

End of long-term federal subsidies

Before 1994, the federal government has committed to pay annually to the public housing, the co-ops and non-profit housing subsidies in the long term. It is what making possible to reduce the rent for low-income tenants of such housing. However, Ottawa has decided not to renew these subsidies once the current funding arrangements completed. And when that happens, the shock can be very large: rents that can double or even triple, privatization of some public housing, «slumification» of other housing, etc..

Across Canada, some 585,000 social housing units still receive federal subsidies, while 450,00 already lost their subsidies since 2006. Erosion will accelerate dangerously in the coming years. If nothing changes, 132,500 social housing dwellings will loose their federal subsidies by 2018, and ultimately, no one will receive federal money.

Outlook mobilization and struggles

It is imperative to fight the battle to save the financing of social housing today!

In the current pre-election context, we must hound the opposition parties, both Liberal Party of Canada and New Democratic Party that they formally commit to refinance existing housing and develop new funding programs federal government for the construction of social housing.

We must work actively to mobilize social housing tenants and applicants to prevent Harper walking on our backs!

DEMANDS

The federal government must meet its international commitments regarding the right to housing.

For this to be the case, we must collectively mobilize to demand that the federal:

- 1) Maintain its subsidies in existing social housing and
- 2) Reinvest significantly in the development of new social housing.



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HOUSING: A FEDERAL ISSUE

It's a sad 20th anniversary that we celebrate this year. In 1994, the federal government decided to end its long-term investments for public, cooperatives and non-profit housing construction. Despite increasing needs, the federal government has chosen to reduce its support to housing. Already in 1993, it invested only 1.3% of spending on housing, which had been strongly criticized by the United Nations. Today this percentage is only 1%.

These poor investments led the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing to reprimand the Canada during an observation mission to Canada in 2007. The UN rapporteur argued that «Canada is one of the richest countries on the planet, the existence of this [housing] crisis is even more striking». He deplored that Canada, once renowned for its cutting-edge housing policies, is far from what it used to be in this area due to the budget cuts of the last 20 years.

Housing, a Human Right !

Housing is not a commodity like any other! The United Nations recognizes the right to housing as the right «to a place where we can live safely in peace and dignity», without discrimination and without obstruction, devoting a portion of its income «which doesn't threaten or compromise the satisfaction of other basic needs». That is why we organize! All must be able to house themselves and live in dignity.

Although Canada has ratified many international treaties recognizing the right to housing, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), it is clear that it does not respect its commitments in that area.





Housing Portrait in Canada

Across Canada, 30.7% of households are tenants. There are therefore 4 078 230 rental housing units.

Rents are expensive!

- 40% of tenants pay more than 30% of their income in rent,
- 19% pay more than 50% and
- 9.5% pay more than 80%.

In 2011, the number of rental housing amounted to 1 311 200 in Quebec. Is nearly 39% of the housing, a percentage which is higher than that of all other Canadian provinces.

Number and percentage of tenant households paying 30% or more and 50% or more of their income on rent, National Household Survey, 2011

Canada and metropolitan areas

	30% or more of their income		50% or more of their income	
	Number	%	Number	%
Canada	1 622 855	40,1	773 720	19,1
Montréal	284 280	39,2	143 915	19,8
Toronto	270 745	42,9	136 470	21,6
Vancouver	136 025	44,4	73 545	24,0
Edmonton	53 800	40,8	27 955	21,2
Calgary	46 355	38,4	22 640	18,7
Québec (ville)	45 790	32,9	21 140	15,2
Ottawa	45 475	38,6	21 970	18,6
Winnipeg	34 365	37,3	15 425	16,7
Halifax	26 220	42,7	13 280	21,6

In Indigenous Communities

Far from improving, housing conditions worsen dangerously among First Nations and Inuit people, according to the National Household Survey.

Thus, of the 55,180 dwellings on «native reserves» across Canada, 24,020, or 44%, were in need of major repairs in 2011. Moreover, 13,900 households lived in inadequate housing size for a percentage of 25%, and 18% of these households would need 3 more bedrooms to meet the needs of their families.

Overcrowding is even more disastrous in the Inuit territory of Nunavik, Northern Quebec. On 2,535 homes built in all communities, 1055, or 42%, are of insufficient size. The situation is not expected to improve, with half of the population under 20 years, which undoubtedly increase the lack of new homes. In addition, 875 units, representing 35% of the total, are in need of major repairs.

The deplorable housing conditions in communities contribute to additional migration to the urban centers of many Indigenous people who also experience multiple problems: discrimination in rental housing, poor quality apartments, overcrowding and for several, homelessness visible or concealed.

Social housing in danger !

Social housing is the best way to ensure the implementation of the right to housing because it is non-profit, collectively owned and is funded directly by governments, allowing themselves out housing speculative and maintain rents meeting affordability households with low and moderate-income market.

But the provinces and cities are not able to assume this responsibility alone, the federal government must fund the construction and maintenance of social housing.

By 2019, Ottawa will provide \$ 250 million per year in all provinces and territories for their housing programs called «affordable.» In Quebec, \$ 58 million from the federal are not even sufficient to subsidize the construction of 700 social housing.

