

**News release**

**For immediate publication**

**February 18, 2010**

**Minister Kelly Lamrock is going against the decision of the Poverty Reduction Plan and creating a two-tier system for the Household Income Policy - Linda McCaustlin.**

“This new Household Income policy has been something the Common Front for Social Justice had been advocating for years. On the other hand, it does not go far enough.” stated Ms. Linda McCaustlin, co-chair of the Common Front for Social Justice

The new version of the policy is only applying to people who were on social assistance before January 1, 2010. All New Brunswick citizens who are forced to apply for social assistance after January 1, 2010 will still fall under the old version of the Household Income Policy.

"It means that if I am applying for social assistance January 2, 2010 and my sister wants to live with me I will still be considered an economic unit and both of our incomes will be combined to determine how much I will be receiving" says Ms. McCaustlin.

“This is creating a two-tier system for citizens falling under this policy” continues Ms McCaustlin.

Minister Kelly Lamrock is saying this is an improved version of the commitment made by the provincial government in its Poverty Reduction Plan. We have a real difficulty in seeing where the improvements are.

The Poverty Reduction Plan stated: *"The household income policy will only be applied to social assistance recipients who are in spousal relationship"*. This commitment made and agreed by everyone at the Final Forum chaired by Premier Shawn Graham was clear. There would be a real change to the policy so that everyone, except those in spousal relationship, would not have their income combine. Now Minister Lamrock has change this promise and has reduce it to an new improved version which gives a lot less than what everyone understood it would do.

“The Common Front considers that this is a step backward from the statement written in the Plan, and not a step forward” concludes Ms. McCaustlin.

-30-

**For information:**

Linda McCaustlin - 855-7046 or John Gagnon - 548-9776 or 545-0651

Jean-Claude Basque - 389-1578

The Common Front for Social Justice is the largest democratic and popular organization in New Brunswick with close to 75,000 members. The Common Front brings together individuals, local, regional and provincial organizations to fight against poverty.