	ON.16.03	Expand the Nutrition North Canada Program to Include All Communities Accessible Only by Air Education & Health
1 2 3	Whereas,	community eligibility for the Nutrition North Canada program is based on past usage instead of current need; and
4 5 6	Whereas,	currently 48 communities (33%) accessible only by air are not eligible for the Nutrition North Canada program; therefore be it
7 8 9 10 11 12	Resolved,	that the Ontario Provincial Council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada in 69 th annual convention assembled request national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada urge the federal government to review its community eligibility criteria for the Nutrition North Canada program based on need, and to include all northern communities accessible only by air; and be it further
13 14	Resolved,	that this resolution be forwarded to national council of The Catholic Women's League of Canada for consideration at 96 th Annual Convention August 2016.

BRIEF

In 2011, the Government of Canada launched Nutrition North Canada (NNC), a food retail subsidy program for isolated northern communities. Nutrition North replaced the former Food Mail Program, an air transportation subsidy program that was in place for more than 50 years. NNC subsidizes a variety of perishable and nutritious food items shipped by air to an eligible community. "Customers in eligible communities can purchase subsidized food from registered Northern retailers or directly from registered Southern suppliers." (Government of Canada website). The aim is to ensure food security to these communities.

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9 In 2014, the Auditor General found that community eligibility for the NNC program is based on 10 past usage instead of current need (2014 Fall Report of the Auditor General of Canada). As a 11 result, there are close to fifty (50) other isolated northern communities, not benefiting from the 12 subsidy, where access to affordable, nutritious food is a serious issue (CBC, website).

13

"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, internet). This definition was adopted by Canada at the World Food Summit in 1996. "… food insecurity is a strong predictor of poorer physical and mental health … Among children, food insecurity has been linked to poorer health and the development of a variety of chronic health conditions, including asthma and depression" (Tarasuk, 1).

21

The right to food is both a human and legal right. It is a right clearly protected under
international law: article 25 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and article 11 of the
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (Ziegler, website).

25

26 In December of 2012, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to

Food, submitted his report to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations regarding his trip to Canada. In his report De Schutter, found that the prevalence of food insecurity was sixty (60) percent of First Nations children in northern Manitoba households, seventy percent of adults living in Nunavut (De Schutter, 16). "This is six times higher than the national average and represented the highest documented food insecurity rate for any aboriginal population in a developed country" (Skinner, 37). Another study found that 76% of survey respondents

- 33 experiencing food insecurity lived in households with children (De Schutter, 16).
- 34

The diverse challenges and differences northerners face in ensuring access to affordable and nutritious food of good quality is a large problem. Ensuring that all air only accessible communities are part of the Nutrition North Canada program is a start to the solution of providing food security to the people of Canada's north. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada should review its community eligibility criteria for the Nutrition North

40 Canada program and base the criteria on need.

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ACTION PLAN

1

- 1. Write letters to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and local members of Parliament, urging the federal Government to expand the list of communities accessible only by air to receive the subsidies of Nutrition North Canada Program.
- 2. Study the list of foods that are subsidized to remote Canadian communities by going to the Nutrition North Canada website. Become aware of what is missing from the list.
- 3. Increase awareness about the high cost of food and the issue of food insecurity in Canada's north by visiting <u>www.feedingmyfamily.org</u> for more information.
- 4. Skip-a-meal: in Canada each month, over 850,000 people turn to food banks for help; more than one-third of which are children and youth. In Nunavut, nearly 70% of preschool Inuit children live in food-insecure households. Of these children, 25% are severely food insecure. You can help feed Canadian children by skipping a meal or brown bagging a healthy lunch and donating the money you would have spent to your local food bank. These dollars will help fund school meal programs, food banks and soup kitchens that provide free emergency food aid and rely on donations.
- 5. Continue to monitor progress on this issue.