

## FLASH SHEET

From NCWC representative to Campaign 2000 Joyce Ireland December 30, 2002

### **“Poverty Amidst Prosperity: Building a Canada for All Children”**

On November 24, 2002, the anniversary of the 1989 House of Commons’ unanimous resolution to “seek to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000”, Campaign 2000 released its annual Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada.

This report is available in print and on the website: [www.campaign2000.ca](http://www.campaign2000.ca) It is a valuable source of information concerning the current state of poverty affecting children and their families in Canada and the actions needed to reach the goal envisioned by Members of Parliament in 1989. Prime Minister Chrétien in his reply to the Speech from the Throne in October 2002 stated” We must put Canada’s families and children first...we will begin consultation immediately with our partners to be ready in the next budget: to put in place a long term investment plan”.

The NCWC is a partner in Campaign 2000, a non partisan, across Canada coalition of over 85 national and community organizations united in securing the implementation of the 1989 resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000.

The annual Report Card provides excellent reference data for program planning in local and provincial councils and for the development of resolutions for debate at provincial and national council meetings. It challenges members of partner organizations to act and to advocate with political leaders and members of legislative bodies on behalf of the needs of families and children.

Highlights in the recent report include:

- Bar graphs illustrating the percentage of Canadian children living in families below the poverty line each year 1989 to 2000
- Bar graphs showing the depth of poverty in one parent and two parent families in the period 1989 to 2000
- Provincial statistics for the percentage and actual number of children living in poverty in 2000.
- Bar graphs reporting the average provincial welfare incomes and low income cutoffs in the years 1991 to 2000
- Bar graphs showing the total number of children aged 0 to 12 in Canada in years 1992 to 2000. The number of regulated child-care spaces in the same years.
- Bar graphs showing the number of Affordable Housing Units created annually 1980 to 2000.

The Report Card narrative gives a more detailed analysis and the implications of the statistics for children and families. It describes a social investment strategy necessary to “enable all children in Canada to get the best start in life and an equal opportunity to succeed. These include:

- **A healthy start in life**
- **An enhanced Child Tax Benefit**
- **A bold strategy for Early Childhood Education and Care**
- **Making housing a reality for all**

**Urgent Action:** NCWC policies over the years have reflected these objectives. Campaign 2000 asks partners to follow up on these issues by writing to MP's to urge their support for the promises in the Speech from the Throne. A draft letter prepared by Campaign 2000, for partners and individuals to adapt/use includes the statement:

***“The real test of the government’s commitment to fight child and family poverty will be in the next budget when promises need to be translated into public investment priorities.”***

- >Implement the approved increase in the National Child Benefit (NCB) and introduce a plan to enhance the Canada Child Tax Benefit to a maximum of \$4,200 per child that provides a net benefit to all eligible families;
- >Establish an architecture and provide funding for Early Childhood Education and care that includes high quality child care and commit up to \$1 billion in the 2003 budget;
- >Invest in affordable housing sufficient to create 20,000 new affordable units per year and rehabilitate 10,000 units per year.