

January 11th, 2011

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is disappointed that the recommendations of The Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology Report, *In From the Margins; A Call to Action on Poverty, Housing and Homelessness* are not receiving support from the Government of Canada, as noted by the response delivered to the Senate, Monday, September 27<sup>th</sup>.

The report is the result of many hours of listening to people tell of the destructive effects of poverty on themselves and their families and listening to careful researchers who understand the best way of building a strong society. It has specific recommendations that government can implement in the interests of building a stronger, healthier and more law-abiding Canada. This is a constructive report that deals with the ways of helping people to contribute to society and to take their place as productive citizens, despite the obstacles that are currently in their way. It outlines ways of dealing with the effects of poverty on peoples' lives, of changing and improving inefficient government programs, compensating for the neglect and disadvantage of certain groups, such as Aboriginals who have suffered from extreme poverty for many years.

Attention is urgently needed to deal with the housing shortage that leads to a large increase of homelessness and which not only destabilizes our cities but also adds significantly to municipal costs.

Poverty is very expensive, and leads to wasted lives. It adds to health costs, criminal justice expenses and increased unemployment throughout life. The 2008 NCWC Brief to Government outlines NCWC policy regarding Child and Family Poverty. The Senate report has a lot to offer in building a stronger society and healthier Canadians, as well as healthy communities across the land. In the meantime, the National Council of Women of Canada urges you to look again at this Report and take the opportunity to strengthen Canada by implementing its recommendations. Further we ask that you provide us with the action plan of Government to reduce poverty in Canada.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Scott  
NCWC President

CC: Senator Art Eggleton, Chair, The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,  
Science and Technology  
Senator Hugh Segal, Deputy Chair, The Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs,  
Science and Technology  
Ujjal Dosanjh, MP for Vancouver South, Health Critic  
Megan Leslie, MP for Halifax, Health Critic

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<sup>i</sup> In the 2008 Annual Brief, the National Council of Women of Canada wrote urging the Government of Canada to develop and implement a national strategy for the urgent reduction of child and family poverty, which includes the following goals and components:

- full time, full year employment provide a level of income above the poverty line
- parents/guardians who are not able to be in the workforce, be assured of a basic income and child benefits above the poverty line
- the strategy have measurable targets and timelines that include;
  - a plan of action and budget that coordinates initiatives within and across government and other partners
  - a government accountability structure for ensuring results and for consulting with Canadians, particularly low-income people, in the design, implementation and evaluation of the actions that will affect them
  - a set of agreed poverty indicators that will be used to plan, monitor change and assess progress.