ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

FACT SHEET - Quality of Life of First Nations
June 2011

QUICK FACTS:

- **One in four children in First Nation communities live in poverty. That's almost double the national average.**
- **Suicide rates among First Nation youth are five to seven times higher than other young non-Aboriginal Canadians.**
- **The life expectancy of First Nation citizens is five to seven years less than other non-Aboriginal Canadians and infant mortality rates are 1.5 times higher among First Nations.**
- **Tuberculosis rates among First Nation citizens living on-reserve are 31 times the national average.**
- **A First Nation youth is more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school.**
- **First Nation children, on average, receive 22% less funding for child welfare services than other Canadian children.**
- **There are almost 600 unresolved cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.**

CONTEXT:

First Nations in Canada are affirming their rights and advancing plans to improve the quality of life for our people and communities based on First Nations rights, Treaties and increased responsibility. This effort will strengthen First Nation citizens and governments and position them to make the decisions that impact their future. It will better ensure fair and equitable education for First Nation youth, build First Nation economies and create safe and secure communities for First Nation people.

Investing in First Nation education is a long-term, sustainable stimulus plan for Canada's economy. Canada will face a labour shortage by 2017 as baby-boomers retire and there are fewer workers to replace them. With more than half of the First Nation population under the age of 23, our young people can fill this gap. The future of Canada depends on strong First Nations. If we close the education and employment gap between First Nations and other Canadians, First Nation workers would add $400 billion to Canada's GDP by 2026 and Canada will save $115 billion in government expenditures.

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At the current rate, it will take two decades to close the education gap between First Nations and other Canadians. We can and must do better!

- There are 40 First Nation communities without schools, and there are First Nation communities where children haven't been to school in more than two years.
- The K-12 completion rate for First Nation students living on-reserve is 49%. First Nation students are more likely to end up in jail than to graduate high school.
- First Nation students attending on-reserve schools are funded at a rate of $3,000 – $7,000 less than students attending other schools in Canada.

First Nation people living on-reserve have the lowest labour force participation rate (52%) of any Aboriginal group, compared to 67% for non-Aboriginal Canadians.

- In 2006, the unemployment rate for First Nation people living on-reserve was 25% - approximately three times the rate for non-Aboriginal Canadians. In 2006, the average household income for First Nations living on-reserve was $15,958, compared to $36,000 (before taxes) for non-Aboriginal Canadians.
- In 2006, 61% of First Nation young adults (20-24) had not completed high school, compared with 13% of non-Aboriginal Canadians.

First Nation citizens face much higher rates of chronic and communicable diseases and are exposed to greater health risks because of poor housing, higher unemployment, contaminated water and limed access to healthy foods.

- Tuberculosis among First Nation citizens is 31 times the national average.
- One in five First Nations is diabetic – that's three to five times the national average.
- Approximately 25% of on-reserve water treatment systems pose a high health risk.
- 12% of First Nation communities have to boil their drinking water, impacting about 75,000 citizens.
- First Nations are experiencing a housing crisis with approximately 85,000 housing units required across Canada. In many cases multiple families live in one and two bedroom homes.
- Approximately 44% of the existing housing stock needs major repairs and another 15% require outright replacement.
- Of the 88,485 houses on-reserve, 5,486 are without sewage services.
- Mould contaminates almost half of all First Nation households.