

News release

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A missed opportunity

“The new five-year plan to reduce poverty is not proposing any new bold actions to reduce poverty and, in that regard, it is a missed opportunity. The close to one in eight citizens living in poverty will not find, in this new five-year plan, too much to rejoice about,” states Linda McCaustlin, co-chair of the Common Front for Social Justice.

“The lack of concrete measurable actions, without any timeline, is a real problem. How is government, people living in poverty or community organizations going to be able to measure the success or non-success of these priority actions if there are no dates attached to them,” adds Ms McCaustlin.

The new five-year plan is proposing 28 priority actions but, when we read closely, most of these actions are not concrete and have no timeline for their execution and no dates for implementation.

In the first Poverty Reduction Plan, a lot of the proposed actions had dates attached to them. For example: introduction of vision and dental care for children in low-income families by April 2011.

According to Ms. McCaustlin: “Another very disturbing aspect of the new five-year plan is the absence of any proposals for the close to 40,000 citizens living on social assistance. How can we have a new five-year Poverty Reduction Plan and nothing for the people living in poverty day in and day out. It is not understandable.”

“ We are putting a lot of emphasis on the community sector and on citizens in the fight to reduce poverty in this plan, but what about the responsibility of government and the private sector? Are we not trying to shift the responsibility of poverty reduction from government to the community sector, and are the authors of the new five-year plan saying that they don’t believe the private sector has any responsibility in reducing poverty?” concludes Ms. McCaustlin.

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Note:

There are 80,000 to 100,000 citizens living in poverty in the province
The majority of them are low-income workers, those on welfare and seniors with the
Guaranteed Income Supplement.

The number has not really decrease since 2009

We have a poverty reduction plan since 2009-2010 but it does not seems that the level
of poverty has decrease.

We know that in 2008-2009 there was a monthly average of 39,036 on social assistance
and in March 2014, there was again 39,200 on social assistance.

The number of social assistance recipients going to food banks has increase by 10%
between 2008 and 2013 ,so we can say their situation has deteriorated.

The new poverty reducton plan does not talk about them.

Minimum wage workers had their salary frozen at \$10.00 an hour even if the cost of
living has gone up.

Rod Hill, an economist at UNB, estimated that they would need \$10.30 this years just to
keep up. And then it should be indexed to the cost of living.

The new poverty plan says we need to include the cost of living to the Minimum wage
but does not say that it should be increase right now.

The Common Front for Social Justice is one of the largest democratic and popular
organizations in New Brunswick, with close to 75,000 group and individual members.
The Common Front brings together individuals as well as local, regional and provincial
organizations to work towards the eradication of poverty.