



## END CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY IN CANADA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Let's End Child Poverty for Good**

**TORONTO** – Canada has a once in a generation opportunity to end child and family poverty. With the federal government committed to creating a national poverty reduction strategy for the first time, we must take the long overdue actions necessary to end child poverty for good, says Anita Khanna, National Coordinator for Campaign 2000.

“Federal politicians committed to eliminate child poverty in Canada in 1989, 2009 and 2015. Unfortunately, the necessary action plans never materialized and 1.34 million children, almost 1 in 5, are in poverty today. With the federal government ready to tackle poverty, Canada must craft a strong plan that meets the needs of its most vulnerable citizens. Therefore Campaign 2000 calls on the federal government to ensure the design of the new Canada Child Benefit reduces child poverty by 50% in five years,” says Khanna.

“It is vitally important that Canada seize the opportunity to lay out a solid framework to eradicate poverty,” said Dr. Sid Frankel, Professor of Social Work at University of Manitoba. “This framework must be developed collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal governments and organizations, non-governmental organizations and people living in poverty. It must include poverty reduction targets as well as clear timelines for government to remain accountable for progress. In addition, the commitment to poverty reduction must be secured in legislation.”

The 2015 Campaign 2000 report card, *Let's Do This: Let's End Child Poverty for Good*, chronicles the state of child poverty in Canada and offers solutions that the federal government can adopt to reduce and eradicate it immediately. Recommendations address precarious employment, gaps in the social safety net, housing, income inequality, and early childhood education and care (ECEC), long a fundamental piece of Campaign 2000's child poverty eradication agenda.

“Critical to a plan to eradicate child poverty, a national childcare program is long overdue. It should be based on a well-developed policy framework that starts with principles of universality, high quality and comprehensiveness and sets out clear goals, targets and timelines,” says Martha Friendly, Executive Director of Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

A climate of renewed hope and optimism provides Canada with an important opportunity to close the book on its failure to eliminate child poverty. “With decades of research and evidence to guide us, we need to muster the resolve to end child and family poverty for good. Let's do this, and let's do this right,” says Khanna.

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. For Campaign 2000's 2015 report cards, visit <http://www.campaign2000.ca>

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## BACKGROUND:

### Key Findings from the 2015 National Report Card, *Let's Do This: Let's End Child Poverty for Good*:

- **Child poverty has increased since 1989:** from 15.8% to 19% today; 40% of Indigenous children live in poverty.
- **37% of children in poverty reside in households with full time, full year employment.**
- **Canada needs a good jobs strategy and decent wages:** over 2 million workers stuck in temporary employment.
- **Canada still needs a national childcare program.** There are only enough regulated child care spaces to cover 25% of children aged 0 – 12 years.
- **Poverty affects people differently:** Children in racialized, recent immigrant and Indigenous families as well as children with disabilities are at greater risk of living in poverty, leading to persistent social and economic inequality.
- **1 million children experience food insecurity,** lacking reliable access to adequate, safe, good-quality, nutritious food.
- **Government transfers prevent poverty: 705,000 additional children would live in poverty without transfers.** However, Canada's system of transfers is not as effective as those of other OECD nations.
- **One in seven of those in homelessness shelters are children.** Living in inadequate, crowded and unaffordable housing is associated with higher vulnerability to asthma and injury, an accelerated spread of communicable diseases, anxiety and insomnia, less physical exercise and diminished school performance.