

2018 Report Card Outlines Bold Ambitions for Child and Family Poverty Eradication

OTTAWA – With the 2019 federal election under a year away, all parties should embrace bold ambitions to eradicate child and family poverty in Canada, says Campaign 2000. Canada's first Poverty Reduction Strategy (CPRS) should be reviewed by all to make the targets more ambitious, the timelines shorter and the plans to accomplish them transparent. Released on National Child Day, the non-partisan national coalition's 2018 annual national report card focuses on strengthening Canada's first CPRS and provides clear recommendations to accelerate poverty eradication among children and families.

"Nearly 30 years after the 1989 all-party resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000 was passed, over 1.4 million children in Canada still live in poverty," says Anita Khanna, Campaign 2000's National Coordinator. "The federal government has made significant investments since 2015 and the CPRS is a new starting point in Canada's battle against poverty - but it is not yet the strategy Canada desperately needs. Government has committed to reduce poverty by 20% by 2020 and 50% by 2030 – but allowing some 700,000 children in yet another generation to grow up in the hunger, stress and struggle of poverty is unacceptable."

In the lead up to the federal election, Campaign 2000 calls on all parties, First Nations governments, provinces and territories to support investments in poverty reduction based on a bold vision and decisive action to reduce poverty by 50% in 5 years. With children's lives at stake, we cannot afford to wait and see - Canada must act and we must succeed.

The 2018 report card, *Bold Ambitions for Child and Family Poverty Eradication*, provides a current snapshot of the depth and breadth of poverty among children and families across Canada according to the Census-Family Low Income Measure After Tax derived from taxfiler data. The report recognizes federal investments against poverty and provides clear recommendations. These include calling for a \$6 billion down payment to kick start the CPRS, amending the Income Tax Act to enable all children to receive the Canada Child Benefit and taking urgent action to address the poverty crisis among First Nations, Inuit and Metis families.

The report shines a spotlight on the central role of universal childcare in eradicating child and family poverty. "Universal access to affordable, high quality childcare is the missing puzzle piece in Canada's anti-poverty agenda," says Martha Friendly, Executive Director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit. "The lack of quality childcare robs children of valuable learning environments and because it creates barriers to women participating in the workforce, education and training, many parents cannot lift themselves out of poverty. The first three-year phase of federal re-engagement in childcare has been most welcome but Canadian families now need the next steps to ensure that the principles the federal government has set out—the accessible, affordable, high quality, inclusive childcare Campaign 2000 has always called for—becomes a reality."

Bill C-87, the Poverty Reduction Act was tabled for first reading on November 6, 2018. It outlines the CPRS' targets and timelines, the terms of the National Advisory Council on Poverty and names the Market Basket Measure (whether a family of four can afford a modest basket of goods and services necessary to achieve an adequate standard of living based on community size) as Canada's Official Poverty Line. Just a day earlier, on November 5, 2018, British Columbia passed its own Poverty Reduction Strategy Act, notably committing the province to achieve a 50% reduction in child poverty in 5 years.

"After years of inaction, British Columbia has finally legislated principled poverty reduction targets that inspire some hope for the 172,550 of children in our province living in poverty," says Adrienne Montani, Provincial Coordinator of First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. "The federal targets should not lag behind – they should commit to match or exceed British Columbia." Campaign 2000 partners release detailed child and family poverty report cards annually, with report cards focused on British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island out today as well. Saskatchewan will release its provincial report card on Thursday and Manitoba will release its provincial report card in December.

"Canada needs more aggressive action against child and family poverty because better beginnings for children ensure better opportunities over their lifetimes," says Dr. Sid Frankel, Professor of Social Work at University of Manitoba. "The CPRS requires a costed implementation plan to ensure poverty reduction targets are achieved. The implementation plan should include four elements: boosting family incomes through adequate income transfers; intervening in the labour market to create and maintain

good jobs; providing high quality, accessible public services such as universal childcare, and; supporting community building in low-income communities.”

“Canada needs to strengthen the CPRS in order to cut poverty in half within 5 years. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we cannot allow poverty eradication to skip another generation,” adds 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 that is hosted by Family Service Toronto. For all of Campaign 2000’s 2018 report cards, visit <http://www.campaign2000.ca>

-30-

CONTACT INFORMATION

National Report Card:

Anita Khanna –National Coordinator, Campaign 2000, 416-788-3439 (cell), AnitaKH@familyservicetoronto.org

Liyu Guo –Campaign 2000, 416-624-1885 (cell) or 416-595-9230, ext. 244 (office), liyugu@familyservicetoronto.org

Porte-parole français disponible Rachel Gouin: 613-791-0361 (cell)

Provincial Report Cards:

British Columbia – Adrienne Montani, First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, 604-709-6970;

info@firstcallbc.org

Alberta -- Joel French, Public Interest Alberta, 780-420-0471 (office), 780-893-9379 (cell),

communications@pialberta.org

Saskatchewan – Miguel Sanchez, Social Policy Research Unit, University of Regina, 306-585-4848

Manitoba – Sid Frankel, University of Manitoba, 204-295-3749 (cell), Sid.Frankel@umanitoba.ca

Ontario – Fatima Altaf, Ontario Campaign 2000, 416-595-9230, ext. 241 fatimaal@familyservicetoronto.org

New Brunswick – Randy Hatfield, Saint John Human Development Council, 506-645-1145, randy@sjhdc.ca at

Prince Edward Island – Mary Boyd, PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy, 902-892-9074 or 902-388-2693 (cell)

BACKGROUNDER

Key Findings from the 2018 National Report Card, *Bold Ambitions for Child and Family Poverty Eradication*

- **Nearly 1 in 5 children in Canada (19.6%) and 37.9% of First Nations children live in poverty.**
- **Poverty discriminates against children in families that are lone female-led, racialized, immigrant and Indigenous or affected by disabilities.** One in four racialized children, one in three children of immigrants and two in five of children in lone-mother led families are in poverty, leading to persistent social and economic inequality.
- **Children under 6 are more likely to live in poverty;** 20.7% at the national level, up to 42.5% in Nunavut.
- **One in six children in Canada are food insecure.** Lacking access to adequate, safe, good-quality, nutritious food due to financial constraints.
- **The poverty reduction strategy’s targets will leave at least 700,000 children in poverty by 2030**
- **Canada still needs a national childcare program.** There are only enough regulated child care spaces to cover 29% of children aged 0 – 5 years old.
- **The Canada Child Benefit is reducing poverty and material deprivation** – child poverty rates down by up to 18% according to the Market Basket Measure
- **Canada needs a good jobs strategy and decent wages:** The federal government should lead by example and restore a \$15/hour minimum wage for workers in federally regulated industries and improve the accessibility of Employment Insurance
- **Government transfers prevent poverty:** nearly 860,000 additional children would live in poverty without transfers.