

Media Release

September 7th, 2007

Ontario's political leaders are being challenged to commit to a Poverty Reduction Plan as the first order of business for the next provincial government.

25 in 5: Network for Poverty Reduction is calling on each party to commit to a plan to reduce Ontario's poverty rate by 25% in the next five years. The Network is issuing an open letter to the leaders of Ontario's political parties on Friday, September 7, 2007 from the offices of the Family Service Association (FSA) in Toronto.

"We can't win the war on poverty without a plan," said Sri-Guggan Sri Skanda-Rajah, board member of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants. "We need to hear about goals and timelines. Good intentions are not enough. What Ontario needs is a clear plan to reduce poverty in this province."

Margaret Hancock, Executive Director of FSA Toronto, said the goal of the 25 in 5 Network is simple. "We are proposing a target that we believe is realistic and achievable. Other jurisdictions are taking leadership in the area of poverty reduction, and it is time for our provincial government to make a firm commitment to poverty reduction."

In Ontario today, 1.3 million people live in poverty, with many more living in fear of being one paycheque away from poverty. Despite strong economic growth, the income gap between rich and poor continues to grow. Ultimately, poverty affects everyone. However, poverty rates are dramatically higher for racialized groups and new immigrants, lone-parent families, people with work-limiting disabilities and Aboriginal peoples.

Councillor Joe Mihevc, Chair of the City of Toronto's Community Development and Recreation Committee, highlighted the importance of provincial leadership in the fight to reduce poverty. "This is about building communities where there is opportunity and a better quality of life for all children, youth and adults."

For more information, visit the web site of the Community and Social Planning Council at www.socialplanning.org or the Income Security Advocacy Centre at www.incomesecurity.org.

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**25 in 5: Network for
Poverty Reduction**

