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HungerCount Report Supports Need for a National Anti-Poverty Plan

The 753,458 Canadians who turned to food banks in just one month in 2006 highlight the need for a national anti-poverty strategy, says the National Council of Welfare.

John Murphy, the Chairperson of the National Council of Welfare, says that the findings of the Canadian Association of Food Banks (CAFB) report, *HungerCount 2006*, are yet another demonstration of why we need a comprehensive national anti-poverty strategy in Canada. “The continued high numbers of people who use food banks make it abundantly clear that too many Canadians struggle with hunger and poverty,” he says. “Countries like Ireland and the United Kingdom have made fighting poverty a priority, as have Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador. Preventing and reducing poverty is essential if we are to have a strong and prosperous country.”

HungerCount 2006 shows that more than half of food bank users receive social assistance and an increasing number of users are the working poor. This supports work by the National Council of Welfare showing that welfare incomes in every province remain far below the poverty line and that a large share of people living in poverty in Canada are employed.

The National Council of Welfare supports the CAFB’s recommendation that governments of all levels must develop a common strategy and a more comprehensive approach to end hunger in this country. Hunger is about poverty and the Council has noted many times that poverty has costs for individuals, communities and the country.

In October, the National Council of Welfare launched an on-line questionnaire at www.ncwcnbes.net to find out what Canadians think about solutions to poverty and income insecurity in Canada. The questionnaire will run until mid-December and the results will be made public. They will also guide the advice the Council provides to the federal government.

The Council encourages individuals and organizations across Canada to respond to the questionnaire and tell us what you think.

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The National Council of Welfare is an independent body established to advise the federal Minister of Human Resources and Social Development on issues of importance to low-income Canadians. Its *Poverty Profile, 2002 and 2003* report was released July 20, 2006 and its *Welfare Incomes 2005* report, on August 24, 2006. For more information, please visit the website www.ncwcnbes.net

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