

## CHARLOTTETOWN

June 11, 2020

For immediate release

Exceptionally high child poverty rates in Black, Indigenous communities are indicators of systemic violence in Canada.

The MacKillop Centre for Social Justice and the PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy join anti-poverty activists from across Canada in support of their call to address the systemic nature of violence and poverty within our communities. Data released this week show exceptionally high rates of poverty across the country in Black, First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities. For 30 years Campaign 2000 has been tracking rates of child poverty in Canada. While they are unacceptably high given that the federal government made a promise to eradicate child poverty by 2000, the numbers grow exponentially across the country for Black and Indigenous children. According to Custom Census data tabulation from 2016, the latest data available and supplied by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, reveals that Status and non-Status First Nations children living on and off reserve experience astoundingly high child poverty rates.

Census 2016 data also shows that in Prince Edward Island and across the country, rates of child poverty in Black communities are higher for Black children. PEI's overall child poverty rate taken from 2017 tax filer data is 18.5% which is equal to the national average, while the census rate for black children is 33% which is 3 percentage points higher than their national average. The census figures place the rate for indigenous peoples on PEI as follows: Inuit, 43%; non-status First Nations, 42%; status First-nations, 37% and Metis, 25%.

"It's wonderful to witness the renewed mobilization led by black and indigenous communities asking government and civil society to seriously address anti-black and anti-indigenous racism in Canada. Nobody understands the consequences of this kind of systemic injustice and poverty better than the people who have suffered its consequences for so many decades. Have we finally heard their voices and what actions will be taken to finally end this disgraceful neglect? When will their words and dreams be put into action for equal opportunity in this country and in the world" asks Mary Boyd of the MacKillop Centre for Social Justice.

Leila Sarangi, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000 states that "Poverty and police violence in Black and indigenous communities uphold our systems of oppression and white supremacy. We need to address this. We support Black and indigenous calls for immediate police accountability and significant investments in mental health services, housing, employment, childcare and education for these children."

Sid Frankel, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Manitoba states that: "Economic discrimination against Black and indigenous children threatens the very survival of these communities

through robbing them of a future which is as healthy, educationally accomplished, and occupationally successful as Canadians in general. This cannot be tolerated.”

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