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Women ignored in federal plan to revive economy

Women have been forgotten in the federal budget that was released yesterday conclude three prominent New Brunswick women's groups.

"This financial crisis is going to negatively affect many people. Our government representatives should use our tax dollars to ensure that the recession will not create additional inequalities", warns Michèle Caron, Chair of Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick.

"Unfortunately, the budget indicates that the Federal government considers women's economic needs as less important: backing off on pay equity, lack of investment in social infrastructures such as daycare facilities, planned reduction of federal transfers to New Brunswick, no reduction in the number of hours required for employment insurance benefits", lists Caron.

Huberte Gautreau, Chair of the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity is disappointed. "The Flaherty budget promises to do exactly the reverse of what we have been asking the Federal government to do. Instead of passing proactive legislation to ensure pay equity, as we have demanded for many years, it proposes to reduce accountability of employers under federal jurisdiction by making pay equity part of collective agreements and excluding it from any possibility of legal action. Furthermore, government is planning to pass legislation that would limit annual pay increases in the public sector, while some women are still catching up for years of discriminatory pay practices."

Jody Dallaire, Executive Director of the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition, deploras the lack of funding to build a Canadian child care system. “Everyone agrees that government must invest during the economic downturn. But government refuses to to meet the economic needs of women by investing in child care. For decades now, we have been calling for this type of infrastructure spending, which will help women and their families participate in the economy.” The OECD and Unicef, both place Canada last among industrialized nations when it comes to availability and public funding of child care services.

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