



END CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

MEDIA RELEASE

January 27, 2009

Women and children last: No thank you, Mr. Flaherty!

Toronto – This landmark federal budget includes billions of dollars of spending and wrong-headed tax cuts but offers little support for our most vulnerable families – especially the 760,000 low income children and their mothers – who feel the double burden of job loss at the workplace and at home, says Campaign 2000, the national coalition of over 120 partners working to end child and family poverty in Canada.

“Going into this budget, Campaign 2000 looked for robust mix of income supports and social infrastructure, to both prevent further poverty and start to reduce the high rate of child and family poverty.

We expected restored eligibility for EI, increase to the Canada Child Tax Benefit by at least \$1,000 during the next two fiscal years, public expenditures in social infrastructure including early learning and child care services (ECEC) and social housing, and designated expenditures for First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities including housing, water and sanitation,” said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator.

“What has been presented is unimaginable: no change to EI eligibility, no increase in child benefit for families in poverty under \$20,000 and no spending on child care services. This is an affront to women, children and all workers across this country. Parents, especially lone mothers, need child care services; they’ll be working harder either in the paid labour force, in training or in searching for a job while being the primary caregivers at the same time. We need a child care plan; Canada can’t work without it. We also need an improved child benefit. The budget adjusts the National Child Benefit to mirror the changes in tax brackets but does nothing to increase the maximum benefit for low income families. This is macho-economics that leaves women and children off the lifeboat in this recession!” add Sid Frankel, Campaign 2000 Steering Committee.

“It’s smart spending to allocate funds for Aboriginal skills training and partnerships, and the specific funding for housing and desperately needed infrastructure in First Nations communities is welcome. Yet, where’s the national housing program that will build new units in urban and rural locations, for Aboriginal and all communities? Where are the affordability measures that will assist the one out of three households paying more than 30% of their income on rent?” said Wayne Helgason Executive Director of Social Planning Council of Winnipeg and board member, Aboriginal Centre of Winnipeg. “We will watch closely to see how the housing funds flow to communities; the track record to date is not strong.”

Campaign 2000 is particularly disturbed by personal income tax adjustments worth more than \$2 billion annually. When additional income is exempt from taxation, it’s like a tax cut through the back door – and it benefits all taxpayers not only low income taxpayers. This multi-billion dollar tax decrease continues the trend of impoverishing the federal treasury, making it more difficult for the national government to do those things that Canadians rightfully expect from their government.

With the lack of purposeful action in this budget, it’s certain that rates of child and family poverty will increase and the federal government will be left with no capacity to respond. Minister Flaherty may have purchased new shoes for this budget but it’s about time he found his soul.

.../p.2

Campaign 2000 is a non partisan cross Canada coalition of over 120 organizations committed to ending child & family poverty in Canada. www.campaign2000.ca

-30-

For further comment please contact:

Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator, Campaign 2000. Tel: 416-595-9230 x 228 or 416 575 9230

Sid Frankel , University of Manitoba. Tel: 204 474 9706

Wayne Helgason, Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. Tel: 204 943 2561