

## ROLE OF CTF

Eliminating child poverty has been and continues to be a priority issue for CTF.

## PURPOSES OF CTF ADVOCACY

To develop CTF's advocacy profile, in accordance with the direction given by the Board of Directors.

## KEY MESSAGES

### Supporting Families: Reducing Child Poverty

- More than one in seven Canadian children is living in poverty – in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. Despite some initial success at reducing child poverty from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the Conference Board of Canada reports that the rate increased between the mid-1990s and the late 2000s to 15.1%, ranking us 15th out of 17 peer countries.
- Certain vulnerable groups continue to experience higher levels of poverty than others – Aboriginal peoples (one in four First Nations children lives in poverty), recent immigrants and racialized communities, female lone-parent families, and persons with disabilities.
- According to the Conference Board, “income inequality in Canada has increased over the past 20 years” and “since 1990, the richest group of Canadians has increased its share of total national income, while the poorest and middle-income groups have lost share.” There is growing international recognition that income inequality can hurt the economy.
- Poverty's negative impact on student learning and development is well established.
- The economic and social costs of not addressing poverty run into the billions of dollars annually.
- Addressing poverty is fundamentally a human rights issue. The UN notes that a human rights-based approach to tackling poverty recognizes that in addition to a lack of economic and material



resources, poverty also contributes to social exclusion and is a violation of human dignity.

- The positive impact of government transfer payments in reducing the poverty rate is significant.
- Some progress is being made at the provincial level in reducing poverty. Seven of ten provinces have put in place poverty reduction plans or strategies. We firmly believe the time has now come for strong federal leadership on this issue.

The teachers of Canada therefore call on the Federal Government to:

- Commit to a comprehensive federal poverty reduction strategy for Canada that includes realistic targets and timelines developed in broad consultation with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal governments and organizations, non-governmental organizations and people living in poverty;
- Restore and expand eligibility for Employment Insurance to better support individuals separated from their employment. This would involve easing eligibility requirements, extending benefit durations, and increasing benefit rates;
- Increase the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) from the current maximum of \$3,582 per child to \$5,300 per child;



- Develop a national strategy on housing and the elimination of homelessness, and that such a strategy reference the right to adequate housing, and have targets, timelines and accountability measures;
- Replace the current Universal Child Care Benefit with a universal child care and education system providing dedicated funding for high quality care and early intervention and school readiness initiatives for all children;
- Address rising income inequality and the needs of low-income families by restoring fairness to the Canadian tax system.

### CURRENT CTF ACTIVITIES ON THIS FILE

- ✓ Participating in “Keep the Promise: A Partnership Initiative to End Child and Youth Poverty” in partnership with the Keep the Promise coalition and Campaign 2000.
- ✓ Over the past several years we have prepared articles and other publications on the topic of child poverty. We have also prepared briefs and backgrounders on poverty for our annual Hill Day events (most recently in Spring 2013) as well as for Senate and other government committees.
- ✓ CTF is an active member of Campaign 2000, the Dignity for All campaign for a poverty-free Canada (coordinated by Canada Without Poverty & Citizens for Public Justice), and the National Alliance for Children and Youth.

### CTF POLICY ON THIS TOPIC

Children and Poverty – Policy Section 5 – Health and Welfare, subsection 5, *CTF Handbook*

Role and Functions – Policy Section 1, subsection 3, *CTF Handbook*

### SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Canadian Teachers’ Federation. *Reducing Child Poverty* – 2013 CTF Hill Day Backgrounders

[www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/HillDay2013\\_Poverty.pdf](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/Research-Library/HillDay2013_Poverty.pdf)

[www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/Events/Hill-Day-2013-Key-Messages.aspx#child-poverty](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/en/Pages/Events/Hill-Day-2013-Key-Messages.aspx#child-poverty)

Campaign 2000 (2012). *Needed: A Federal Action Plan to Eradicate Child and Family Poverty in Canada – 2012 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty*, Toronto.

[www.campaign2000.ca/reportCards/national/C2000ReportCardNov2012.pdf](http://www.campaign2000.ca/reportCards/national/C2000ReportCardNov2012.pdf)

Conference Board of Canada (2013). *How Canada Performs: A Report Card on Canada*, Ottawa.

[www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/society.aspx](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/society.aspx)

Dignity for All Campaign For a Poverty-free Canada.

[www.dignityforall.ca/](http://www.dignityforall.ca/)