

## **SEDI urges Ottawa to make a significant investment in the Task Force on Financial Literacy's recommendations**

*Lack of financial literacy a crisis for Canadians – SEDI commends the work of the Task Force for raising awareness of critical issues.*

Toronto, February 9, 2010 - Financial literacy, the knowledge, skills and confidence to make responsible financial decisions, is now more important than ever. Currently, Canadians owe a record high of \$1.48 for every \$1 of disposable income. Canada's debt-to-disposable income ratio is now higher than that of its American neighbours for the first time in 12 years.

Social and Enterprise Development Innovations (SEDI) commends the [Task Force on Financial Literacy](#) for addressing the critical lack of financial literacy in Canada and for recommending a national strategy to help Canadians be more knowledgeable consumers, savers and investors. The Task Force strategy, presented today to Minister of Finance Jim Flaherty, includes key recommendations proposed by SEDI such as:

- Investing in the capacity of the voluntary sector, including not-for-profit and community groups, to offer financial literacy programs to vulnerable populations, low-income earners and persons at-risk.
- Linking financial literacy information and supports to government programs that provide opportunities for financial planning and investing such as the Registered Retirement Savings Plan, the Registered Disability Savings Plan and the Canada Learning Bond.
- Working with the private sector to bring personal finance training to the workplace.

"We commend the federal government for recognizing the critical importance of financial literacy. We also commend the diligent and thorough work of the Task Force members, who engaged Canadians in every province and territory in building a much-needed national strategy on financial literacy," said Laura Watts, CEO of SEDI.

"There is no better time for government to take the lead in helping Canadians increase their knowledge and skills to manage everyday finances. This includes saving for a rainy day, post-secondary education, retirement or other life events. Given that six in 10 Canadians would be at risk if their paycheques were delayed by even a week, many households are not far from financial crisis. It is vitally important that government recognizes financial literacy as an essential skill and makes significant investments in the Task Force recommendations.

"SEDI is analyzing the Task Force strategy and looks forward to actively contributing to the process of making financial literacy a priority in Canada by working with governments and other sectors of society."

Founded in 1986, SEDI is a national, charitable organization active at the forefront of financial literacy. Since 1995, it has helped community groups across Canada to build their capacity to deliver financial literacy programs to low-income earners and persons at-risk. SEDI has long identified financial literacy as an essential skill and a vital area of public policy. In 2008, SEDI successfully recommended to the federal government the creation of a task force on financial literacy to boost financial education in Canada in a coordinated, strategic and inclusive manner. Also in 2008, SEDI created its division, the [Canadian Centre](#)

[for Financial Literacy](#), to build community capacity, conduct research and provide consulting in the field of financial literacy.

For more information on SEDI, visit [www.sedi.org](http://www.sedi.org).

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