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Harper Conservatives Ignore Canada's Children

OTTAWA - A new report confirms that the Conservative government of Stephen Harper is turning its back on the plight of hundreds of thousands of children living in poverty, Liberal Social Development Critic Ruby Dhalla said today.

"The report highlights the fact that not all Canadian children benefit from the country's economic prosperity," said Dr. Dhalla. "The federal government could be taking a leadership role in the battle against child poverty, but we have heard nothing from this government.

Dr. Dhalla was commenting on the release today of the 2007 National Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada which shows 788,000 children are living in poverty. The report also found that too many single-income families, as well as too many First Nations and immigrant families are living in poverty.

"This report confirms what we Liberals have been telling the government for months – Canada needs an anti-poverty strategy," Dr. Dhalla said. "In every major category – new Canadians, Aboriginals, and the working poor – the federal government has steps it could take to address the challenge of poverty."

This month, Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion proposed the Liberal 30-50 plan to cut child poverty in half and to lift 30 per cent of poor families out of poverty, all within five years. Campaign 2000 called the Liberal commitments "bold".

"This report card demands action," said Dr. Dhalla. "In fact, for First Nations, for new Canadians and for the working poor, the Liberals have a plan. All the government has to do is listen."

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Contact:

Office of Dr. Ruby Dhalla
613-995-4843