



CANADA WITHOUT POVERTY  
CANADA SANS PAUVRETÉ

251 Bank Street, 5th Floor | Ottawa, ON K2P 1X3  
www.cwp-csp.ca | 613-789-0096

## Joint Submission to the Human Rights Council On the Occasion of the 3rd Universal Periodic Review of Canada

5 October 2017



**GROOTS Canada**



**Temiskaming Native Women's Group**



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<sup>1</sup> Submitted by Canada Without Poverty, Alternatives North, BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, the Canadian Poverty Institute, Downtown Mission of Windsor, Fredericton's Community Action Group on Homelessness, Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS Canada), Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, the Temiskaming Native Women's Group, and Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition

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## I. Introduction

Canada Without Poverty (CWP), along with the above listed partners submits this brief to the Human Rights Council on the Occasion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Canada. Please find attached a description of the organizations participating in this joint submission.

## II. Overview of Poverty in Canada

Considering the significant wealth and resources of the State Party, a disproportionate number of people in Canada are living in poverty: individuals who are deprived of resources, means, and choices necessary to provide an adequate standard of living and enable participation in community life. **In total, 1 in 7 or 4.8 million people in Canada live in poverty, including 1.2 million children.**<sup>1</sup>

### 1) Marginalized groups disproportionately experience poverty in Canada.

1. **Indigenous peoples.** A shocking **1 in 4 Indigenous peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) or 25% are living in poverty<sup>2</sup> and 40% of Canada’s Indigenous children live in poverty.**<sup>3</sup>
2. **Persons with disabilities.** 25% of people living in low-income households are people with disabilities.<sup>4</sup> Close to **15% of people with disabilities** are living in poverty, **59% of whom are women.**<sup>5</sup>

3. **Single mothers. 21% of all single mothers are low income compared to just 5.5% of married couples.**<sup>6</sup>
4. **Women.** Women are also more likely to be precariously employed, engaged in part-time work and with fewer earnings than men. In 2009 women earned 78% of what men earned, in 2010 it was 77.6% and in 2011 it was 76.7%.<sup>7</sup> The wage gap is even greater for some groups of women. Indigenous women earn 10% less than Indigenous men (working full time) and 26% less than non-Indigenous men.<sup>8</sup> Women (and children) are also more likely to experience family violence, generating and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.
5. **Racialized communities.** In two of Canada's largest cities, far more than half of all persons living in poverty were from racialized groups: 58% in Vancouver; and 62% in Toronto. Across the country, 1 in 5 racialized families live in poverty compared to 1 in 20 non-racialized families.<sup>9</sup>

**2) United Nations authorities have described housing and homelessness in Canada as a "national emergency".<sup>10</sup>**

6. The inadequate housing and homelessness crisis remains a persistent and serious concern for United Nations Special Rapporteurs<sup>11</sup> as well as United Nations treaty bodies.<sup>12</sup>
7. The Government of Canada has reported to United Nations treaty bodies that 150,000 people are homeless each year, a figure which only covers those using emergency shelters, thereby excluding the many homeless individuals who do not resort to shelters for a number of reasons, including lack of available spaces. **Other estimates suggest over 235,000 people are homeless annually, which includes those in shelters and in temporary housing (e.g.: motels).**<sup>13</sup> Neither figure includes the 'hidden homeless', thousands of individuals (particularly women and youth) and families doubled up with friends, family, or neighbours.
8. In Canada's Northern territories, a disproportionate number of individuals, particularly Indigenous persons, are doubled up in homes needing significant repair. **31% of Canada's Inuit population lives in overcrowded housing.**<sup>14</sup> This is due in large part to the disinvestment in new affordable housing projects and social housing by the Federal government.
9. **One-fifth of all households** in Canada experience **extreme housing unaffordability**<sup>15</sup> issues. Past federal housing policy has primarily focused on support for home ownership while only 6.5% of homeowners are housing insecure, compared to 26.4% of renter households who experience housing insecurity.<sup>16</sup> In Canada, housing is primarily viewed as a commodity rather than a human right. **Real estate speculation**

**and the drive for investment has fuelled a housing market that is impossible for low-income renters**, particularly in urban centres like Metro Vancouver where the vacancy rate is 0.7%.<sup>17</sup>

10. In communities across the country, subnational governments have created laws and bylaws which fine or criminalize the activities of people who are participating in life-sustaining activities. For example, the Safe Streets Act<sup>18</sup> of Ontario allows municipal officials to issue tickets to those who are panhandling, squeegeeing or exercising other forms of solicitation. When living in poverty, these activities are essential to survival. In Hamilton, Ontario, one individual was ticketed 250 times under the Safe Streets Act.<sup>19</sup> Municipalities have been left to develop and interpret policies addressing homelessness without any human rights guidance or guidelines, leading to substantial violations of rights.

**3) The State Party's current approach to food insecurity is based on short-term, emergency solutions.**

11. Among the 9 provinces and territories who measured levels of food insecurity in 2014, **12% of households experienced some level of food insecurity in the previous 12 months**. This statistic represents 3.2 million individuals, including 1 million children under the age of 18.<sup>20</sup>
12. Short-term solutions include the establishment of food banks, which often denies the dignity of the user and inadequately meets the need for nutritional, safe, and culturally appropriate food. **Over 850,000 people across Canada have no choice but to use food banks each month in order to make ends meet. More than one-third of those helped by a food bank are children.**<sup>21</sup>
13. **Each Northern Territory faces unique challenges, and the experience of food insecurity varies in each region of the territories. Nunavut has the highest food costs in the country with residents paying two times the amount on food compared to the rest of the country.**<sup>22</sup> Nunavut is also home to the highest number of households in Canada that are food insecure at 46.8%, with 19.3% experiencing severe food insecurity.<sup>23</sup> **As noted in the 2012 recommendations of Olivier De Schutter, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food**, the current Nutrition North program, created to address these high levels of food insecurity, is not achieving its desired outcomes as it is costly, only benefits some communities, and does not ensure the retail subsidy is passed on to the consumer.<sup>24</sup>

**4) Social assistance income rates continue to fall well below any measure of poverty used in Canada.**

14. Most social assistance recipients are worse off than recipients were in previous decades because welfare incomes have not been adjusted for inflation. In many cases, rates are 20% lower than in the past.<sup>25</sup> For example, in **Toronto, Ontario**, a single person receives a mere \$721 per month.<sup>26</sup> Each month recipients are expected to find adequate shelter with a meager \$384, while the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Toronto is three times that, at \$1,560.<sup>27</sup>
15. Social assistance rates across the country are so woefully inadequate for single-parent families that **only in Newfoundland and Labrador can these families receive assistance that is sufficient to bring them above the poverty line. All other social assistance rates across the country for lone-parent mothers ensure a life of abject poverty.**<sup>28</sup>
16. In welfare programs across the country, including those intended for persons with disabilities, rules penalize individuals who attempt to work themselves out of poverty or otherwise reduce living costs (for example taking in roommates or engaging in spousal relationships). Individuals who engage in these cost-saving activities to cover the small amount of income they receive from social assistance benefits are penalized by reductions in payments or are excluded from the program.

**5) In Canada, employment does not result in economic security and social well-being.**

17. Canada's labour market has changed dramatically. Most jobs being created in Canada are low-paying, part-time, temporary, or contract and without long term benefits. Barely half of those working today are in permanent, full-time positions that provide benefits and a degree of employment security. For example, **temporary jobs, which do not provide security or benefits, have increased more than four times the rate of permanent jobs since the 2008 recession.**<sup>29</sup> **Migrant workers**, often in the agricultural sector, face substantial barriers as employment is often characterized by inadequate wages, a lack of labour rights and unsafe work conditions.<sup>30</sup>
18. The recent decline in the unemployment rate is largely the result of young workers ending their search for work, not the result of those unemployed workers finding jobs. Young persons in particular face diminished job security, growth of temporary work, rising costs of education and record debt levels. **Young people face a rate of unemployment at 11.7% – nearly twice the national average of 6.5%.**<sup>31</sup>

**6) There is a significant interconnection between inadequate access to childcare and poverty – particularly for women in Canada.**

19. Canada's public support for young children and their families is the weakest among the world's rich countries at only 0.25%<sup>32</sup> of GDP – about one-third the OECD average (0.7%).<sup>33</sup> With the exception of Québec's \$7 per day childcare program, the rest of the country lags behind in ensuring accessible and affordable childcare spaces. The cost of childcare can be as much, or more than housing costs. For example, in the city of Toronto infant care can be \$1,649 per month.<sup>34</sup>

**7) Canada's public healthcare system is regarded worldwide as a model for healthcare, however, the system has significant gaps.**

20. While services in the doctor's office and in hospital are covered, Canada's national program, Medicare, only covers 70% of total healthcare costs, with the rest covered by private insurance and out of pocket spending. There are significant discrepancies in access to healthcare treatments between rural, remote, and urban centres. Drug, dental, and eye care, are not available under Canada's Medicare program. Drug costs are also not covered under Canada's healthcare system, including drugs prescribed for serious illnesses. **One in ten Canadians cannot afford prescription medications.**<sup>35</sup> For those living in poverty, these out-of-pocket expenses can become a barrier to accessing healthcare.

21. There are serious barriers to accessing dental healthcare. Canada's national system of health insurance (Medicare) does not include dental care.<sup>36</sup> Dental health significantly contributes to overall health as cavities and gum disease contribute to serious conditions, particularly for pregnant women.<sup>37</sup> **Ninety-five percent of dental care is paid out-of-pocket or through private dental insurance and is delivered in private dental offices.** The remaining 5% is covered through a combination of public health programs offered federally and provincially, targeting the needs of specific populations. Many are unable to access necessary dental services, including uninsured adults and seniors. Internationally, Canada is among the lowest funders of public dental healthcare programs.<sup>38</sup>

22. **Denial of health care also occurs for those with undocumented immigration status** who are ineligible for provincial healthcare insurance and have no means to pay for care themselves.

### **III. Financial capacity and federal jurisdiction on poverty**

23. **Federal government social spending is at its lowest level since 1949.**<sup>39</sup> Every year between 1950 and 2007, federal government expenditures exceeded 15% of GDP.<sup>40</sup> Federal program spending for 2017 is at 14.6% of GDP.<sup>41</sup> If Canada were to inch towards a similar percentage of GDP in government spending as nine years ago, even by a single percentage point (15.6%), this would make available \$21.6 billion. For example, with the additional \$21.6 billion, Canada could invest in: on-reserve housing

(\$1 billion), on-reserve drinking water (\$0.5 billion), on-reserve schools (\$2 billion), improvements to health care (\$5 billion), national pharmacare (\$4 billion), improvements to homecare (\$3 billion), a national housing and homelessness strategy (\$3 billion), a national poverty strategy (\$2.6 billion) and a violence against women strategy (\$0.5 billion).

24. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, **in Canada's overall tax system, the top 1% pays a lower share of their income in tax than the poorest 10%.**<sup>42</sup> Areas of taxation which benefit the wealthy are taxed at lower rates. For example, capital gains are taxed at half the rate of employment income.
25. Historically, Canada had cost-sharing programs with subnational governments which required equal buy-in from all levels of government, but in recent years the federal government has pulled back in sharing these costs. Additionally, in comparison to subnational governments (i.e. provinces and territories), the federal government's debt load is low. While subnational governments bear a significant obligation to address socio-economic disadvantage, they are limited by their ability to take on debt load.
26. A recent report from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities highlights the barriers to provision of services for municipalities based on the limited fiscal transfers received from higher levels of government. **Municipalities, who are often left responsible for the implementation of socio-economic rights, only receive about 20% of their budget requirements from fiscal transfers.** This is in comparison to other wealthy countries where fiscal transfers fulfill 70% to 80% of their municipal budget.<sup>43</sup>

#### **IV. What the UN Human Rights Council recommended to Canada in its Second UPR and Canada's Response**

27. One of the most critical recommendations made by the HRC in 2013 was to **develop national strategies on poverty and housing** (Russian Federation, Cuba, Egypt, Sri Lanka, Rec #124). Canada **accepted the recommendation in part**, shifting the responsibility on to subnational governments by stating that "poverty, strategies and action plans have been adopted by most PTs." In 2009, at the first UPR, the Russian Federation made a similar recommendation to develop a national strategy to eliminate poverty (Rec #17), which was **not accepted by Canada** on the basis that it was not within the jurisdiction of the federal government.
28. In 2009, members of the HRC recommended that Canada "[i]ntegrate economic social and cultural rights in its poverty reduction strategies in a way that can benefit the

most vulnerable groups in society” (Cuba, Rec #45). Canada accepted this recommendation in part.

29. Canada accepted in part the 2009 recommendation regarding full implementation of the ICESCR, including that Canada “[c]reate or reinforce a transparent, effective and accountable system that includes all levels of the government and representative of the civil society” (Portugal, Rec #14).
30. Canada accepted in part the recommendation in 2013 to “elaborate a **national plan on food security with a view to the realization of the universal human right to food**” (Brazil, Rec #125) on the position that it “remains committed to existing FPT policies and programs but does not accept the specific proposal to develop a national plan on food security.”
31. Canada did not accept the recommendation made in 2013 to “[r]atify the Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Economic Social and Cultural Rights” (Costa Rica, France, Portugal, Spain, Rec #6) stating that “Canada is a party to seven of the core international human rights treaties and efforts are focused on the implementation of these treaties.” Without ratification of the optional protocol or any other review mechanism for economic, social, and cultural rights, it is nearly impossible to ascertain by what means those who are marginalized can hold the government to account for economic, social, and cultural rights. This recommendation was also reflected in the first UPR (Mexico, Egypt, Rec #1).
32. Canada accepted recommendations made by members of the HRC in 2013 on economic and social rights in relation to employment, health, and housing for Indigenous persons (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) (Cuba, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Namibia, Rec #67-70, 74). In 2009, similar recommendations were made by members of the HRC (Indonesia, Rec #46).
33. Members of the HRC made additional recommendations in 2013 to “[f]urther **enhance its efforts in social protection and security for people living in poverty**, such as considering formulating the necessary poverty alleviation and homelessness strategies” (Malaysia, Rec #126). Canada accepted this recommendation.

## **V. What has the Government of Canada done since UPR2 to address poverty and homelessness in Canada?**

### **1) Progress towards implementation of recommendations**

34. **We are encouraged by the government's efforts, in particular the Minister of Children, Families and Social Development to create a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy and National Housing Strategy. Some indication has been made by the Government that the National Housing Strategy will employ a human rights framework, but no firm commitment in this regard has been made and no specifics have been provided. The Government has yet to indicate whether the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy will be based in human rights.**
35. Twelve of thirteen of Canada's provinces and territories have taken steps toward the creation of regional poverty reduction strategies. We are encouraged by the government of British Columbia's announcement in August 2017 that they will begin consultations to construct a provincial poverty strategy.<sup>44</sup> UN bodies, including the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have advised Canada, State Parties must, among other elements, ensure that poverty elimination strategies are based in human rights and include claiming mechanisms for stakeholders.<sup>45</sup> None of the existing poverty strategies at the provincial or territorial level are based in human rights or have established a rights-claiming mechanism.
36. **Canada's decision to reinstate the mandatory long form Statistics Canada census** is a significant step towards the realization of human rights obligations. The reinstatement of this important survey will have longstanding effects on civil society's ability to measure poverty in the country. However, there remain concerns among civil society that have been echoed by treaty bodies, including the 2017 concluding observations by that Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, that disaggregated, reliable and comprehensive statistical data on poverty remains absent.<sup>46</sup>
37. **Since 2013, there has been an upward trend by subnational governments to increase minimum wage.** In Ontario and Alberta, some steps have been taken by provincial governments to set minimum wage at \$15 per hour. We are encouraged by these efforts, however, rates across the country still fall below what is needed to maintain an adequate standard of living.
38. In 2016, the Government of Canada introduced an **increase to the Canada Child Benefit (CCB)**, a measure intended to help families and children experiencing poverty. Families earning a net income of under \$30,000 will receive \$6,400 for children under 6 and \$5,400 for children under 18. Civil society organizations have raised some concerns with the benefit, including that no conditions have been placed on the CCB leaving the benefit vulnerable to retrogressive measures by subnational governments. Additionally, the benefit can only be claimed by filing taxes, resulting in thousands of dollars unclaimed, especially by First Nations individuals living in poverty, who may be reluctant to file taxes based on a long history of colonialism and mistrust of government.<sup>47</sup>

39. **In the 2016 federal budget, federal government enhanced the Northern Living Allowance by 33%, an income deduction that helps reduce the amount of income tax paid by northerners in an effort to address the high cost of living in the territories.** In reality, this deduction favours high-income households where one individual is a high-earner as they are able to claim an extra \$11 per day through the Additional Residency Amount.

## 2) Actions that remain to be taken for implementation

40. **People in Canada face increasing barriers to exercising economic and social rights. It is nearly impossible to ascertain by what means and mechanisms those who are marginalized can hold the government to account for rights protected under the ICESCR.** For example, in a recent Ontario Court of Appeal decision, *Tanudjaja v. Attorney General of Canada*<sup>48</sup>, the court agreed with the Attorneys General of Canada and Ontario that people living in poverty should be denied the ability to claim their right to housing in court, even where their housing circumstances violate other enumerated Charter rights, like the right to life or to equality. Effectively, the government of Canada and Ontario argued and the court agreed that Charter remedies for violations of socio-economic rights for the most disadvantaged people in the country should be prohibited. **Additionally, Canada does not recognize discrimination on the basis of social condition (e.g. socio-economic disadvantage) in the Canadian Human Rights Act.**
41. In December 2016, the Government of Canada announced that they were taking steps towards acceding to the **Optional Protocol of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. However, no further progress has been made public since this announcement. **Canada has not indicated a similar interest in ratification of the Optional Protocol for the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.**
42. In recent years, there have been few significant improvements to consultations with Indigenous peoples and organizations and civil society groups, nor any attempt to increase the transparency, coordination or accountability of Canada's approach to implementation. **While the government has launched consultations on a number of policy issues, civil society is often not compensated for its participation nor are results from these meetings always made public to ensure accountability for recommendations.** For Indigenous communities, there has been significant criticism that the government's efforts to address socio-economic disadvantage have been tokenistic rather than geared towards concrete remedies for rights violations.
43. **We are deeply concerned about discriminatory provisions within the Income Tax Act of Canada (ITA) which limit freedom of expression for people living in poverty**<sup>49</sup> and

**enforce the antiquated perception that poverty is a result of personal failure rather than systems and laws which perpetuate discrimination and stigma of persons in poverty.** CWP and other charitable organizations with the objective of the relief of poverty face constant fear about speaking publicly against policies and legislation which create or exacerbate poverty as a result of Section 149.1(6.2) of the ITA which effectively limits free speech where that speech suggests governments should change laws, policies or programs. When CWP seeks to collaborate with fellow organizations who share a common purpose of relieving poverty, it is made clear by many involved that they feel constrained to speak publicly about their concerns regarding government policies and legislation for fear of being audited, losing their charitable status in accordance with Section 149.1 (6.2), and having to close down operations for lack of funding. **In 2015, the Human Rights Committee voiced serious concern over this provision in concluding observations to Canada, and in the same year, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders directed a communication to Canada raising similar concerns.**

44. In January 2016, we were encouraged by the federal government's announcement that the CRA political audits would be rolled back.<sup>50</sup> However, no announcements have been made on whether the root cause of the advocacy chill, section 149.1(6.2), will be reviewed to reflect a modern understanding of the relief of poverty and Canada's obligations under international human rights law.
45. **The Government has yet to reinstate the National Council of Welfare.** Since 1962, the National Council of Welfare (NCW) was a government created arm's length agency unique in its research collection and reporting, along with the statutory authority to create opportunities for the poor to participate in the national decision-making process.<sup>51</sup> The loss of important information gathering has left a gap in the monitoring of Canada's rights obligations.
46. **Canada's system of social benefits and financial entitlements is increasingly delivered through the federal tax system.** For example, the Canada Child Benefit, Working Income Tax Benefit and Guaranteed Income Supplement are among more than sixty programs that are only available for those who file taxes. Low awareness, the complexity of tax-filing online and other barriers – including language – prevent access to critical supports. It is estimated that more than one billion dollars for these supports goes unclaimed to those who are otherwise entitled.<sup>52</sup>
47. **Critical steps remain to be taken by governments to protect those living in poverty from predatory lending companies.** Nearly two million Canadians use payday loans annually.<sup>53</sup> Payday loan outlets provide short-term loans to those who are often financially vulnerable and unable to access traditional financial institutions. While the Criminal Code of Canada permits provincial governments to regulate these types of

loans, interest rates can often reach 500% annually when amortized. Borrowers often become trapped in a cycle of economic dependence to these lending institutions from which it may take months or years to break free. **While Québec has placed restrictions on the payday loan industry, and Ontario and Alberta have recently enacted legislation to limit interest rates, the payday loan industry employs aggressive marketing tactics** and with a value of \$2.2 billion continues to flourish to the detriment of those who are financially vulnerable.<sup>54</sup>

### 3) Retrogressive Measures

48. **In December 2014, Canada removed protections for vulnerable persons to access social assistance benefits.** The national government passed Bill C-43, provisions 172 and 173 of which remove a key national standard, which protected refugees from a requirement that they be residents for a period of time before applying for social assistance.<sup>55</sup>
49. Social assistance rates, already set at woefully inadequate rates, have faced retrogressive cuts since the second UPR. For example, in 2016, the province of Saskatchewan announced cutbacks for the shelter allowance associated with the disability benefit, *SAID*, estimated to affect 2,700 people living with disabilities. In a media interview, one individual reported that he would be living off \$150 a month due to the cuts.<sup>56</sup> In 2017, the Saskatchewan cut \$75 for those with special dietary needs while clawing back benefits from those who have been deemed to have an over-payment often due to fluctuating income and sometimes ministry error. In 2016, the province of Québec introduced Bill 70, which imposes restrictions on individuals from accepting a “suitable” job if one is offered to them. Those affected by the Bill will see a cut in benefits from \$628 to \$404 per month.<sup>57</sup>

## VI. Recommendations

We call on States to make the following recommendations to the Governments of Canada:

50. **THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA URGENTLY RESPOND TO SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF POVERTY BY ENSURING THAT THE CANADIAN POVERTY ELIMINATION STRATEGY, NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGIES AND RELATED SUBNATIONAL STRATEGIES ARE BASED IN HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS INCLUDES REFERENCING INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS AND ENSURING THE INCLUSION OF CLAIMING MECHANISMS FOR RIGHTS-BEARERS.**
51. **THAT THE STATE PARTY RE-BUILD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY BY RE-ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WELFARE, SUPPORTING CIVIL SOCIETY**

**WITH ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO PARTICIPATE IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS ON POVERTY RELATED ISSUES, AND REVISING SECTION 149.1(6.2) OF THE INCOME TAX ACT TO ENSURE THAT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS THAT PROMOTE THE RELIEF OF POVERTY IN CANADA ARE NOT RESTRICTED IN THEIR FREE SPEECH AND CAN PROMOTE CHANGES TO LAW OR POLICY TO RELIEVE AND END POVERTY IN CANADA.**

**52. THAT THE STATE PARTY TAKE STEPS TO ADDRESS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISPARITIES AMONG MARGINALIZED GROUPS INCLUDING:**

- a. THE IMMEDIATE REVIEW AND REPEAL OF LEGISLATION CRIMINALIZING LIFE-SUSTAINING ACTIVITIES AS A RESULT OF HOMELESSNESS, INCLUDING THE ONTARIO SAFE STREETS ACT AND OTHER MUNICIPAL BYLAWS.**
- b. TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD, WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SEVERE RATES OF FOOD INSECURITY IN NORTHERN CANADA.**
- c. IMMEDIATELY INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES; EARMARK SUFFICIENT FUNDS SPECIFICALLY FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE; AND DESIGNATE THAT TRANSFER PAYMENTS BE CONDITIONAL ON PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES SETTING THEIR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES AT LEVELS THAT ARE ADEQUATE. AS WELL REINSTATE THE NATIONAL STANDARD PROTECTING REFUGEES FROM A MINIMUM RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT BEFORE RECEIVING WELFARE BENEFITS.**
- d. SET NATIONAL WAGE STANDARDS AND ENCOURAGE SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENTS (PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES) TO ENSURE MINIMUM WAGES ARE REGULATED SO THAT WORKERS CAN MAKE A “DECENT LIVING”. THE STATE PARTY MUST ALSO ESTABLISH JOB CREATION PROGRAMS TO ENSURE THAT NEW JOBS CREATED ARE STABLE, FULL-TIME JOBS WITH SOCIAL BENEFITS AND THAT PAY A LIVING WAGE. TO ADDRESS THE PAY GAP EXPERIENCED BY MARGINALIZED GROUPS, CANADA MUST ENSURE EFFECTIVE, PROACTIVE PAY EQUITY LEGISLATION IS IN PLACE.**
- e. DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BASED IN HUMAN RIGHTS, FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A HIGH-QUALITY, UNIVERSAL, PUBLICLY-FUNDED AND MANAGED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE PROGRAM.**
- f. DEVELOP A NEW 10-YEAR HEALTH ACCORD FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGH-QUALITY, UNIVERSAL, CULTURALLY-APPROPRIATE, PUBLICLY-FUNDED AND MANAGED HEALTH PROMOTION, PREVENTION, AND ACUTE CARE**

**SERVICES. THIS INCLUDES A NATIONAL PHARMACARE PROGRAM AND DENTAL CARE STRATEGY.**

- 53. THAT THE STATE PARTY PROMOTE RESPECT FOR ALL HUMAN RIGHTS AND ENSURE ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE REMEDIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF RIGHTS. THIS INCLUDES LAUNCHING A PROCESS OF LAW REFORM TO ESTABLISH A FORMAL MECHANISM FOR TRANSPARENT, EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS. CANADA MUST ALSO RATIFY THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS TO THE ICESCR AND THE CRPD.**

## **VII. Endorsements**

Please find enclosed a list of organizations who have endorsed this submission.

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- <sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. September 2017, "Household income in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census", available here: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170913/dq170913a-eng.htm?HPA=1>
- <sup>2</sup> Collin, Chantal, and Hillary Jensen (2009), "A Statistical Profile of Poverty in Canada", *Library of Parliament*, p.17.
- <sup>3</sup> CCPA (2013) "40% of indigenous children in Canada live in poverty: study," available here: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/newsroom/news-releases/40-indigenous-children-canada-live-poverty-study>
- <sup>4</sup> DAWN-RAFH, "Women with Disabilities and Poverty", available here: <http://www.dawnCanada.net/issues/issues/fact-sheets-2/poverty/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Council of Canadians with Disabilities, available here: <http://www.ccdonline.ca/en/socialpolicy/poverty-citizenship/demographic-profile/poverty-disability-canada>
- <sup>6</sup> Williams, Cara (2010), "Women in Canada, A Gender-based Statistical Report. Economic Well-being", Statistics Canada p.9.
- <sup>7</sup> "CAN-SIM Table 282-0072: Labour force survey estimates (LFS), wages of employees by type of work, North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), sex and age group, annual." Ottawa: Statistics Canada.
- <sup>8</sup> Kate McIntruff, February 2016. Behind the Numbers "All your wage gap questions answered" Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, available here: <http://behindthenumbers.ca/2015/02/26/all-your-wage-gap-questions-answered/>
- <sup>9</sup> Block and Galabuzi (2010).
- <sup>10</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Review of Canada 1996, 2008 and UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Mission Report on Canada, 2009.
- <sup>11</sup> Miloon Kothari, "Mission to Canada 9-22 October 2007," available here: <http://www.apnql-afnql.com/en/dossiers/img/logement/Housing-Interim-observations-2007-10-22-en.pdf>
- <sup>12</sup> CESCR Concluding Observations (1998,2006, 2016); CEDAW Concluding Observations (2008, 2016); CRPD Concluding Observations (2017); CERD Concluding Observations (2012, 2017); HRC Concluding Observations (2005); CRC Concluding Observations (2003)
- <sup>13</sup> Stephen Gaetz, Erin Dej, Tim Richter, & Melanie Redman, The State of Homelessness in Canada 2016. available here: [http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC16\\_final\\_20Oct2016.pdf](http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/SOHC16_final_20Oct2016.pdf)
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**Annex 1 to Canada Without Poverty and Partners' Joint Submission to the Human Rights Council  
on the Occasion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Universal Periodic Review of Canada**

**Description of Organizations**

***Canada Without Poverty, Ottawa, Ontario***

Founded in 1971 and operating as a leading national anti-poverty organization, CWP has represented low-income populations in Canada for over 40 years. Many of CWP's members are living in poverty and our Board of Directors is comprised of people with direct, personal experience of poverty, both past and present. With a pan-Canadian reach, CWP is often called upon by parliamentary committees, civil society, and the media to speak about poverty as it relates to various stages of the life-cycle and vulnerable demographic groups. In 1993, under our former name, the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO), CWP was the first NGO to undertake an oral presentation before a UN treaty body. Since that time, CWP has participated in many United Nations reviews including several treaty body reviews and the most recent Universal Periodic Review of Canada.

***Alternatives North, Yellowknife, the Northwest Territories***

Alternatives North is a coalition of church, labour, environmental, women and anti-poverty groups and individuals that works for social, economic and environmental justice.

***BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, Vancouver, British Columbia***

The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition is a coalition of over 70 Coalition Members and over 400 supporting organizations that have joined the call for a bold and comprehensive poverty reduction plan from the government of British Columbia that would include legislated targets and timelines to significantly reduce poverty, inequality and homelessness.

***The Canadian Poverty Institute, Calgary, Alberta***

The Canadian Poverty Institute is a national institute based at Ambrose University that is dedicated to research and teaching on the root causes of poverty in order to inform policy and practice leading to the eradication of poverty in Canada.

***The Downtown Mission of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario***

The Downtown Mission (founded in 1972), exists as a place of sanctuary. In response to the mandate of the Gospel, through outreach we provide: food for the body, nurture for the spirit, shelter for the homeless, advocacy for the impoverished, and opportunity for human growth. Its vision is to be a self-directed sustainable charitable social service organization grounded in the Christian faith, proactively addressing and meeting the needs of the homeless and disadvantaged of the Windsor area, well recognized and supported by the community.

### ***Fredericton's Community Action Group on Homelessness, Fredericton, New Brunswick***

Fredericton's Community Action Group on Homelessness is a joint initiative of over 30 non-profit organizations, government representatives and community leaders working together to end persistent, long-term homelessness in Fredericton.

### ***Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS Canada)***

GROOTS Canada is a network of women engaged in community organizing, community economic development, housing issues and leadership development of women directly affected by poverty and oppression. GROOTS Canada was very active in the process leading up to the 1996 Habitat II Istanbul and in the follow-up. Several members of GROOTS Canada attended both Habitat 2 and Habitat +5, five years later in New York. We continue to work on women and housing issues, community leader development and economic development.

### ***The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction***

The Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction works to build understanding about the need to invest in poverty reduction to create a healthier, inclusive and more prosperous Hamilton. We work locally, provincially and nationally on policy and systems-level change to achieve long-term solutions to poverty. Our members come from sectors across the community and more than half are individuals with the lived experience of poverty or social exclusion.

### ***The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network, Niagara Region, Ontario***

The Niagara Poverty Reduction Network (NPRN) is a regional collective of over 30 members from the health, social, education, and business sectors, along with individuals who currently live in poverty. NPRN is working to wipe out poverty in Niagara through public information, collaboration, and advocacy to address poverty's root causes.

### ***The Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry, Regina, Saskatchewan***

The Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry is a social justice ministry of the Wascana Presbytery of the United Church of Canada. Our work is conducted in three ways; we provide individual advocacy for people on social assistance in Saskatchewan, provide public education on poverty issues, and we challenge systemic discrimination and promote policies to eradicate poverty.

### ***The Temiskaming Native Women's Group***

### ***The Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Whitehorse, the Yukon***

For over 20 years, the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition (YAPC) has been facilitating the elimination of poverty through awareness, advocacy and action. With a membership of over 400 individuals and organizations they: build strategies and partnerships to reduce poverty in Yukon; help provide a voice for Yukoners living in poverty; coordinate actions and information campaigns on poverty; and advocate for systems change to support individuals and organizations.

***Annex 2 to Canada Without Poverty and Partners' Joint Submission to the Human Rights Council  
on the Occasion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Universal Periodic Review of Canada***

**List of Organizations who endorse the Joint Submission**

Canadian Association of Social Workers  
The Canadian Child Care Federation  
Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA)  
The Childcare Resource and Research Unit  
The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada  
Citizens for Public Justice  
Collectif pour un Québec sans pauvreté  
Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU)  
MacKillop Centre for Social Justice  
Ottawa Poverty Reduction Network  
The PEI Coalition for a Poverty Eradication Strategy  
The United Church of Canada