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Poverty reduction key to economic recovery: 25 in 5

TORONTO – A coalition of poverty reduction advocates urges the Ontario government to redouble its efforts to cut poverty by 25% by 2013 or risk falling short of the goal.

In a report marking the second anniversary of the province’s poverty reduction promise, the 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction says recession has put even more heat on the Ontario government to put its commitment on the front burner.

“The 2008-09 recession hit Ontarians hard, plunging many into poverty and making it more challenging for those already in deep poverty to climb out,” says Greg deGroot-Maggetti, co-chair of 25 in 5.

“The post-recession reality is that many Ontarians need help getting back on their feet, with additional supports, training, education and job opportunities.

The 25 in 5 report, *Building a Resilient Ontario*, concludes Ontario was smart to stay the course on poverty reduction during the worst of the recession, but the true test of the government’s commitment comes post-recession and into recovery.

“Some would prey on the public’s fears about slow economic growth, using them as an excuse to walk away from the promise to reduce poverty,” deGroot-Maggetti says. “But periods of slow growth are exactly when governments should redouble their efforts. The province must put poverty reduction on priority status or its 2013 goal won’t be met.”

“Poverty reduction is smart economic and social policy because it’s about building resilient communities that can bounce back from tough times,” says Mike Creek, 25 in 5 co-chair. “As Ontario nears the halfway point of its poverty reduction timeline, the mission is to stay focused on the goal. The clock is ticking.”

The report urges the provincial government to make a clear and bold investment in its poverty reduction promise in the 2011-12 budget; to review income security programs; to invest in good jobs and core social supports such as early learning, affordable housing, and programs that ensure Ontarians have access to livable incomes. *Building a Resilient Ontario* is available at www.25in5.ca.

- 30 -

The 25 in 5 Network for Poverty Reduction is a multi-sectoral coalition of more than 100 provincial and Toronto-based organizations and individuals working to eliminate poverty.

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