

Towards a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy

Presentation to the Vancouver Coastal Regional
Caucus
June 1st, 2017



Context (Ministerial Mandate)

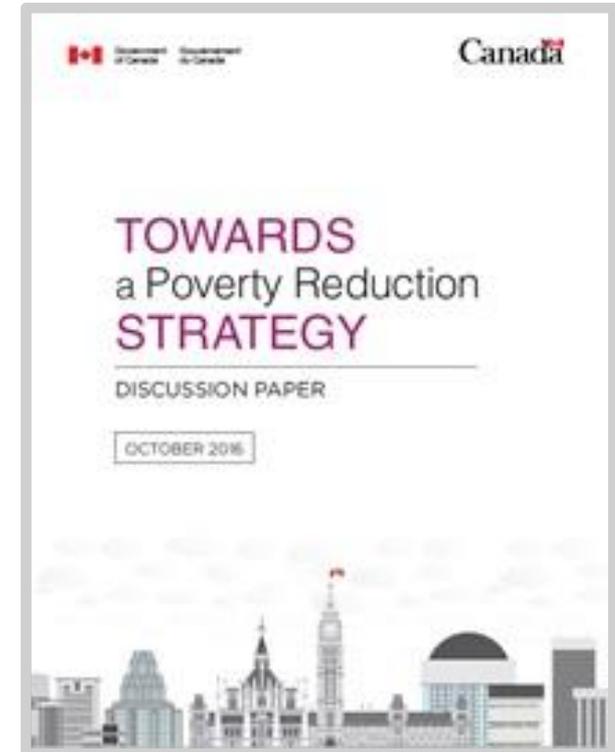
The Minister of Families, Children and Social Development has been mandated to develop a Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy that:

- aligns with, and supports, existing provincial/territorial/municipal strategies (British Columbia does not currently have a poverty reduction strategy);
- sets targets to reduce poverty; and,
- measures and publicly reports on progress.



In October 2016, the stage was set for engaging with Canadians...

- A discussion paper called “Towards a Poverty Reduction Strategy” was released on October 4th.
- The paper is deliberately not prescriptive.
- It explores the various dimensions of poverty in Canada.
- It explores the groups who are more vulnerable to poverty.



Diagnostic – Who is “poor” in Canada?

- While poverty goes beyond inadequate income, data on low income does provide us with some important information.
- About three million Canadians live in low income – 9% of Canada’s population.¹ While the situation is short-term for some, for others it can last a long time due to the multiple barriers they face (e.g., low levels of education, disability, multi-generational barriers).
- There are certain groups more vulnerable to low income:
 - unattached individuals aged 45-64 (30%);
 - single-parent households (24%);
 - people with disabilities (23%);
 - recent immigrants² (20%); and,
 - Indigenous people (off-reserve) (19%).
- Low-income data for First Nations reserves and the Territories is not published on an annual basis by Statistics Canada. However, evidence suggests that the poverty rate on-reserve and for Inuit overall is higher than that for Indigenous people living off-reserve.

1. Statistics based on after-tax Low Income Cut-offs or LICOs, the most widely used measure of low income, with data available from 1976 to 2014.

2. Recent immigrants refers to those who have lived in Canada for less than 10 years.



Connection between Health and Poverty

- Poverty and health are closely connected.
- Living in poverty affects overall health due to challenges including food insecurity and poor living conditions.
- Poverty in Canada is associated with shorter life expectancy and higher rates of chronic diseases, certain cancers, stress & mental health problems.
- Poverty also affects an individual's ability to access health care through visits to the doctor's office, walk-in clinic or hospital emergency room to address both physical and mental health issues.
- Among the groups more likely to be living in low income, Indigenous people were more likely to have unmet health care needs.



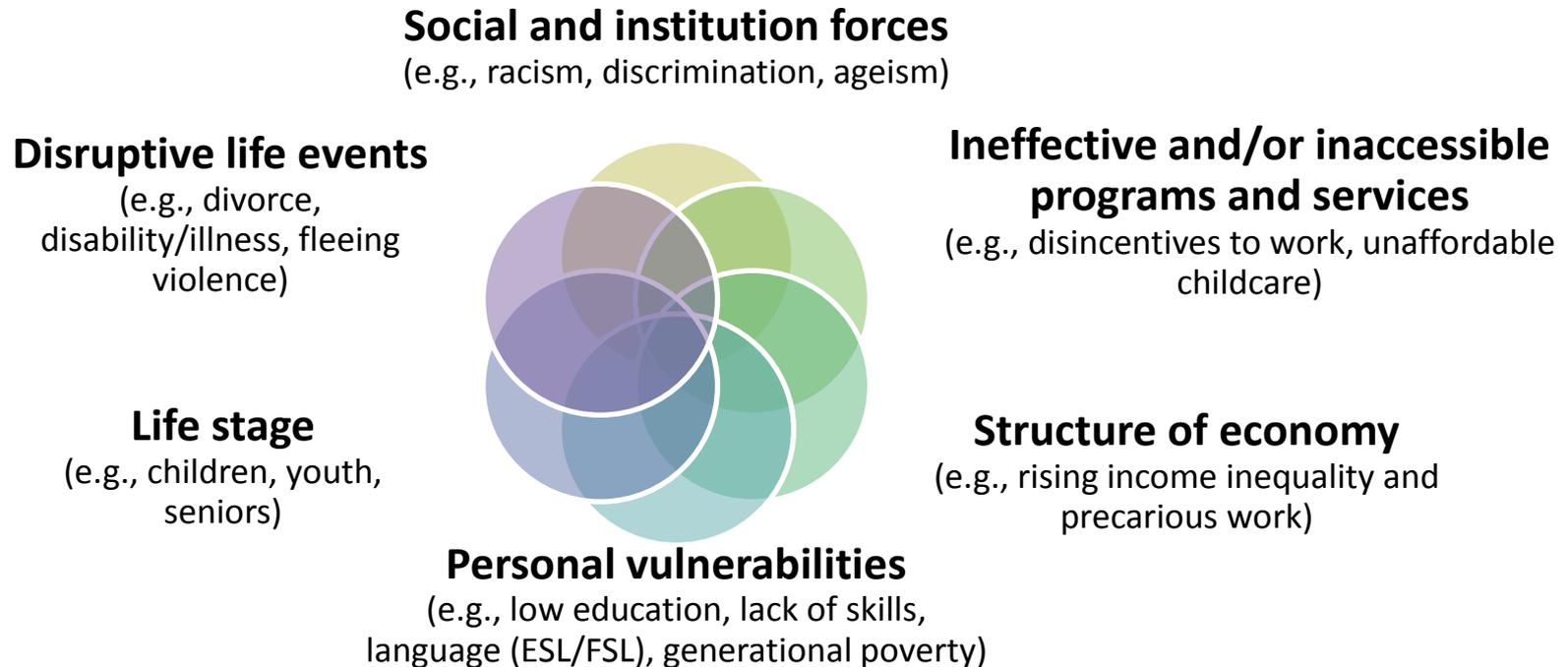
Diagnostic - Indigenous People and Poverty Indicators

- **Education**: While only 12% of the overall population does not hold a high school diploma, this proportion is significantly higher for Indigenous people, particularly First Nations on reserve (47%) and Inuit (49%).
- **Employment**: In 2011, the unemployment rate for Indigenous people was much higher than that of the non Indigenous population.
- **Housing**: About half of the 91,595 First Nations households living on reserve in 2011 lived in housing below acceptable standards because homes required major repairs and were overcrowded.
- **Food Security**: Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous women, experience higher levels of food insecurity than non-Indigenous Canadians.
- **Crime**: Indigenous people are more likely to be victims of crime than non-Indigenous people.

Poverty is multi-dimensional and there are different forms of measurement that are informed by distinct perspectives. In the context of Indigenous peoples, traditional measures of poverty are not always accurate reflections of Indigenous perspectives of wealth and well-being



Poverty is complex and multi-dimensional



To have a meaningful impact, we need to consider the multiple dimensions and faces of poverty.



The Government of Canada has taken actions that will have an impact on reducing poverty

Actions Already Undertaken and Announced

<p>Canada Child Benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expected reduction of about 40% in overall child poverty between 2014 and 2017 - About 300,000 children lifted out of poverty 	<p>Guaranteed Income Supplement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase to the GIS top-up provided 750,000 seniors with more money and expected to lift about 13,000 of them out of poverty 	<p>Old Age Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age of eligibility increase cancelled - Helps avoid having the poverty rate of seniors aged 65 and 66 increase from 6% to 17%
<p>Canada Pension Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Will reduce risk of under-saving from 24% to 18% - Corresponding enhancement to Working Income Tax Benefit will result in poverty reduction impact of nearly 6,000 individuals 	<p>Middle Class Tax Cut</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in personal income tax rate from 22% to 20.5% - 9M Canadians to benefit from tax change - Average tax reduction of \$330 for singles and \$540 for couples 	<p>Health Funding Agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transferring \$11B to provinces to improve access to high-quality care, with a focus on homecare and mental health - Investing \$544M to support innovation and improve access to pharmaceuticals
<p>Reinstating the Interim Federal Health Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides temporary coverage of health-care benefits to resettled refugees, refugee claimants, rejected refugee claimants 	<p>Canada Student Grants & Loans Repayment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase from \$2,000 to \$3,000/year for low- and middle-income students - Graduates only start repaying loans when they earn at least \$25,000/year 	<p>\$8.4B towards improving lives of Indigenous people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primary and secondary education on reserve - First Nations Child & Family Services Program - Social and green infrastructure - Shelters for victims of family violence
<p>Early Learning and Child Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Represents a preventative measure and helps reduce intergenerational transmission of poverty - Investment of \$7B over 10 years to increase the number of affordable childcare spaces for low- and modest income families by approx. 40,000 	<p>National Housing Strategy and Homelessness Partnering Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More than \$11.2B over 11 years. - Reduce households in core housing need by 35%, resulting in direct improvements to the quality of life of low-income families - Investments could reduce the population of shelter users who are chronically or episodically homeless by 50% by 2027-28 	<p>EI & Labour Market Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Made benefits easier to access for young Canadians and recent immigrants - Reduced the waiting period from 2 to 1 week - Working While on Claim pilot extended to help nearly 700,000 workers - Benefits extended to significant job loss regions to help around 235,000 workers - Expand and reform PT training agreements while investing additional \$1.8B over 6 years.

Engagement – Objectives

- The Government of Canada is committed to renewing the relationship with Indigenous Peoples, and to making progress on the issues most important to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.
- We have no preconceptions about what the Canadian Poverty Reduction Strategy should look like; we want to hear from all Canadians, especially groups particularly vulnerable to poverty and persons with lived experience of poverty, to determine what will be in it.
- Other poverty reduction strategies have touched on areas such as income, housing and homelessness, employment and training, education, health, mobility and equality of opportunity.
- Indigenous Peoples are among the vulnerable groups most at risk of living in poverty in Canada.

We are here to hear your views and welcome your input on the development of the Strategy.



Engagement Plan

- We are undertaking broad public engagement to inform the development of the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Our engagement with Indigenous people will include:
 - Ministerial Roundtables
 - A roundtable with the Métis Nation was conducted in Winnipeg on March 30, 2017;
 - A roundtable with Inuit leaders is scheduled for May 11, 2017 in Ottawa;
 - A roundtable with First Nations is scheduled for May 23, 2017 in Thunder Bay; and,
 - A roundtable with the National Indigenous Organizations is scheduled for June 8 in Gatineau.
 - National Indigenous Organizations–led Engagement
 - We are funding five National Indigenous Organizations to carry out engagement activities in order to have an even broader reach to connect with Indigenous communities across Canada.
 - Community-level Conversations
 - ESDC officials are arranging or co-facilitating regional thematic engagement sessions in all regions across Canada, including the following that have already taken place:
 - The Government of Nunavut Roundtable for Poverty Reduction in Iqaluit, March 8-9.
 - The Arctic Youth Ambassador Caucus in Iqaluit, Nunavut from March 8th-12th, 2017.
 - The Wabanaki Council on Disability three-day roundtable meeting (March 13-15) in Moncton.
 - More regional thematic sessions are imminent or in the planning stages



Questions for discussion

1. How would you define “poverty”? What does “wealth” mean to you?

What does “poverty” mean to you? What would you say your community needs to achieve your vision of well-being and wealth?

2. What should we focus our efforts on?

How can the Government of Canada work with First Nations to overcome the challenges associated with poverty?

What federal departments or provincial ministries need to be involved in this discussion?

3. How will we know we are making a difference/actually reducing poverty?

Please share your thoughts on how you think we should measure poverty. What will success look like?

4. Share your success stories

What has worked well in your communities when it comes to improving well-being?

