



***For immediate release***

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## **Will the budget short-change women?**

A budget is a statement of priorities. It is time for the government to prioritize women's equality, maintain three of the New Brunswick's prominent women's organizations.

"The budget should include a gender-inclusive analysis", says Michèle Caron, Chairperson of the Regroupement féministe du N.-B. "As this analysis is unlikely to be found in the budget, we have developed criteria to determine if the 2009-2010 budget will increase or decrease inequalities."

"As the hourly wage gap between men and women has increased over the past two years, the government must take immediate action to reverse this tendency", reminds Johanne Perron, Executive Director with the New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity. While the hourly wage gap stood at 12% in 2006, in 2008, New Brunswick women earned an average 14% less than men (\$16.46 an hour for women as compared to \$19.16 for men.)

When all income sources are included, the total average salary of women with an income stands at \$22 875, in comparison to men's at \$34 321. In fact, 41% of women and 27% of men do not pay income taxes, as their income is too low.

"How will a tax cut help the 41% of women who do not pay taxes?" asks Jody Dallaire, Executive Director with the New Brunswick Child Care Coalition. She maintains that the government has a responsibility to meet the needs of all segments of society, including women, who represent after all, the majority.

The questions raised below were widely distributed throughout the province by the three women's organizations, determined to assist women in evaluating the budget.

### **Budget Evaluation Criteria**

- € Does the budget include an increased investment in public services such as:
  - social housing
  - education
  - health care?
  
- € Does the budget create a network of publicly-funded daycare programs?
  - Does it reduce parent fees?
  - Does it increase educators' salaries?
  
- € Does the budget maintain existing government services rather than transferring them to the private sector where workers are often underpaid?
  
- € Does it maintain our progressive income tax system for individuals (increasing in the higher income brackets), rather than replacing it by a fixed or two-level income tax system?
  
- € Does it maintain a progressive income tax system for businesses in order to be able to offer quality public services?
  
- € Does it keep sales taxes at the current level rather than increasing them (higher sales taxes would have a negative impact on the poor)?
  
- € Does it increase minimum wage to \$10 per hour?
  
- € Does it increase social assistance levels to the Atlantic average?
  
- € Does it publicly fund pay equity adjustments for early childhood educators, home support workers and transition house workers?
  
- € Does it foresee the implementation of public sector pay equity legislation?

€ Does it foresee the implementation of private sector pay equity legislation to stimulate consumer activity and the economy?

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