



END CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA
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Media Release

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Time for Initial Steps in Poverty Reduction Strategy

Campaign 2000 Calls for a Down Payment on Poverty Reduction in the 2008 Budget

TORONTO, ON, January 21 – The McGuinty government should seize the opportunity of the 2008 budget to take initial steps on a Poverty Reduction Strategy for Ontario, said Campaign 2000, a 55 Ontario partner coalition working to end child and family poverty, in a pre-budget submission today.

“This first budget of the new term is a chance for the government to make a down payment on the promised Poverty Reduction Strategy,” said Jacquie Maund, Ontario Coordinator of Campaign 2000. “With 345,000 Ontario children living below the poverty line it’s time for action. A year of government planning can have a huge impact in the short span of childhood.”

“We need some immediate steps in the 2008 budget on social assistance, minimum wage, and family supports like affordable housing and child care.”

“Social assistance rates should be indexed to inflation so their purchasing power doesn’t shrink, and we’re calling for a double digit rate increase this year to bring them closer to a livable income,” Ms. Maund explained. A single mother with one child on social assistance receives \$9,000 less than the poverty line.

“The minimum wage should be increased to \$10.25/hour now so that parents working full time, full year can have a living standard out of poverty.” 41% of poor children in Ontario live in families where at least one parent works full-time all-year. The Employment Standards Act must be updated to ensure contract, temporary and self-employed workers have the same protections as full-time workers.

The budget should also include provincial investment in affordable housing and expansion of licensed child care spaces - key components in an effective poverty reduction strategy for families.

Ms. Maund applauded government actions to date in appointing a lead minister for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, striking a broad Cabinet Committee which includes the Minister of Finance, and working to set targets for poverty reduction in Ontario.

For the full text of Campaign 2000’s submission visit:

www.campaign2000.ca

For further comment, please contact:

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