevention efforts requires clearly defining what the notion of conflict prevention means to the government. Most participants supported a whole-of-government approach and broad participation from a range of actors across society in conflict prevention. Humanitarian assistance was noted as a means to contribute to conflict prevention by reducing vulnerability, but some expressed hesitance at having the military involved in humanitarian assistance efforts. It was also noted that conflict prevention and better understanding conflict would help avoid fuelling the next problem and creating unintended consequences when intervening, by not fully understanding certain segments of the population and their grievances. One participant suggested putting further scrutiny into those the military works with and recommended seeking opportunities to build indigenous authority that can be supported by local populations over the long term rather than working with the most convenient or powerful actor who may not represent the interests of local populations.

**Employer of Choice:** Much discussion focused on the need for the DND/CAF to be an employer of choice to attract, support and retain the best talent. At its core, participants noted that this involved instilling an ethos of respect across the organization, ensuring that everyone feels safe and supported regardless of who they are. This must be consistently supported, enforced monitored and assessed by leadership. One participant offered that incentivizing and rewarding certain skillsets that support gender and equality in leaders could be a practical way to achieve this outcome. A handful of participants repeatedly noted that effective mechanisms to report and address misconduct and strict accountability are critical.

A number of participants focused on recruitment, and there was a general sense that the DND/CAF should strive to represent the diversity present in Canada and ensure that equality is present across the organization by meeting the needs of all, regardless of who they are. Some questioned the use of targets for women or other groups within organizations suggesting it is often not clear how the numbers are determined or what the intended goal is.

Support to personnel was a key focus of this discussion. In order for DND/CAF to recruit and retain the best personnel, participants suggested that more tailored support for women and others with unique needs, particularly health services, are required. A few participants remarked that attrition rates for

women are much higher than men in the CAF. Some suggested that this was owing to decisions around family planning, and greater flexibility and support to female CAF members would be helpful. In terms of support networks, one participant suggested that the DND/CAF should consider how to build informal support mechanisms into the organization that CAF members could use before requiring professional help. Similarly, another participant pointed to the CAF reliance on unpaid family members to support CAF personnel (e.g., mental health, reintegration). CAF families bear a large burden in supporting CAF personnel and this is a critical component of the success of the military. DND/CAF need to consider how to better support military families.

**GBA+ Training:** Participants were unanimous in recommending that the DND/CAF institute GBA+ training that is a genuine, ongoing activity across all levels and ranks of the organizations. This training would be the basis to achieve organizational culture change to ensure respect and equality are the basis of institutional success. This requires determining what skills are needed in this area across the organization, and the level of specialized knowledge necessary within the DND/CAF (e.g. gender advisors). A number of participants pointed to the need to constantly re-evaluate training to ensure that it meets the needs of the organization, as well as the need for reporting mechanisms and accountability to address issues where the system fails. Finding the right level of training will be the key to success.