

DO MORE, DO BETTER

Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022

The *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022* takes note of the political and historical context in which the Government of Québec must act. It sets forth the key directions that clarify the Government of Québec's intentions and will guide its implementation. The policy directions determine the strategic priorities of the action plan, which are broken down into concrete measures.

CONTEXT

The Aboriginal nations are experiencing significant social problems that stem from a history marked by iniquity, attempts at assimilation and systemic racism. The Aboriginal peoples have for centuries displayed a remarkable capacity to adapt to the significant pressures exercised on their way of life. Proud of their difference and imbued with their cultures, the Aboriginal peoples have never relinquished the assertion of their aspirations.

However, the disturbing observations that are made today on the health of the Aboriginal communities demand vigorous action. The Government of Québec recognizes its responsibility to act and also acknowledges the urgency of doing so. The enhancement of the Aboriginal peoples' living conditions is, from now on, a priority.

The *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit 2017-2022* seeks to respond to the calls for action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The approach that it is initiating is open-ended. It marks a point of departure that initially proposes the implementation of 110 concrete measures supported

by \$147.3 million in funding over five years. The approach can be gradually enriched through the addition of new initiatives designed in conjunction with the Aboriginal communities.

Through the action plan, the Government of Québec is initiating a unique way of contributing to the social and cultural development of the Aboriginal populations. Indeed, the Government of Québec's initiatives in these spheres will henceforth be articulated in a single instrument and no longer by means of the ad hoc initiatives of government departments and bodies. In so doing, the government understands that its intervention must hinge on a comprehensive perspective that incorporates all dimensions of life in society: health, social services, education, justice, public security, gender equality and complementarity, housing, employment, youth, culture, languages, citizen involvement, and so on.

The Government of Québec is convinced that it can thus contribute more effectively and sustainably to the betterment and progress of the Aboriginal societies to better build, together, the Québec of tomorrow.

KEY DIRECTIONS

The action plan focuses on a number of policy directions on which the government's initiatives will hinge:



The Inuit and the First Nations are nations in the sociological and political sense of the term.



The historic wrongs caused to the First Nations and Inuit have engendered suspicion and a breach of trust that require the Government of Québec to renew its efforts to achieve reconciliation.



The process of enhancing living conditions must occur simultaneously among individuals and communities since the two facets are closely linked.



It is imperative that the Government of Québec's contribution to healing be linked to the specific identities and cultures of the Inuit and the First Nations. The action plan has been elaborated and will be implemented in this logic of reassurance and cultural relevance.



It must offer appropriate responses to an emerging reality in Québec, i.e. the growing presence in urban agglomerations of the Aboriginal peoples.



The two levels of government must better combine their efforts and create genuine collaboration between them. The constitutional context and the sensitive question of areas of jurisdiction respecting Aboriginal affairs must not result in a service deficit for the members of the First Nations and the Inuit Nation.



Aboriginal women are central to any truth and reconciliation approach. They represent a significant force for change whose blossoming must be supported by combating the vulnerability factors that affect them and by enabling them to regain their capacity to act.



Young people are the present and the future of the Aboriginal nations, of which they represent a significant proportion of the population. They must be guided in their life paths and receive the services that they need to become active, enterprising citizens capable of effectively playing the central role that is necessarily theirs in the development and vitality of their communities and Québec society as a whole.