



October 17, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P., Minister of Jobs and Families
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Re: United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

Dear Prime Minister Carney and Minister Hajdu,

We are writing to you on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, a day that reminds us that ending poverty is inseparable from protecting human rights, dignity, and social inclusion, and that commitments to eradicate poverty must be matched by concrete action.

Canada has made significant commitments to reduce and ultimately eliminate poverty. Most recently, Canada endorsed the Doha Political Declaration at the Second World Summit for Social Development in November 2025, joining other United Nations member states in recommitting to poverty eradication, decent work, equality, and human rights. Domestically, Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy established a goal of reducing poverty by 50% between 2015 and 2030, and these commitments were enshrined in law through the Poverty Reduction Act in 2019. Together, these commitments create a clear mandate for the federal government to reduce poverty and ensure that progress is sustained.

Canada demonstrated that meaningful progress is possible. Through investments in income supports and public programs, poverty rates fell substantially and key targets were reached ahead of schedule. Yet this progress has been reversed. The latest data show that poverty has increased steadily over the past four years. Today, 11% of people in Canada, more than one in ten people, are living on incomes too low to meet their basic needs. Hard won gains have been eroded, pushing more individuals and families further away from economic security.

Poverty in Canada is not experienced equally. It is deeply shaped by systemic barriers and ongoing discrimination. The effects of colonialism, racism, ableism, and other forms of exclusion continue to limit access to employment, education, housing, health care, and



other opportunities that are essential to a decent quality of life. As a result, communities that already face marginalization bear a disproportionate burden of poverty.

Recent increases in poverty reflect these inequities. Poverty among racialized people has risen by 6.5 percentage points, reaching 15.5%. Among Indigenous People, the poverty rate has increased by 6.4 percentage points to 17.9%. The poverty rate for children has more than doubled, reaching 11.5%. Nearly one third of children growing up in women and gender diverse lone-parent families are growing up in poverty. This group had the largest increase of 12.4 percentage points between 2020 and 2024. These increases are deeply concerning and underscore the need for a stronger and more equitable response.

We recognize and welcome your government's investments in measures such as the Groceries and Essentials Benefit, the protection of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care system, the Canadian Dental Care Program, and the permanent National School Food Program.

These initiatives provide important supports to individuals and families across the country. However, both the data and the lived experiences of people in our communities demonstrate that current measures are not sufficient to reverse rising poverty rates or address the structural barriers that keep many people from thriving. Canada has the tools, evidence, and resources to do better, and must act with greater urgency to get back on track toward its poverty reduction commitments.

Our organizations have developed practical recommendations that would reduce barriers, advance racial and gender justice, and put Canada back on a path toward meeting its poverty reduction commitments. We urge your government to take immediate action to:

1. Strengthen income security by ensuring federal benefits and income supports are adequate, accessible, and sufficient to meet basic needs, so that no one in Canada is left living in poverty.
2. Address systemic barriers to economic security by strengthening employment equity, ensuring decent work and fair wages, and tackling racial, gender and other inequalities that disproportionately expose marginalized communities to poverty.

3. Make essential needs and services affordable for everyone by investing in affordable housing, public health care, child care and other essential public services funded by a fairer tax system that reduces inequality.

These actions must be grounded in the lived experiences of those most affected by poverty, racism, and exclusion. We call on your government to develop a fully funded action plan to meet Canada's poverty reduction commitments, with clear timelines, measurable targets to reduce poverty and close racial and gender disparities and transparent mechanisms to track progress and ensure accountability.

Canada has already shown that poverty can be reduced when governments act with ambition and purpose. The challenge now is not whether progress is possible, but whether your government will take the action needed to reverse the current trend and meet Canada's poverty reduction commitments. We look forward to working with your government to turn these commitments into sustained progress so that everyone in Canada can live with dignity, security, and opportunity.

Sincerely,

Lauren Ravon, Executive Director, Oxfam Canada

Leila Sarangi, National Director, Campaign 200: End Child and Family Poverty

Charles Smith, Project Lead, Canadian Network for Equity and Racial Justice (CNERJ)

Campaign 2000 is a diverse pan-Canadian coalition of organizations working to end child and family poverty. Formed in response to the unanimous 1989 federal resolution to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000, Campaign 2000 has spent more than three decades monitoring and reporting on poverty in Canada.

Oxfam Canada is part of a global movement working to end poverty and inequality, with a particular focus on advancing women's rights and gender justice.

The Canadian Network for Equity and Racial Justice (CNERJ) is a national civil society coalition founded in 2023 to combat systemic racism, discrimination, and hate across Canada.