



## National Advisory Council on Poverty

### **Opportunity for All**

*Opportunity for All* commits to the creation of a **National Advisory Council on Poverty** that would be established through legislation and would have a mandate to advise the Government on poverty in Canada, and would report regularly to Parliament and the public on the progress of the strategy. It will also be the body through which ongoing dialogue with the public on the strategy will be coordinated.

The National Advisory Council will be created to reflect the diversity of Canada, so gender, linguistic and regional diversity, and representation of highly vulnerable groups will be considered.

### **Dignity for All**

*Dignity for All* has called for the creation of both internal and external review mechanisms to monitor the progress of the strategy. Further to this goal, *DfA* has also called for the reinstatement of the **National Council of Welfare**, or a similar body, that would have a research and reporting mandate, and could also provide a monitoring function for the progress of the strategy.

To truly embrace a human rights approach, the strategy must require the government to create a genuine accountability mechanism to the 1 in 8 people in Canada living in poverty. This could take the form of an adjudicative body by which individuals can claim their economic and social rights and have access to remedies. The new National Advisory Council could play an important role in monitoring the progress of the strategy, engaging the public in the process, and providing regular evaluation. It would require a strong mandate with adequate power, independence, and funding to play this role. Canada could be a leader in the area of human rights by taking a step further and allowing the council to create an adjudicative body to hear complaints of systemic violations of the rights to food, housing, and an adequate standard of living.

## *What was the National Council of Welfare?*

The National Council of Welfare, established in 1963, was a government-appointed impartial advisory body that, by law, advised the federal government on issues of poverty in Canada. Through the statute that established the NCW, the council also had the authority to create opportunities for people in poverty to participate in national decision-making. In 2012, the government announced the termination of the Council, a move that was decried by anti-poverty community organizations across the country.