



Keep the Promise: Make Canada Poverty-Free!

Joyeuses Fêtes à tous et à toutes! Happy Holidays to All!

Thank you for another year of great partnership and working together! May Year 2010 get us closer to making Canada poverty-free! May our movement grow stronger and our voices louder!

+ House of Commons unanimously resolves to end poverty for all

As we wind down the year here at Campaign 2000, we can look back on a series of successes in the fight against child and family poverty in Canada. To mark November 24, 2009 — 20 years since the 1989 unanimous all-party resolution in the House of Commons to end child poverty in Canada by the year 2000 — the Campaign 2000 network held events across the country that brought critical public and media attention to the plight of the one in ten children who still live in poverty in Canada and the critical situation in First Nations communities where the number rises to one in four children in poverty.

In addition to releasing seven provincial Report Cards on Child Poverty, Campaign 2000 partners coordinated awareness events, held press conferences across the country and announced the findings of this year's national report card at a breakfast meeting with MPs and Senators from all parties and encouraged Canada's leaders to keep their promise. All the new reports/report cards are available at www.campaign2000.ca.

As a direct result of these efforts and collaboration between MPs and Campaign 2000 partners, the House of Commons **Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA)** submitted a new motion, which was unanimously passed by the House on November 24th; it reads:

That, with November 24th, 2009 marking the 20th anniversary of the 1989 unanimous resolution of this House to eliminate poverty among Canadian children by the year 2000, and not having achieved that goal, be it resolved that the Government of Canada, taking into consideration the Committee's work in this regard, and respecting provincial and territorial jurisdiction, develop an immediate plan to eliminate poverty in Canada for all.

We urge all of you to write to your MPs, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and all the federal opposition leaders and request their immediate action to develop a poverty reduction strategy for Canada. Follow the links below to email your MP: <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/en/time-to-act-on-child-poverty> (English)
<http://www.abolissonslepauvrete.ca/fr/il-est-temps-dagir-sur-la-pauvrete-des-enfants> (Français)

To read more about what took place in Ottawa on Nov. 24th and view a few photos, follow the link below:
<http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca/en/blog/november-24-day-action-success-thank-you>

Note on the photos below: Rally on Parliament Hill (left); Campaign 2000's Breakfast Event for MPs/Senators/Community Partners on the Hill, Nov. 24, 2009 (right)



Recommendations from new Senate Report reflect Campaign 2000 priorities

The Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology released its landmark report on poverty, housing and homelessness in Canada, *In From the Margins: A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness*, on Tuesday, Dec. 8th, 2009.

Among its 74 recommendations, the Committee proposes:

- That the federal government adopt as a core social policy poverty eradication goal that all programmes dealing with poverty and homelessness are to lift Canadians out of poverty rather than make living within poverty more manageable and that the federal government work with the provinces and territories to adopt a similar goal [Recommendation 1];
- That the federal government establish with the provinces a goal that individuals and families, regardless of the reasons for their need, receive incomes totaling at least after-tax LICOs [Recommendation 4];
- That in recognition of both Canadian obligations under international human rights law, and their importance in claiming access to appropriate programs and services, explicitly cite international obligations ratified by Canada in any new federal legislation or legislative amendments relevant to poverty, housing and homelessness [Recommendation 31];
- That the National Child Benefit be raised, incrementally and predictably, to reach \$5,000 (in 2009 dollars) by 2012 [Recommendation 34];

As Toronto Star columnist Carol Goar put it, '*Inspired by the groundbreaking report on poverty tabled by the late Senator David Croll 38 years ago, a committee of seven senators has spent the past two years producing a new blueprint for a new century. Their report ... is comprehensive, thoughtful and – for its time – courageous. The senators, headed by Liberal Art Eggleton and Conservative Hugh Segal, knew from the outset that Prime Minister Stephen Harper had no interest in a plan to break the poverty cycle. They watched the economy weaken and the deficit balloon.*

Yet they concluded unanimously: "Eradicating poverty is not only the humane and decent priority of a civilized democracy, but absolutely essential to a productive and expanding economy." Those are bold words in today's Ottawa.'

The report is available at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/40/2/parlbus/commbus/senate/com-e/citi-e/rep-e/rep02dec09-e.pdf> And you can find Goar's full article by clicking here: <http://www.thestar.com/comment/article/736238>

Canadian Paediatric Society's report highlights importance of income disparity

Are We Doing Enough? -- the 2009 edition of its periodic report on Canadian public policy and child and youth health, urges governments to take action on evidence-based policies that determine good health including poverty reduction as a way to

reduce income disparities. Campaign 2000 was pleased to be involved in collaboration on this report which includes some data from our report cards. For full report, see <http://cps.ca/English/Advocacy/StatusReport2009.pdf>.

[National housing strategy one step closer as HUMA Committee approves revised Housing Bill](#)

MP Libby Davies' private members Bill C-304, an Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians moves on to 3rd reading when the House re-convenes on January 25th after the HUMA Committee strengthened the bill.

[Updates from Regional Partners](#)

[British Columbia](#)

First Call held a successful launch of the BC child poverty report card, noting that 2007 was the 6th year in a row BC held (or tied for) the highest rate among provinces; our message was well received, with over 40 news stories covering the provincial report. The Official Opposition pressed the government for a poverty reduction strategy in the provincial [Legislature](#) on November 24. The BC government published a [document](#) in response putting a positive spin on the statistics and related program spending.

Earlier this fall the Union of BC Municipalities passed a [special resolution](#) calling for a comprehensive, cross-ministry strategy to address child poverty. BC's Representative for Children and Youth has also spoken out as a strong supporter of poverty reduction, stating that "if we continue to ignore the issue of child poverty we will continue to lead in child poverty."

The [Living Wage for Families Campaign](#) is making headway in educating communities and employers about family-supporting wages; the campaign will release a new living wage calculation for Metro Vancouver in the New Year. The [BC Poverty Reduction Coalition](#) continues to advocate for a provincial plan, and coalition member Vibrant Abbotsford recently petitioned their city council about poverty reduction. The Burnaby Board of Trade succeeded in getting a motion passed by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce [urging](#) federal funding for a universal early childhood development program.

New resources being used for advocacy in BC include a [report](#) from the BC Healthy Living Alliance, a [video](#) from Vancouver Coastal Health, [videos](#) from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the [15 by 15](#) report prepared by the Human Early Learning Partnership at UBC for the Business Council of BC.

The upcoming Olympics are shining a harsh spotlight on social conditions in Vancouver and around the province, and provide an opportunity for highlighting inequality in the media and to the general public. The [Raise the Rates Coalition](#) is one of many groups organizing around the Olympics, and will hold their 3rd annual [Poverty Olympics](#) in Vancouver on February 7.

[Alberta](#)

Following a series of [province-wide forums on poverty reduction](#), the two Campaign 2000 partners -- Public Interest Alberta and Edmonton Social Planning Council -- released a report on the critical need for a comprehensive poverty elimination strategy for Alberta. The report entitled ***We Must Do Better: It's Time to Make Alberta Poverty-Free*** was released on November 24, 2009.

A hearing was held in Edmonton on a national anti-poverty plan on Dec. 3rd when HUMA Committee was in town. As a news commentary stated, New Democrat MP "Tony Martin is getting a lot of support for his call for a national poverty plan. Martin is in Edmonton for a one-day hearing on a study looking into developing a federal strategy on the issue. He says the message he's been getting is that the provinces can't do it alone, and clearly want and need a national plan which they can plug into."

Income security and housing are the two main issues the federal committee has been hearing about, in what has been almost two years of cross-country hearings. Martin says he hopes to table a report with the House of Commons by late February or early March of next year.

Saskatchewan

According to the latest new provincial Report Card produced by the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of Regina, a Campaign 2000 partner, 35 000 of Saskatchewan children under age 18 lived in families with incomes below the LICO in 2007. Like the national child poverty rate, Saskatchewan's has fluctuated throughout the past two decades according to economic trends. It is likely that more children and their families will have fallen into poverty when 2009 data become available.

In late November, the Saskatoon Regional Inter-sectoral Committee (SRIC) released a Follow-up Report to the report on Health Disparity in Saskatoon. The goal of this report is to synthesize stakeholder responses to the evidence-based policy options laid out in the Health Disparity Report so as to establish a working model that can be used jointly by individuals, community based organizations and government agencies going forward in the effort to eliminate poverty in Saskatoon. On November 24th, 2009, our regional partner in Saskatoon, Communities for Children, held dialogue sessions with diverse community representatives, including people with lived experience of poverty, Aboriginal formal and informal leaders, community based organizations, people living with and working with people who have disabilities, and the Intercity Ministerial Association. Two core principles, "a city that bridges" and "nothing about us without us" served as a basis for the report's proposed Working Model for Change.

Manitoba

Gary Doer resigned from his position as Premier sparking a NDP leadership race in Manitoba. In response, the Make Poverty History Manitoba coalition organized a leadership candidate's forum on poverty and homelessness issues on Monday October 5th. At this forum both candidates promised to meet with community groups annually if elected.

On Wednesday October 21 the Social Planning Council's Campaign 2000 Committee released a Poverty Barometer (Occasional Newsletter) on immigration issues. The barometer showed that nearly 1/3 of children in recent immigrant families in Manitoba live in poverty.

On November 24, the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg released its annual provincial Report Card at a breakfast for Members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, Winnipeg City Councillors, and community leaders at the Manitoba Children's Museum. Speakers included Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, Billie Schibler (Manitoba Children's Advocate), and Hon. John Harvard.

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg presented to the HUMA committee on December 4th when it held hearings here.

Ontario

Poverty Reduction Strategy:

Ontario Campaign 2000 released the *2009 Ontario Report Card* on November 24 with the message that now, during the recession, Ontario needs to invest faster and further in poverty reduction if it is to meet the target to cut child poverty by 25% by 2013. A candle lit vigil outside Queens Park helped amplify the message, along with excellent media coverage in print, radio and TV.

On December 2nd the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction released "Making Good on the Promise" www.25in5.ca and the government released their report on the one year anniversary of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy www.Ontario.ca/growingstronger.

The Daily Bread Food Bank released details on one of the 9 indicators that will track progress on poverty reduction: the new Ontario Deprivation Index. Based on a Statistics Canada survey in 2009 it found that 12.5% of Ontario children lack 2 or more items on the index. For more details, see this link: <http://dailybread.ca/learningcentre/publications.cfm?id=3-2>

The Province also announced a team of 9 representatives from anti poverty organizations, foundations, and research organizations to advise on the review of Social Assistance, promised as part of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Housing:

As one of its commitments in the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Ontario government held 13 consultations to get input to development of a Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy. MPPs and communities have held another 30+ community meetings. A broad coalition of housing activists formed the Housing Network of Ontario (HNO) to encourage and track

community participation. Ontario Campaign 2000 is part of the HNO which released in October a report summarizing what was heard at the consultations. The report can be viewed at <http://www.stableandaffordable.com/>

The government indicates they will release the Housing Strategy in June 2010. Ontario Campaign 2000 has called for inclusion of a Housing Benefit in the next Ontario budget as a downpayment on the Housing Strategy. Similar to a program in Québec, a Housing Benefit would provide a monthly allowance to all low income tenants who spend more than 30% of income on rent and would help make existing housing more affordable. Community organizing continues led by the HNO to keep up the pressure for an effective, well funded strategy – a key component if Ontario is to reach its poverty reduction targets.

Child Care:

The Ontario government announced in October that they will start phasing in full-day learning for 4 and 5 year olds in September 2010, with full implementation by 2015. A portion of the first schools will be in low income neighbourhoods. Budget commitments of \$500 million over the next 2 years remain in place to support implementation. This was welcome news for Ontario Campaign 2000 and the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care.

However, we remain concerned that there are no assurances the Province will invest the required \$64million/annually to maintain 8,000 child care fee subsidies that are threatened due to expiring federal funding. Send a message to your MPP and Finance Minister Duncan about the importance of Ontario funding subsidized spaces – we can't build full-day learning on a crumbling foundation of child care centres through this web link: <http://www.childcareontario.org/petition/>

Quebec

The Quebec government has been holding regional consultations to develop the second 5 year Plan for the War Against Poverty led by Sam Hamad, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Inclusion. Le Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté has been organizing across the province to exercise collective pressure and a common vision of what they want in the next plan. They are concerned that there are no people with lived experience of poverty on the commission that is touring the province. The Collectif wants to ensure that the next plan includes their key demands: all citizens must have access to free, universal and quality public services without user fees; raise Quebec's minimum wage so working people can exit from poverty; and increase social assistance benefits so that they cover essential needs and ensure dignity and health for those on welfare. Visit their website here: <http://www.pauvrete.qc.ca/>

Nova Scotia

Recently, the Department of Community Services, under the new NDP government, has hired Ulrich Vom Hagen as the Coordinator of Poverty Reduction. Announcements indicate that he has held a number of policy jobs in provincial governments. It's been said that a lot of internal work is being done re poverty reduction that will lead to some news in the months ahead.

Meanwhile, our Nova Scotia partner released its annual Report Card for the province at a community event on Sun., Nov. 22nd. You may get a flavour of what's in it through an excerpt of the new provincial Report Card: *"This year's report card is a bad news/good news story. The goal of ending child poverty in Canada by 2000 was not achieved. Yet significant progress has been made in a number of areas. The Canada Child Tax Benefit and the National Child Benefit initiative have developed into a ready and effective tool for reducing poverty for some families with children (i.e., the working poor). However, while families that depend on welfare for family income do receive the National Child Benefit they also receive very low welfare payments causing their total family income to always be below the LICO whether the after tax or before tax measure is applied.*

*This data supports the **continued call to both the provincial and federal governments for a comprehensive plan to reduce poverty among families with children – a plan that is long overdue.**"*

PEI

Although the government of P.E.I. has not made a public commitment or announcement about its intentions to launch a strategy, the P.E.I. Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy continues to make progress especially with research and public education.. Members of the Coalition are approaching individual members of the Legislative Assembly to obtain their support. Some suggested that we meet with the government caucus to brief them and hopefully get the whole government focused on the task. The House leader assured us that we would have that opportunity after the closing of fall session on December 8. We would like to meet with them before the end of 2009.

This is not the kind of timeline we had hoped for. The Deputy Minister of Social Services promised us twice that there would be an announcement before the end of 2009. All is not lost, however, because as we wait we are able to pin down more and more convincing evidence that poverty is costing this province a lot of money, that children are suffering and that they develop health problems in adulthood, at great personal and public cost. All of this is strengthening our case for a Poverty Eradication Strategy.

The Coalition is alert to government's claim that its approach will be "slightly" different from what we are advocating - this in spite of the fact that one of the essential components of a Poverty Eradication Strategy, public consultation, has not taken place. We can't help but suspect that a reliance on Food Banks, Soup Kitchens and Christmas Turkey Drives, etc. are so entrenched that government does not want to let them go. A cost/benefit comparison of those projects would soon illustrate that they are only a small fraction of what is needed to end poverty. In addition, these projects are a form of indirect taxes that could be better spent through a determined long-term strategy to overcome poverty.

As the Coalition waits for a meeting with government it is encouraged by the solidarity it is experiencing across the country. We couldn't find enough accurate statistics to make a Child Poverty Report card in 2009 and had to settle for an Op-Ed in the Charlottetown Guardian with a front-page quote. We were able as well to have the local CBC interview Armine Yalnizyan on the problems presented by the province's lack of reliable statistics and the local CBC gave good coverage to the Campaign 2000 National Report Card on Child Poverty. As we continue to uncover information we may be able us to produce a P.E.I. report card in 2010.

New Brunswick

In November, New Brunswick joined the ranks of provinces with a poverty reduction strategy. A year long process culminated in a Final Forum where more than 50 participants agreed on the essential elements of the province's first poverty reduction plan, *Overcoming Poverty Together*. Both political parties with seats in the Legislature, people living in poverty and representatives from the non-profit sector and business adopted a global objective that:

"By 2015, New Brunswick will have reduced income poverty by 25% and deep income poverty by 50%, and will have made significant progress in achieving sustained economic and social inclusion". The drafting of an "Economic and Social Inclusion Act" is underway. In the meantime, the government has eliminated the interim social assistance rate program (a shameful category of \$294/month for a single employable person), extended the health card for persons exiting social assistance for up to three years, and limited the application of the household income policy to social assistance recipients who are in spousal relationships. The provincial minimum wage will rise to the Atlantic average by September, 2011.

Overcoming Poverty Together provides for the creation of a provincial Economic and Social Inclusion Board as well as Community Economic and Social Inclusion Networks established at the local level. Both will be composed of representatives of people living in poverty, non-profit, business and government sectors. A secretariat is envisaged that will provide coordinating and administrative support to the Board and community inclusion networks. A number of reforms, spread out over five years, are contained in the Plan which can be found here: <http://www.gnb.ca/0017/Promos/0001/pdf/Plan-e.pdf>.

Child and Family Poverty Report Card: New Brunswick 2009. Nearly twenty four thousand (24,000) New Brunswick children - one in six - live in poverty, according to the 2009 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in New Brunswick released by the Saint John Human Development Council, a Campaign 2000 provincial partner.

As well, Vibrant Communities Saint John released an Update Newsletter on the local **Poverty Reduction Strategy** in September, 2009. You can download a copy of the **Poverty Reduction Update** by clicking the link: <http://www.sjhdc.ca/pdf/Sept09FINAL.pdf>.



Newfoundland and Labrador

Province succeeding in lowering poverty rates

Newfoundland and Labrador has realized significant improvement in the overall level of poverty since 2003 according to its December report which shows that it has moved from having one of the highest levels of poverty to having the third lowest level. See the article or read the report at: <http://www.thetelegram.com/index.cfm?sid=310583&sc=79>. First Progress Report on the

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Strategy can be accessed at this link:
www.hrle.gov.nl.ca/hrle/publications/poverty/PRSPProgressReport.pdf.

Campaign 2000 and Vibrant Communities working toward the elimination of poverty in Canada

November 24th marked the 20th anniversary of the House of Commons 1989 unanimous resolution to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000. On the anniversary, Campaign 2000 released its annual Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada. This year, Penelope Rowe spoke about the report card at the MacMorran Community Centre in St. John's. The report card illustrates how little Canada has progressed in 20 years - despite efforts to reduce poverty, the rate of child and family poverty has gone down only slightly, to 9.5% in 2007 from 11.9% in 1989.



After discussing the report card, Vibrant Communities screened 'Four Feet Up', a documentary from the perspective of an 8-year old boy living in poverty in rural Nova Scotia. The film made personal the cold facts about poverty in Canada.

The day was cause for celebration as well. Recognizing the failure of the previous unanimous resolution in 1989, on this November 24th the Government of Canada passed a motion to develop an immediate plan to eliminate poverty in Canada for all. This effort was thanks to Campaign 2000 and the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA).

For more info about news from NL and what our partner is involved in, click here:
<http://www.envision.ca/newsletter/HTML/2009/NewsletterDec07.htm>

[New Resources/Blogs](#)

- A new documentary (directed by Mark Chatel) entitled **A Country's Hunger/LA FAIM D'UN PAYS** was released this Nov. 24th, marking the 20th anniversary of the all-party HOC resolution to end child poverty. It was produced by an independent film maker and telecast on TV by RDI. For more info, visit www.balestra.tv
- NFB's new film **Four Feet Up**: Campaign 2000 and many of its partners were involved in NFB's cross-country film screenings on Nov. 24th this year. Read the blog page from Amy Stewart of NFB here: <http://blog.nfb.ca/2009/12/14/on-common-ground-eliminating-child-poverty-is-something-we-can-all-agree-on/>
- The Road to Good Intentions, BY TRISH HENNESSY | NOVEMBER 24, 2009. Read Trish's blog here: <http://www.rabble.ca/blogs/bloggers/trish-hennessy/2009/11/road-good-intentions>

[Donate to Campaign 2000](#)

We're continuing to make some progress, and your ongoing support is crucial at this time of the year. With your renewed support, we can keep the momentum going. Your donation is greatly appreciated. Please send your donation payable to Campaign 2000, c/o Family Service Toronto, 355 Church Street, Toronto, ON M5B 1Z8 or donate online through Canada Helps at www.campaign2000.ca Thank you for your support!

Campaign 2000's E-Bulletin provides regular updates (3-4 times a year) on activities to reduce and eventually eliminate child and family poverty in Canada with news and views, political analysis, commentary on party platforms, government action or inaction, and links to the latest research findings and reports. To unsubscribe from **Campaign 2000's E-Bulletin** at any time, e-mail us at liyugu@familyservicetoronto.org. For more info, please visit www.campaign2000.ca and www.familyservicetoronto.org

Campaign 2000 is proudly supported by Family Service Toronto

