

New poverty figures show poverty eradication must be part of recession recovery ^[1]

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Press release in pdf ^[2]

Text of the press release:

New data from Statistics Canada show that 9 per cent of children in Canada lived in poverty in 2008, down slightly from 9.4% in 2007. These distressing statistics should provide the catalyst for our MPs to take action and make sure that ending poverty is part of Canada's recession recovery plan.

"It is unacceptable that in one of the richest countries of the world, more than 600,000 children -- about 1 in 10 -- are growing up in poverty. It's important to remember that the reality for many Canadians living in poverty since the recession hit here in 2008 has yet to show up in the numbers, as our national statistical agency is always two years behind in reporting Canada's income data," said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000.

"There is no doubt that the recession is still on the minds of Canadian families, particularly those families who now find themselves in low-income situations. As many as 500,000 workers have exhausted their Employment Insurance benefits. Welfare caseloads have increased in all provinces.

Rental affordability has declined in 11 major urban centres in Canada. And in 2009 food banks recorded the largest increase in people coming to prevent their own hunger than they had recorded in more than two decades," Rothman commented.

"Our MPs have two good opportunities now to exercise leadership on poverty eradication. Bill C-304 on affordable housing, scheduled for third reading in the House, would compel the federal government to develop a national housing strategy with the provinces, territories, municipalities and civil society.

This strategy is desperately needed because private market rental units are increasingly out of the reach of low-modest income earners. And the new private member's bill introduced on June 16 by MP Tony Martin (Sault Ste. Marie), an Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada, would obligate the federal government to develop a strategy for poverty elimination.

"There is no way to get around it. Poverty elimination must be at the forefront on any recession recovery plan. Canada can and must do better than simply turning a blind eye to families relying on food banks, children not eating fresh fruit and vegetables and protein every day, and living in apartments infested by pests," said Laurel Rothman, National Coordinator of Campaign 2000.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: poverty ^[4]

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