## Time to Reform Employment Insurance (EI)

**Friday, August 6, 2004** – Like so much else in our social policy apparatus, the federal Employment Insurance program is out of step with today's social realities.

CPRN's president, Judith Maxwell, makes this point in ***Beyond EI***, a presentation to the House of Commons Human Resources Committee, May 2004.

Maxwell argues that today's EI program, responding as it does to the post-war risks of cyclical and seasonal unemployment, is not appropriate for the new risks of the 21st century. Those risks derive from global competition and resulting pressure on wage levels, the shift to a service economy, new technologies, and new family roles without adequate public supports.

The new risks are: a low wage economy, insecure employment relationships, growing skill requirements for good jobs, persistent unemployment that is structural, not seasonal or cyclical.

Maxwell provides evidence of the impact of these new risks: the fact that 2 million adults work for less than $10/hour; real minimum wages are 15-25% below 1975 levels; a high dependence on charity; unmet demand for affordable housing. In short, *the problem is not unemployment, but low-wage employment*.

Maxwell calls for both employers and governments to change their policies to take account of these new realities and makes some suggestions.

To access or download a copy of her presentation, click here.

## Kids Canada Now On-line in French

***Enfance Canada***, a French-language edition of Kids Canada Policy Digest, our innovative compendium of federal-provincial-territorial policies that affect children and families, is now available on our French language Web site.

***Enfance Canada*** presents information on four policy fields for the six Canadian governments that provide services in French: Canada, Nunavut, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. Information for other jurisdictions is presented in English. We will be adding details on additional policy fields in the near future.

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