



END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

Media Release

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Federal Government abandons people in poverty in Canada

Toronto – The Government of Canada has turned its back on low income people in Canada, the diligent work of the Senate and the majority will in the House of Commons for serious action on poverty. In its response to the 2009 Senate report *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty*, the government of Canada rejects the comprehensive recommendations in the report. It is noteworthy that all parties in the House of Commons excepting the minority Conservative government party support aggressive policies to drive down the poverty rate.

At least 1 in 10 Canadians was experiencing poverty before the economic turmoil set in. As Canadians continue to live through the economic upheaval of the past few years, it becomes clear that the situation will get worse before it improves. Current indicators highlight the numbers of people who have exhausted EI benefits, the rising caseloads of people applying for social assistance, and a record high rate of Canadians carrying debt.

“It’s hard to understand the government’s simplistic assumption that local communities should lead the fight against poverty while the federal government can walk away from basic income security and child care responsibilities. This is the moment for the federal government to embrace its historic role in addressing poverty and income inequality. Instead, the Government of Canada ignores creative public policy recommendations,” said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000.

“It’s also too facile to rely on the labour market alone to lift people out of poverty. Low wage jobs with no benefits entrench poverty and do not pay for the cost of raising children. It’s no surprise that one third of children in poverty had at least one parent working full time throughout the year in 2008. For adults with disabilities who may have limited availability for employment and for seniors in their post-employment years, strong and assured income support is also essential,” commented Sid Frankel, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

“We are calling on the federal government to honour the unanimous all-party resolution of November 24, 2009 and begin to work with provinces and territories on ‘an immediate plan to eliminate poverty in Canada for all’. In August, the Winnipeg Statement was ratified at a roundtable of political representatives, civil society, Aboriginal leaders, labour and the business sector (<http://www.campaign2000.ca/whatsnew/releases/Winnipeg%20StatementAug2010.pdf>). They confirmed that poverty eradication needs to be on the working agenda of the Premiers and the federal government. The Premiers, in the communiqué of the 2010 Council of the Federation meeting, committed to reducing poverty as part of economic recovery. Now the federal government must act responsibly,” added Rothman.

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Campaign 2000 is a non-partisan, cross-Canada network of 120 national, provincial and community partner organizations committed to working to end child and family poverty in Canada. www.campaign2000.ca

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