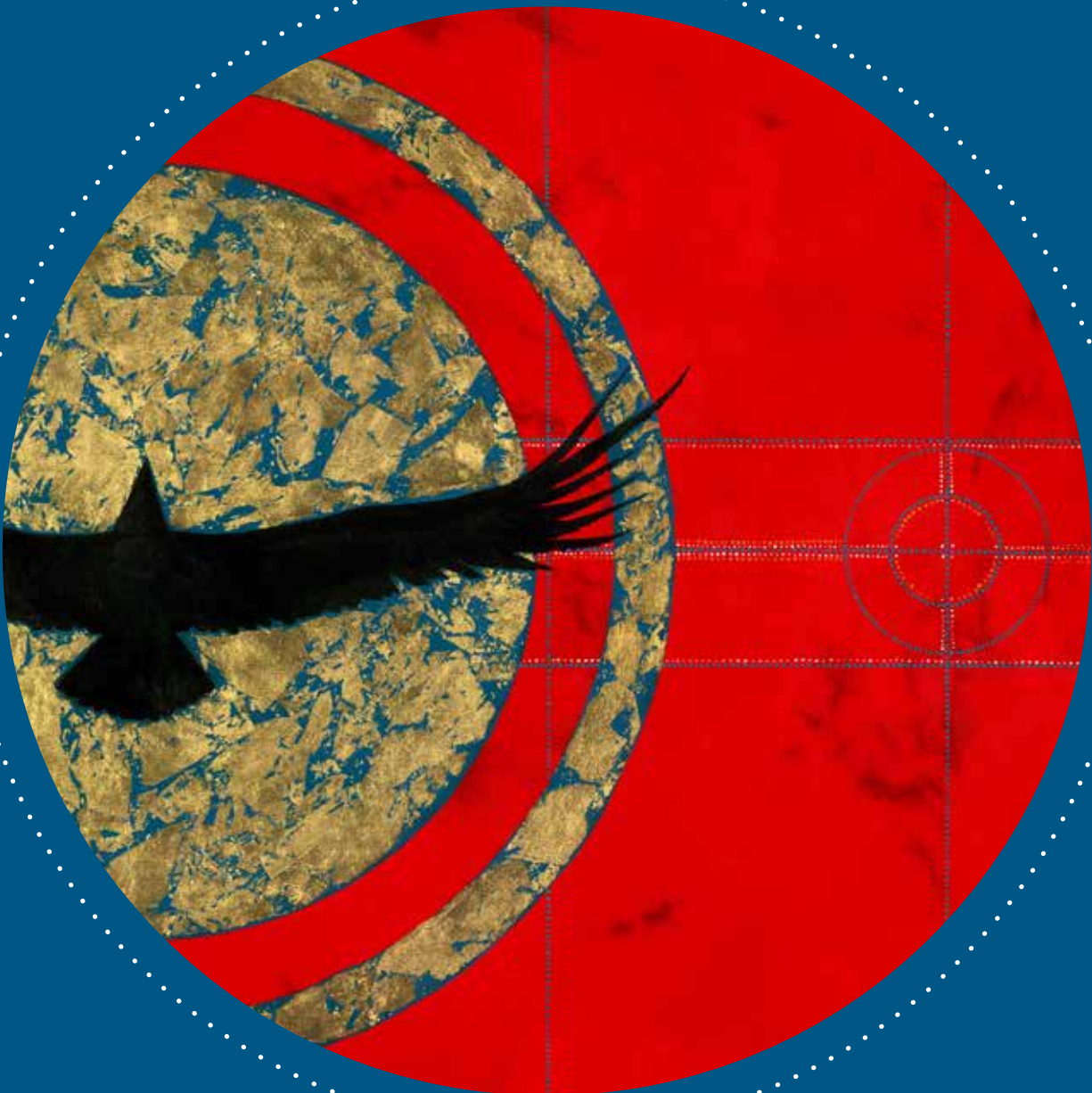


DO MORE, DO BETTER

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

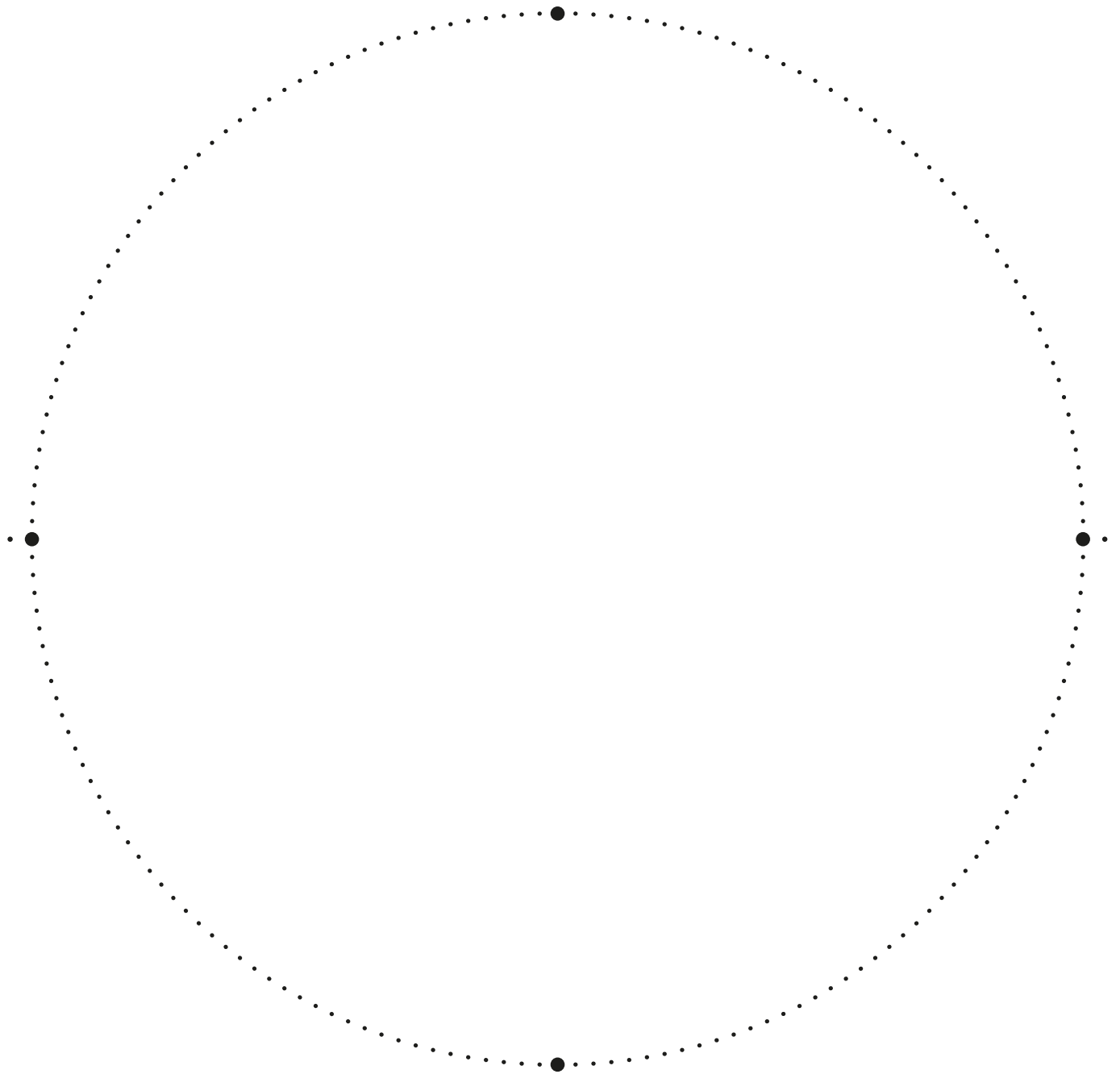


2017-2022

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Government Action Plan
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MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER



In its policy on Québec affirmation and Canadian relations entitled *Quebecers: Our Way of Being Canadian* published on June 1, 2017, the Government of Québec notes that “Québec’s identity is enriched by contributions from people of all origins while remaining closely attached to the continuity of its distinct, French-speaking character and to the historic contribution of Aboriginal peoples” (page 58). The Government of Québec clearly expresses its desire there to harmonize and develop its relations with the Aboriginal peoples on the basis of reciprocal respect and cooperation.

In the 21st century, at a time when the world is changing and Québec must meet new challenges, it is crucial to be able to rely on all of our society’s strengths. The Government of Québec intends to work with all Quebecers to build a fairer, more prosperous, inclusive, open Québec. The First Nations and Inuit were present in the territory long before the arrival of the first Europeans and are at the root of our history. They have largely contributed to building the Québec that we now know and must have the means to fully contribute to the Québec of tomorrow.

However, to contemplate the future optimistically, we must first lucidly examine the past. The relationship with the Aboriginal peoples has also been marked by sustained attempts spread over several generations to assimilate them. They have, unfortunately, suffered numerous forms of discrimination before being recognized for what they are, that is, full-fledged, living, resilient nations which are proud of their differences and cultures, enriched by their identities and anxious to take their rightful place in society. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us to ensure that this cohabitation is now based on respect, mutual aid, collaboration and friendship.

This initial *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit* is a concrete commitment by our government to Québec's Aboriginal nations. We wish to give them all of the tools possible to sustain dynamic, involved, creative, innovative communities. Since social and cultural development are indissociable from the economic development of communities, this new tool will go hand in hand with the new Aboriginal Initiatives Fund (AIF) to support economic projects.

The plan stems from extensive consultations conducted in recent years among the First Nations and Inuit and marks the beginning of a new approach based on dialogue and a concrete contribution by all of the parties concerned. It therefore implements measures in an array of crucial areas: language, culture, health and social services, education, employment, housing, justice, security, research, gender equality, youth and citizen involvement. Its initiatives focus on four strategic priorities: enhance services; promote culture and languages; develop the power to act of individuals and communities; and promote consensus building and research.

We stand to gain a great deal by making Québec an even more inclusive society that relies on the contribution that each individual can make. Together, let us regard diversity as an opportunity for collective enrichment rather than an obstacle.

It is together that we must continue to steer Québec on the path of change.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'P' and 'C' followed by a horizontal line.

Philippe Couillard
Premier of Québec

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS



I am pleased to present the first *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit*. For the first time, Government of Québec departments and agencies are integrating their respective initiatives into a single, coherent approach in order to maximize positive impacts from government intervention aimed at the Aboriginal populations.

The publication of an action plan always marks a significant step for a government since it embodies an ideal means through which to carry out its objectives and intentions in the field.

It is, therefore, necessary for the measures in an action plan to stem from clear government policy directions. Otherwise, the action plan would only present a disparate array of initiatives assembled arbitrarily. A broad plan must shape a set of measures that need, consequently, to be regulated upstream by an aim that explains its meaning and basic structure. For this reason, action plans are often intended to implement a policy or strategy published previously by the government.

In the case of the *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit*, the government decided to proceed differently. Indeed, the components of the policy and the policy directions that guide government action have been incorporated into the first sections of the action plan. The Government of Québec expresses there the project to which it wishes to give concrete expression with the Aboriginal peoples and its priorities and positions respecting certain complex situations. The measures explained in the subsequent sections reflect the

positions taken by the government and translate these priorities into concrete actions. Of course, extensive consultations and discussions with the Aboriginal peoples in recent years and the situations recently highlighted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada have supported them.

In this way, the reader can ascertain through a single document the Government of Québec's degree of commitment to the social and cultural development of the Aboriginal nations and the meaning that it wishes to give its initiatives.

The Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit is a milestone in a long-term undertaking, which will require constant effort and sustained determination. Everyone must be aware that success can only be achieved if all of the stakeholders concerned are prepared, together, to make such an effort and display such determination.

With this first action plan, the Government of Québec is seeking to contribute to sustained improvement in the general living conditions of Québec's Aboriginal peoples. It is acting immediately through tangible measures in a basic perspective of reconciliation and redress for past mistakes.

The Government of Québec wishes to implement this action plan in collaboration with the Aboriginal communities. It hopes that the approach will also, over time, be enriched by the communities' contribution, since the action plan is not a closed, exhaustive initiative that claims to offer all of the solutions. On the contrary, we know that it is, instead, a perfectible tool, a starting point which will only prove fully effective with the contribution of the Aboriginal peoples themselves, who are the best placed to understand needs in the field.

It has been emphasized repeatedly, in particular by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, that the Aboriginal societies must regain their balance and, to this end, they have firmly committed themselves to the necessary healing process. The Government of Québec wants to contribute actively to this process. It hopes to build contemporary Québec with the Aboriginal nations at their best.

To conclude, I would like to emphasize the contribution to this document of three renowned Aboriginal artists. Their visual or poetic works, harmoniously integrated into the text, will reveal to readers the diversity of contemporary Québec Aboriginal art. I would like to warmly thank the artists for generously agreeing to share in this way their work and sensitivity.

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink, reading "Geoffrey Kelley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Geoffrey Kelley
Minister responsible for Native Affairs

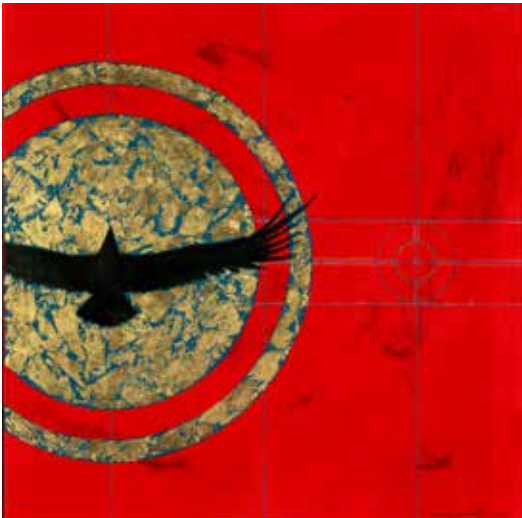
ARTIST COLLABORATOR

ERUOMA AWASHISH



With a degree in Interdisciplinary Arts from the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, Eruoma Awashish wishes to teach about her culture. Her double identity, Atikamekw by her father and Quebecer by her mother, allows her to better understand the differences between these two peoples and to create a dialogue through her works. Her work speaks of hybridization and metamorphosis. Suffering is a theme she often addresses

because, according to her, it is a gateway to transformation. Her work is full of spirituality, symbols and syncretism. She likes to combine symbols referring to the First Nations culture and the Catholic religion. Through these symbols, her works both speak about contrast and miscegenation, duality and balance, suffering and serenity. Her work questions the hybridization phenomena in First Nations culture.



“A culture that survives over the centuries is a culture that adapts and evolves. First Nations culture is a strong one, because it has never allowed itself to be subsumed by the dominant culture. Despite tentative attempts at assimilation, our culture has survived and evolved; it has transformed.”

• **KAKAKEW**
• (Raven)

• The crow in the
• center of the circle
• represents balance.

ARTIST COLLABORATOR

FRANK POLSON



Frank Polson was born in Montréal in 1952 and is a member of the Algonquin Long Point First Nations community (Winneway, Témiscamingue). For the past seventeen years he has worked at developing his style in the medium of acrylics. Mr. Polson is a self-taught artist who produces works of unique beauty, in the Woodland style, which is relevant to today and in accordance with his heritage.

He has rekindled his memories of many pleasurable and educational seasons spent on the trap-line with his father and has captured those wonderful memories on canvas among the glorious sunsets and sounds and feelings on the wilderness' days and nights. Frank Polson's art has been sold all around the world and were shown in many Canadian and European galleries.



CLANS

The Anishnabe people base their system of kinship on patrilineal clans or totems.

ARTIST COLLABORATOR

NATASHA KANAPÉ FONTAINE



Born in 1991, Natasha Kanapé Fontaine is an Innu and a native of Pessamit on the Côte-Nord. A poet/performer, actress, visual artist and Aboriginal and environmental rights activist, she lives in Montréal and is one of Québec's most prominent poets.

Her first book of poems, *N'entre pas dans mon âme avec tes chaussures* (Mémoire d'encrier, 2012), which recounts her initial questioning about her sense of identity, met with critical acclaim and received the Prix d'excellence de la Société des Écrivains francophones d'Amérique 2013. A finalist for the Prix Émile-Nelligan 2015, her second collection,

Manifeste Assi (Mémoire d'encrier, 2014), is an ode to the earth, which is being stifled by natural resource exploitation, including the Alberta oil sands. In February 2016, she published *Bleuets et abricots* (Mémoire d'encrier), a third collection of poetry that conveys the reasoning of the Aboriginal woman who comes back to life to overthrow history. Translated into English by Howard Scott, *Do Not Enter My Soul in Your Shoes* (2015) and *Assi Manifesto* (2016) are transcending borders and delighting readers in Canada and around the world. *Kuei, je te salue* (2016, Écosociété) is a correspondence with the Canadian-American author and novelist Deni Ellis Béchard on racism between the Aboriginal peoples and non-natives. The epistolary exchange is indeed timely in light of news over the past year concerning the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.



- First excerpt, p. 4, drawn from the prologue to the book of poems *Bleuets et Abricots*, Montréal: Mémoire d'encrier, 2016 (modified by the author)
- Second excerpt, p. 20, drawn from *Pour que nous puissions VIVRE* accessible on the artist's YouTube page (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PYdBW5fGhk)
- Third excerpt, p. 44, drawn from the book of poems *Bleuets et Abricots*, Montréal: Mémoire d'encrier, 2016 (modified by the author)

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INTRODUCTION

For several decades, the relationship that the Government of Québec has maintained with Aboriginal representatives centred almost systematically on topics related to the territory, rights and self-government. However, the Aboriginal nations are, at the same time, facing considerable social challenges related to health, individuals, families and communities.

• The importance of social and cultural issues •

The resolution of these problems is, of course, inextricably linked to the responses that we collectively develop to issues such as land claims, royalties on natural resources, or self-government. What is more, it is widely acknowledged that the solution to the social problems hinges, to a large extent, on the challenge of giving concrete expression in Québec society to the legal status of the Aboriginal peoples and, no less crucially, on sharing the wealth generated by the development of the territory.

These sensitive issues have not yet been resolved. They will undoubtedly be resolved eventually, but in the current context, one observation must be made: it is necessary to promptly attach greater importance to the social and cultural needs of the Inuit and the First Nations. The problems can no longer wait. Every day, throughout Québec, distress and suffering are leading to broken lives and undermining the vitality of entire communities.

The starting point of this action plan is the Government of Québec's acknowledgement of a twofold responsibility. First, a concept of responsibility for the population: the Aboriginal peoples belong to separate nations but they are also Québec citizens. Generally speaking, the Government of Québec has a duty to assist the least privileged populations and to establish equality of opportunity in Québec society.

It also has a historic responsibility. Since the 1980s, the Government of Québec has recognized the nation status of the Aboriginal peoples. The Inuit and the First Nations are not simple minority groups. They are the first inhabitants of the territory and occupy a specific place in Québec's history, both culturally and politically. In this spirit, they must be regarded as partners in developing the Québec society. Consequently, the Government of Québec must seek to create conditions that will enable the Aboriginal peoples to consolidate their powers and reaffirm their creative strengths.

One basic reality must be emphasized from the outset. Despite the difficult observations, the Aboriginal peoples have for centuries displayed a remarkable capacity to adapt to the significant pressures exerted 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.

The Government of Québec has acknowledged the call to action addressed to governments by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. From now on, it will accord special priority to Aboriginal social and cultural problems. This action plan is mobilizing for this purpose \$147 million over the next five years, in addition to the \$135 million that the government will earmark during the same period for the economic and community development of the First Nations and Inuit, through the renewal of the Aboriginal Initiatives Fund (AIF).

A transitional action plan

This action plan marks a transitional approach. Indeed, it is the first action plan that the Government of Québec is publishing in the realm of Aboriginal social and cultural development. It seeks to consolidate in a single instrument the relevant government initiatives for the benefit of the Inuit and the First Nations. In other words, the Government of Québec's initiatives in the social and cultural spheres will henceforth be articulated in a comprehensive action plan and will no longer be scattered among the ad hoc initiatives of government departments and agencies.

The Aboriginal peoples have for centuries displayed a remarkable capacity to adapt to the significant pressures exerted 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.

The machinery of government must adapt to this original way of working. This means that the action plan can incorporate over the next five years measures that government departments and agencies are unable to integrate immediately. It also means that the action plan remains open to initiatives which might be designed later with the Aboriginal communities, in keeping with the strategic priorities that it presents.


There are four strategic priorities: 1) enhance services; 2) promote the Aboriginal culture and languages; 3) develop the ability to act of individuals and communities; and 4) promote consensus building and research.

The action plan remains open to initiatives that might be designed later with the Aboriginal communities, in keeping with the strategic priorities that it presents.

An atypical action plan

Lastly, it should be noted that the action plan is not only distinctive because of its evolving nature. It is also unusual because of its first part, which establishes government policy directions on an array of topics pertaining to Aboriginal social and cultural development. Indeed, the action plan must take stock of the singular context surrounding it, i.e. the often complex political and institutional relationship that the Government of Québec maintains with the First Nations and the Inuit Nation. Some things must be expressed, others must be reaffirmed and still others clarified. What might initially strike the reader as a detour constitutes in fact the essential conceptual basis for the Government of Québec's action in the realm of Aboriginal social and cultural development.

In the final analysis, it is the framework that makes its intention explicit, i.e. to contribute significantly to the progress of the Aboriginal societies in order to better build the Québec of the future.



A call arises within me
I feel everything
Remembrances
Wounds
I see everything
The shock of dispossession
I know everything

Speak out and sooth grief
I write to say yes
To myself Woman
Force the doors of silence
Secure the path
Revive the shadows,
the broken children,
speech that no longer knows how to say yes
That no longer knows how to stand.

I will say yes to my birth.

Natasha Kanapé Fontaine

POLICY DIRECTIONS





1

A RENEWED COMMITMENT

Non-natives and Aboriginal peoples have lived together in Québec for more than 400 years. The Aboriginal peoples were first strategic allies in the conflicts between France and England and were, moreover, key trading partners for the colonial powers. We know that the first European settlers survived a harsh climate that they had never before experienced thanks to the know-how of the Aboriginal peoples.

..... 1.1

A relationship which needs to be nurtured

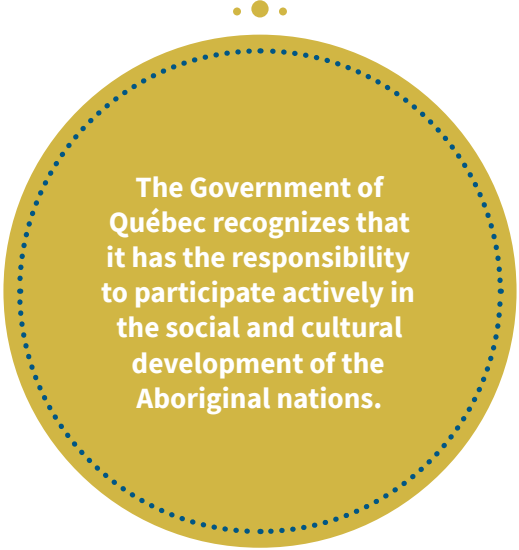
Once this know-how had been acquired, following the Franco-English wars, the Anglo-American conflicts and the decline of the fur market, the relationship between the original inhabitants and the colonial powers changed dramatically. The British Crown would, of course, officially recognize the Aboriginal peoples' specific rights, in particular in the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, but as numerous historians have shown, the relationship between the colonial governments and the Aboriginal peoples very quickly became harmful to the latter. Accordingly, no Aboriginal representative was invited to the Charlottetown and Québec City conferences that led in 1867 to the establishment of the Canadian federation, whose first government sought, in the words of its leader John A. Macdonald, "to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion." It was at that time that the burden of pernicious colonialism exerted its full weight on Aboriginal societies. The *Indian Act*, adopted in 1876, permanently confirmed an asymmetrical relationship in which the Aboriginal peoples were infantilized and even scorned.¹

The impacts of this relationship were widely documented, in a 20-year interval, by the exhaustive deliberations of two commissions: the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). In many ways, the commissions emphasized the vigour and the resilience of the Aboriginal societies. However, they also clearly showed that the First Nations and Inuit have been subject for several generations to sustained attempts at assimilation. The terrible social consequences of the systemic racism and discrimination that they have suffered since the beginnings of the Canadian federation are now known. Moreover, the two commissions have extensively documented them.

For all that, the Government of Québec has made several concrete gestures to harmonize its relationship with the Aboriginal peoples, including the entering into the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement* (1975) and the *Northeastern Quebec Agreement* (1978).

At that time, the Government of Québec established a body in the Conseil exécutif, which has since become the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (SAA), responsible, in particular, for developing a sound, productive relationship with the First Nations and Inuit. In 1983, Cabinet ratified the “Fifteen Principles,” which clearly assert the intention to establish the relationship through a nation-to-nation dynamic. In 1985, the National Assembly of Québec adopted a motion to recognize Québec’s 10 Aboriginal nations and their rights. An identical motion in 1989 covered an eleventh nation, the Malecite Nation. In recent years, the Government of Québec has also undertaken comprehensive territorial negotiations with certain nations. In 1998 it published an important document entitled *Partenariat, développement, action*, in which it made public its policy directions in the realm of Aboriginal affairs and confirmed its desire to reach negotiated agreements

nation to nation. In 2002, the *Peace of the Braves* agreement and the *Sanarrutik Agreement* were concluded with the Cree and the Inuit, respectively.



The Government of Québec recognizes that it has the responsibility to participate actively in the social and cultural development of the Aboriginal nations.

While these conciliatory gestures had significant political repercussions, the social difficulties experienced by a number of Aboriginal communities in Québec have not abated. The Aboriginal peoples must still contend in their daily lives with the destructive effects of a still recent past. Faced with these difficulties, the Government of Québec recognizes that it has the responsibility to participate actively in the social and cultural development of the Aboriginal nations. This commitment is not new. Indeed, in the wake of the Forum socioéconomique des Premières Nations held in Mashteuiatsh in 2006, the Government of Québec had already implemented considerable means, sometimes recurrent, for the benefit of the Aboriginal communities. It was also at that time that Government of Québec departments and agencies elaborated, in their strategies and action plans, measures expressly adapted to the circumstances of the Inuit and the First Nations.

Today, the Government of Québec has decided to renew and broaden its commitment to the development of the Aboriginal societies.

-
1. The *Indian Act* included, for example, compulsory “emancipation” measures. Accordingly, Aboriginal individuals who obtained a university degree, entered a professional corporation as a physician, a lawyer or a notary or who became a Christian minister had to renounce their Indian status. In actual fact, the privileges and rights associated with citizenship were only granted to the Aboriginal peoples on the express condition that they renounce their status.

1.2 Collective awareness

Striking events have recently made the headlines and, more than ever, demonstrated the need to step up efforts to improve the quality of life of Québec's Aboriginal citizens.

The tabling of the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada highlighted the contemporary impact of a boarding school system that, for a century, tore apart families and separated children from their parents. The subsequent erosion of social cohesion in the communities, the rupturing of family ties, a feeling of collective alienation, and spiritual, cultural and linguistic loss were the lasting consequences both for communities and individuals. In the official apology to the Aboriginal nations in June 2008 on behalf of Canadians, Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged the deliberate nature of this planned attempt at assimilation. In June 2015, Québec Premier Philippe Couillard described as cultural genocide the system established to erase the identity, culture and even the language of the First Nations communities in our country.

The outcome of the 2015 federal election also contributed to bringing the Aboriginal question to the forefront of public concerns. A new political context is evolving across Canada that is focusing broader attention on Aboriginal issues, especially in respect of intergovernmental relations. The establishment of a federal, provincial, territorial and Aboriginal forum exemplifies the movement, to which the Government of Québec readily adheres.

Furthermore, the question of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, the unfortunate events in Val-d'Or and media reports have strikingly revealed the specific vulnerability of Aboriginal women in Québec and Canadian societies. In 2016, the federal government established a national commission of inquiry to examine the systemic causes of violence against Aboriginal women and girls. In addition to adopting an Order in Council to guarantee its participation in the Canada-wide commission, the Government of Québec established its own commission of inquiry, which is focusing on relations between the Aboriginal peoples

and certain public services, in particular policing, health and social services. The commission's findings are expected in 2018.

Today, Quebecers are becoming more acutely aware of the situation. The reality of the deplorable conditions in which their Aboriginal fellow citizens live, which are unworthy of a democratic, prosperous society such as Québec, is acutely apparent to Quebecers as never before. They know that the situation must change.

The Government of Québec acknowledges that acculturation and the social problems that the Aboriginal peoples are experiencing cannot go on. They are embodied in daily human dramas that are straining individuals, dislocating families and inhibiting the potential of entire communities. What is more, they are depriving Québec of resources that could otherwise contribute productively to developing the Québec society of the future.

Everyone understands that the time has come to act.

Today, Quebecers are becoming more acutely aware of the situation. The reality of the deplorable conditions in which their Aboriginal fellow citizens live, which are unworthy of a democratic, prosperous society such as Québec, is acutely apparent to Quebecers as never before. They know that the situation must change.

1.3

More effective action

In recent years, the inclusion of distinctive measures in policies, strategies and sectoral action plans in social affairs has nonetheless engendered appreciable progress in the quality of the Government of Québec's intervention in Aboriginal communities. Accordingly, numerous issues such as poverty, homelessness, conjugal and family violence, youth, culture, health and sexual assault have been examined from the standpoint of the distinctive characteristics of a population whose identity and needs set it apart.

Current conditions in the communities nonetheless reveal that despite such efforts and the investment of substantial resources, the outcomes have not always achieved the desired impact. The Government of Québec has, therefore, resolved to consolidate and enhance its initiatives. To this end, it has decided to group together Aboriginal social and cultural development measures into a single approach, which incorporates all of the measures proposed by government departments and agencies in each of the critical areas concerned.

The Government of Québec has never adopted this approach before. Accordingly, instead of continuing to intervene in a fragmented manner through separate sectoral strategies or action plans, the Government of Québec will from now on contribute to the social and cultural development of the Inuit and the First Nations through concerted action. This approach now makes possible better synergy between the measures of different government departments and agencies. In point of fact, it has been difficult in recent years to establish complementarity or achieve a leverage effect between measures designed in a disparate manner. The integration of such measures seeks, for the first time, genuine cohesion in government action in the realm of Aboriginal social and cultural development.

This action plan is meant to be the outcome of this new approach.

**The Government of Québec
has, therefore, resolved to
consolidate and enhance its initiatives.
To this end, it has decided to group
together Aboriginal social and cultural
development measures into a single
approach, which incorporates all of
the measures proposed by government
departments and agencies in each
of the focal areas concerned.**

.....1.4.....
Comprehensive intervention

The government understands that its initiatives must hinge on a comprehensive perspective. Moreover, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada notes that “the approach must be an holistic and culturally appropriate one that addresses the need for improvements in health, education, and economic development in Aboriginal communities” (TRC, *Summary*, pages 227-228). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples also stressed the notion that sanitary living conditions, education, cultural identity, spiritual support and economic activity “are not separate needs; they are all aspects of a whole” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Highlights*, page 72).

participate productively in social life, and contribute to the common good. Social development does not seek solely to facilitate the self-fulfilment and quality of life of individuals, nor is it confined to the broader inclusion of marginalized individuals. It also seeks to strengthen communities, citizen involvement by community members, and the achievement of collective ambitions. Broadly understood, social development implements initiatives designed to promote social bonds and the establishment of a context of equal opportunity that gives all individuals the possibility of overcoming disadvantages, asserting their dignity, and creating a fruitful life. This approach is the first component of the action plan.

Broadly understood, social development implements initiatives designed to promote social bonds and the establishment of a context of equal opportunity that gives all individuals the possibility of overcoming disadvantages, asserting their dignity, and creating a fruitful life. This approach is the first component of the action plan.

Cultural development is indissociable from social development. The Aboriginal languages and cultures have sustained lengthy erosion, the victims of denigration that has sometimes expressed itself through latent discrimination and sometimes through direct attempts at eradication. Culture is a key component of a people's identity. It unites its members and offers them reference points. It structures, so to speak, the essence of the collective imagination. It defines values, formulates shared convictions, and reflects a shared representation of the universe. It assures the transmission of customs and traditions. Culture expresses a people's aspirations and is the ideal medium through which a people projects itself both in the future and in the world. With the passing generations, repeated pressure has caused in the First Nations and Inuit disquiet and dejection, which, by and large, explain the social problems that have developed in their societies.

The concept of social development that shapes this action plan is thus understood in its broadest sense. It is a question of establishing and bolstering the requisite conditions to enable individuals to fully achieve their potential and personal aspirations,

The promotion of culture and support for the Aboriginal languages are the second component of the action plan. In practical terms, government intervention seeks to help consolidate the Aboriginal languages, stimulate and promote the artistic expression, promote heritage and support the production and dissemination of cultural works.

The question of improving the quality of life of individuals and societies is not, of course, confined to the sole vectors of social and cultural development: it must also take into account economic development. All of these components are directly dependent on each other, which is why this action plan must not be considered in isolation. It must be regarded as the most recent of two key measures elaborated by the Government of Québec to enhance the quality of life of the Inuit and the First Nations.

Indeed, since 1999, the Government of Québec has already fostered economic development in the communities through the AIF. The program was renewed, in April 2017, for a period of five years, and makes available to the Aboriginal peoples a \$135-million budget for economic development. With the social and cultural development action plan, the Government of Québec has adopted an instrument that complements the AIF. Both tools have been designed to mutually reinforce each other and will be implemented coherently.

The holistic definition of well-being that Aboriginal culture advocates does not necessarily suit the manner in which modern governments usually organize their activities. Indeed, separate government departments and agencies that usually work independently of each other, each in its own field of expertise, carry out government intervention. With the publication of this action plan and the renewal of the AIF, the Government of Québec is initiating a paradigm shift in its manner of envisioning the development of Aboriginal societies: from now on, it is advocating a comprehensive approach rooted in the economic, social and cultural circumstances of the communities.²

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2. This action plan thus falls within the scope of a sustainable development perspective, as defined by the policy directions in *The 2015-2020 Government Sustainable Development Strategy*, in particular to promote social inclusion and reduce social and economic inequality, and to enhance through prevention the health of the population.



2

CLEAR POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

The initiatives in this action plan must hinge on clear principles. The following policy directions dictate its general conception and implementation.

.....2.1.....

Extending a hand from nation to nation

The Canadian courts have gradually recognized the specific legal status of the Aboriginal peoples. In particular, in 1996 the Supreme Court confirmed this status in the Van der Peet judgement, by emphasizing that they lived in Canada in separate communities and possessed their own cultures, customs and traditions long before the arrival of the first Europeans. The Supreme Court noted that subsection 35(1) of the *Constitution Act, 1982* “is the reconciliation of the pre-existence of distinctive aboriginal societies with the assertion of Crown sovereignty.”

Accordingly, the Inuit and members of the First Nations are not only full-fledged Québec citizens but also constitute nations in the sociological and political sense, i.e. cohesive societies that are aware of their uniqueness, capable of enduring and maintaining elaborate

political relationships. The concept of an Aboriginal nation refers to communities whose historic continuity, cultural conscience, ethnic identity and conception of the political sphere have survived the colonial past and the establishment and rapid growth of a new nation in the territory.

The Government of Québec understands, therefore, that the Aboriginal peoples are not a simple minority group, whose difficulties the government must endeavour to resolve. They form political entities that occupy a singular place in Québec. This means, in particular, that the Aboriginal communities do not constitute for the Québec State a community like any other. The action plan specifically reflects this spirit. It represents, at the root of the nation-to-nation relationship that the Government of Québec wishes to continue to build with the Inuit and the First Nations, an attempt to achieve an Aboriginal partnership.

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2.2

A commitment to reconciliation

The relationship between the original inhabitants and public authorities has been marked historically by significant distortions. Mistakes have been made and harm has been done. Mutual misunderstandings have arisen, mistrust has emerged and conflicts have persisted. This relationship must clearly now receive special attention. Reconciliation is a necessary goal to which the Government of Québec intends to devote considerable effort.

In this respect, the government has taken note of the perspective of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, which, in its report, explains that reconciliation consists in putting right past mistakes and in “maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples” (TRC, *Summary*, page 6). This is an ongoing process that must hinge on the truth and result in genuine societal changes. To become reconciled means working actively to achieve conciliation, i.e. a serene state of cohabitation, constructive exchanges and mutual understanding. As the Commission rightly noted, “reconciliation must become a way of life” (TRC, *Volume 6*, page 20).

This relationship must clearly now receive special attention. Reconciliation is necessary, to which the Government of Québec intends to devote considerable effort.

2.3

A contribution to healing

What is more, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada very rightly observes that “without... healing, there can be no genuine reconciliation” (TRC, *Volume 6*, page 7). For two centuries, Québec’s Aboriginal peoples have displayed remarkable resilience. However, two centuries of injustice, uprooting and marginalization have in many ways undermined the societies and left after-effects from which they must now heal. The process must be viewed from two closely linked perspectives.

A number of individuals are experiencing serious personal problems, often reflected in antisocial, self-destructive behaviour. Such individuals, burdened by painful problems, must have an opportunity to regain their physical, psychological and spiritual health. They must have access to conditions which enable them to regain the energy and dignity necessary to confidently manage their lives and thrive harmoniously in society.

This notion of an approach geared to the improvement of quality of life also applies to communities, since the latter must recover from alienating events that have deeply shaken their foundations. We must enable the Aboriginal communities to regain their vitality and restore their balanced state. Individual and collective well-being are two facets of the same process and are interdependent.

It goes without saying that the healing process must originate in the communities. It must be based on the know-how of the Aboriginal peoples, their traditions and their worldview. However, the Government of Québec acknowledges that it has a responsibility in this process and affirms through this action plan its determination to contribute tangibly to it.

2.4

Relevant, reassuring action from a cultural standpoint

To have a genuine impact, 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 conception of the measures in this action plan thus hinges on a comprehensive effort to understand and acknowledge the Aboriginal peoples’ specific situation. The objective is to maximize access to and the effectiveness of government service delivery through a sweeping, gradual, coherent adaptation of such delivery to the specific cultural and historic traits of the Inuit and the First Nations. An understanding of the specific nature of the Aboriginal peoples and the acquisition by personnel in the delivery of Québec public services of the appropriate skills is therefore essential to establishing a reassuring environment of which trust and respect are the hallmarks.

An understanding of the specific nature of the Aboriginal peoples and the acquisition by interveners in the delivery of Québec public services of the appropriate skills is therefore essential to establish a reassuring environment of which trust and respect are the hallmarks.

In the long run, it is a question of implementing the relevant initiatives in keeping with Aboriginal sensitivities and cultures in order to eliminate the obstacles that the Aboriginal peoples all too often encounter when confronted with networks and services in which they feel lost and which often reflect values and customs that are foreign to them.

The action plan has been drafted—and will be implemented—according to this logic of reassurance and cultural relevance.

2.5

Recognition of urban challenges

The implementation of relevant, reassuring measures from the standpoint of the Aboriginal cultures is especially important in urban environments where the Inuit and members of the First Nations, having left their familiar communities, often experience a cultural shock and a loss of points of reference. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples noted, “culture is not something Aboriginal people discard at the city limits” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Highlights*, page 117).

This action plan must meet the challenge of broadening the presence in urban environments of the Aboriginal communities. The Aboriginal peoples are becoming increasingly mobile between Québec communities and municipalities. There are numerous reasons to settle temporarily or permanently in the city: to find work, study, receive medical treatment or social services and even, unfortunately, to flee a harmful situation.

This new reality has given rise to new needs and has also created challenges from the standpoint of the complementarity of services. While some Aboriginal peoples adapt well to their new environment and have good jobs, many others unfortunately experience disturbing difficulties. In addition to the tragedy and misery that can stem from such destitution, the situation causes, in some urban agglomerations, health and public security problems that cannot be overlooked. Another factor that must not be overlooked is that Aboriginal

peoples in the cities need to be able to create spaces where they can meet and collectively experience their cultural affiliation.

In short, this demographic movement to the municipalities demands that we mobilize to make Québec’s cities places where the Aboriginal peoples can develop and achieve individual and collective self-fulfilment in a spirit of respect for their difference. The action plan also reflects this key direction.

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2.6

Compliance with the constitutional framework

The Government of Québec must act swiftly to address urban challenges since from the standpoint of health, social, education, employment, housing and other services its involvement is especially necessary when the beneficiary does not live in the territory of a community recognized pursuant to the *Indian Act*. This situation stems from a constitutional framework that must necessarily be taken into account. The Government of Québec thus intends to adopt the necessary tools to adapt its response to the growing number of Aboriginal peoples who are relying on the services in its networks.

However, we also know that the Canadian constitutional framework attributes to the federal government a specific role with respect to the Aboriginal peoples. Pursuant to subsection 91(24) of the *Constitution Act, 1867*, it exercises exclusive jurisdiction with regard to “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians.” Hence, not only is it primarily responsible for community services but it is also responsible for contributing to the well-being of the Aboriginal peoples off reserve.

This situation therefore imposes objective limits on the Government of Québec's intervention. It cannot act as a substitute for the federal government not only because of the limited scope of its own jurisdiction but also because it does not have sufficient resources to do so. For all that, the Government of Québec believes it is a priority to enhance the living conditions of the Aboriginal communities located in Québec's territory. Bearing in mind the constitutional framework and the attendant federal-provincial situation, the Government of Québec intends to implement in a complementary manner to the Government of Canada's initiatives the broadest possible efforts in order to participate concretely in the consolidation of the social safety net and conditions to ensure cultural self-fulfilment from which all of Québec's Aboriginal citizens must benefit. What is more, it is in this perspective that it is already funding on the reserves the construction and operation of childcare centres or granting significant funding

to Aboriginal law enforcement services that report to the band councils. This action plan seeks to pursue such efforts.

The two levels of government must more effectively combine their efforts and, through enhanced consultation, establish better synergy in their initiatives.

Compliance with the Canadian constitutional context must, moreover, go hand in hand with a renewed dialogue between the Québec and federal governments. The two levels of government must more effectively combine their efforts and, through enhanced consultation, establish better synergy in their initiatives. This spirit must, in particular, guide the necessary implementation of Jordan's Principle.³

3. Jordan's Principle, stemming from a decision handed down in January 2016 by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, stipulates that no Aboriginal child should be subject to a refusal, disturbances or delay in services because of a jurisdictional conflict between the federal government and the government of his province or territory of residence.

2.7

Essential consideration for Aboriginal women

The media coverage of different types of violence sustained by Aboriginal women and girls has contributed greatly to recent awareness in Québec of the social unrest that is undermining Aboriginal societies. In particular, it has revealed major discrimination issues centred on gender and vulnerability specific to Aboriginal women, who experience a higher violence rate and are the victims of more serious forms of violence than non-Aboriginal women. In particular, they are overrepresented among the victims of homicides, including spousal and domestic homicides. It should be noted, in this respect, that in 2015 the Committee on Citizen Relations of the National Assembly undertook an initiative mandate on the living conditions of Aboriginal women in conjunction with sexual assault and spousal and family violence.

The initiatives implemented under this action plan will be adopted for the benefit of Québec's Aboriginal population overall, both women and men. The challenges that First Nations and Inuit women and girls are facing nonetheless require a perspective of the social and cultural development of the populations that focuses essentially on living conditions and the differentiated needs of women and men.

This perspective hinges on a twofold objective, i.e. to combat different vulnerability factors that affect women and girls, and to promote the full mastery of their ability to act to enable them to contribute fully to the development of communities and the environments in which they are essential links. Women do not only constitute in Aboriginal societies a vulnerable group in respect of which we must seek to enhance living conditions. They are also genuine social anchors in the family and the community whose role must be promoted. They possess considerable strength for change on which we must capitalize.

In the perspective of this twofold objective, government intervention in the realm of social development for Aboriginal women and girls will be carried out in two ways. First, the challenges facing First Nations and Inuit women will be considered in a horizontal manner

in the implementation of the key developmental measures under the action plan. Second, measures will be elaborated to satisfy the targeted needs specific to women, in particular with respect to sexual abuse, spousal and family violence and the complementarity between women and men as regards economic empowerment and social and political leadership.

By placing the condition of Aboriginal women at the forefront of its initiatives, the Government of Québec expects a positive overall impact not only on the health of families but also on the betterment of the entire community. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples noted, we must seek "reintegration of women into family, community and nation decision making" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, *Highlights*, page 59).

Women do not only constitute in Aboriginal societies a vulnerable group in respect of which we must seek to enhance living conditions. They are also genuine social anchors in the family and the community whose role must be promoted.

2.8

Special attention for Aboriginal young people

At the same time, young people, whose self-fulfilment is a key to the development of Aboriginal societies, warrant special attention.

For two generations, the population of the Aboriginal nations has grown at a much faster pace than Québec's total population. Aboriginal young people are increasingly becoming a majority in their communities. Nearly 50% of Québec's Aboriginal peoples are under 30 years of age and roughly 60% are under 35 years of age, compared with 34% and 40%, respectively, in the total population. These young people are facing daunting challenges. They know that entire segments of the society to which they belong must be rebuilt and that they are destined to become the key builders. Aboriginal young people have tremendous potential that must continue to be put to good use and on which we must more broadly rely.

This action plan is meant to contribute concretely to the growth of Aboriginal youth. The Government of Québec hopes to support the Aboriginal communities to enable them to guide young people in their life paths and offer

services that will help them to become active 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.

Aboriginal young people have tremendous potential that must continue to be put to good use and on which we must more broadly rely.

2.9

Gradual action

This action plan presents measures that will constitute the main part of the Government of Québec's commitment in the realm of Aboriginal social and cultural development over the next five years (2017-2022). However, during this period, the array of measures will be enhanced.

Relevant initiatives will continue to be conceived in collaboration with the Aboriginal communities and will be incorporated into the action plan for its duration. We know, for example, that certain Government of Québec action plans, strategies or sectoral policies containing measures specifically intended for the

Aboriginal peoples will expire during the five-year span of this action plan. Such measures will be integrated into the action plan at the time of their renewal and then become an integral part of it.

Another example: measures devoted to the Aboriginal peoples are still being elaborated in the government departments and agencies concerned and cannot be incorporated immediately into this action plan. They will be integrated at later stages.

Lastly, we know that the Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services


in Québec is expected to publish its report in 2018. The report will undoubtedly include recommendations that could lead to the conception of new measures. If need be, such measures will also be integrated into this action plan. The conclusions of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will, of course, be considered in the same way.

In short, this action plan is not static but is open-ended and will be subject to updates. Above all, it remains open to innovation.

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Photo: La Boîte Rouge VIF



We have marched for centuries
We have marched for millennia
To bring light to the world
To carry the spirits of our fathers
To carry the words of our predecessors
To carry the honour of our mothers
Who roamed the land for centuries for millennia
Canoes and children on their shoulders

It is not colonization that will stop us
It is not poison that will stop us
It is not residential schools that will stop us
It is not the gaze of others that will stop us

We have marched for centuries
We have marched for millennia
To continue turning the medicine wheel
To continue honouring our memory
To continue honouring our future

Natasha Kanapé Fontaine





1

ENHANCE SERVICES

Generally speaking, the Québec State intervenes in the realm of social and cultural development through service delivery designed according to determined needs. Public and parapublic bodies, often structured in networks reporting to government departments, are responsible for administering such services and constantly ensure that they respond judiciously to varied local conditions. In this respect, the action plan pursues two key objectives.

• • •

The Government of Québec wishes to offer more effective programs and services that are better adapted to the conditions of the First Nations and Inuit as they perceive them, whether, in particular, in the realm of health, social services, education, justice, public security, employment or culture.

• • •

First, it seeks to broaden the Government of Québec's service offer to the Aboriginal peoples to make it fuller and more accessible, bearing in mind the specific nature of the missions of the government departments and agencies concerned, and in keeping with the federal government's responsibilities. The Government of Québec wishes to offer more effective programs and services that are better adapted to the conditions of the First Nations and Inuit as they perceive them, whether, in particular, in the realm of health, social services, education, justice, public security, employment or culture.

Second, the government wishes to consolidate existing services. The aim is not only to better intervene in fields that are already subject to government measures but also to create complementarity between the networks of the Québec State and Aboriginal organizations, which, on or off the reserve, provide many services in the same or related fields.

Establish new services

As numerous indicators reveal, the living conditions of Québec's Aboriginal peoples are usually inferior to those of the total population. Aboriginal communities are often affected by the prevalence of major psychosocial and socioeconomic problems, which are observed among the Inuit and the First Nations as in no other group in Québec society. As Québec Premier Philippe Couillard noted in 2015, such living conditions are not commensurate with a country of Canada's prosperity, size and wealth.

A broad range of intervention

Consequently, the Government of Québec's intervention must cover a very broad range of needs. In recent years, a number of government departments and agencies have, therefore, conducted consultations among the First Nations and Inuit in many fields, in order to determine needs and properly target development initiatives:

- poverty and social exclusion
- sexual exploitation
- cultural policy
- racism and discrimination
- sexual assault

- spousal and family violence
- elder abuse
- homophobia and transphobia
- educational success
- gender equality
- bullying
- youth
- addiction
- health prevention
- homelessness

The measures put forward in this action plan centre directly on the consultations. They reflect the Government of Québec's desire to make available to the Aboriginal peoples services and programs geared to their circumstances and immediate needs in all sectors where its intervention is possible.

However, it should be noted that, from the outset, the measures do not cover all of the topics subject to consultation.

Indeed, deliberations are still under way in certain government departments and agencies to elaborate measures aligned to the needs expressed by the representatives of the First Nations and the Inuit Nation. For example, health prevention measures, especially

suicide prevention, aimed at the Aboriginal peoples will be added to this action plan once they are determined (2017-2018).

Furthermore, sectoral action plans that are still in force cover other priority topics. While they are designed for the total population, they include measures devoted to the Aboriginal peoples. The measures will be incorporated into this action plan when the action plans that now contain them are renewed: homelessness (2020), spousal and family violence (2018), mental health (2020) and bullying (2018).

The Government of Québec therefore plans to implement initiatives that will be as exhaustive as possible. Various measures are being implemented immediately, including those indicated below.

- Concrete initiatives that target educational success and school retention among Aboriginal students will be introduced and resources will be allocated to support parents and students in their educational experience.
- Measures and programs will be established to better support the Aboriginal clientele in the Québec justice system.
- Resources will be invested to support and guide Aboriginal inmates in detention facilities to promote the management of their problems.
- Means will be adopted to facilitate the development of midwife services in non-treaty communities.
- Structuring initiatives will be implemented to support women, in particular women's groups, to counteract sexual abuse, promote egalitarian relationships and combat gender inequality.
- Tools will be designed in the realm of youth protection to reduce the difficulties that Aboriginal children and their families encounter and to promote the involvement of Aboriginal communities and foster families in service delivery.
- The means will be adopted to combat addiction and violence and to foster the mobilization of communities to deal with these questions.⁴

4. In the case of the Inuit, the measures will take into account the Saqijjuq initiative, which seeks to combat the consumption of psychoactive substances and the over-judicialisation that it engenders.

Relevant, reassuring intervention from the standpoint of the Aboriginal cultures

While the government service offer must be as full and diversified as possible, it is equally essential that it be culturally relevant and reassuring. Even when it receives substantial resources, a program or service is usually ineffective if it is not adapted to the circumstances of the target clientele or if the latter feels misunderstood or unwelcome and decides not to take advantage of it.

**The goal is for the
supplier of services to
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skills to serve them.**

The initiatives under this action plan will, consequently, be elaborated in a logic of relevance and cultural safety and the same logic will guide their implementation. The goal is for the supplier of services to take into account the history and cultural experience of the Aboriginal peoples and to acquire the appropriate skills to serve them. Measures will be adopted in this respect, in particular:

- establish cultural safety strategies in the health and social services network;
- offer government employees in the public and parapublic sectors awareness-raising sessions

on the historic, cultural and sociological situation of the Aboriginal peoples and training on the concept of relevance and cultural safety;

- train and raise awareness among Sûreté du Québec and municipal police officers and service providers in the socio-judicial sector of the distinctive characteristics and differences of the Aboriginal clientele;

- adapt to the circumstances of the First Nations and Inuit the information and awareness-raising tools elaborated in conjunction with the fight against addiction;
- ensure the implementation of adapted measures aimed at offering culturally reassuring and relevant services to Aboriginal crime victims;
- reach agreements to establish a specific Aboriginal youth protection scheme.

1.2

Enhance the existing service offer

The Government of Québec has, for several years, offered a broad array of services to the members of the First Nations and the Inuit Nation. The service offer must be bolstered both through the enhancement of existing measures and by means of broader complementarity between the measures.

This action plan seeks to achieve this end.

Consolidated initiatives

The Government of Québec's existing initiatives can be consolidated in the realms of education, health and social services, justice, public security, off-reserve housing or employment. The approaches can be reviewed, resources can be reallocated and funding bolstered. In this spirit, the Government of Québec intends, in particular, to:

- pursue the fight against elder abuse in Aboriginal communities;
- reorganize its initiatives by means of a comprehensive, concerted strategy to promote the employment integration of the Inuit and the First Nations;
- enhance measures devoted to off-reserve Aboriginal housing;

- enhance the assistance already granted to the Kitcisakik Anicinapek community for home renovation;
- improve the financial conditions of tenants of low-cost housing in Nunavik;
- establish services adapted to the circumstances of Aboriginal students in the Québec education system;
- broaden access and the addiction service continuum for members of the First Nations and Inuit.

Complementary initiatives

The manner in which government intervention is contemplated in the Aboriginal communities must take into account a basic characteristic. In many cases, the Aboriginal peoples themselves offer services to the members of the First Nations and Inuit, either through organizations that are part of their governance structures or through Aboriginal community organizations. Whether they depend on a band council or province-wide body or are part of civil society, the Aboriginal organizations are essential stakeholders, often the best suited to offering the most appropriate measures.

Whether they depend on a band council or province-wide body or are part of civil society, the Aboriginal organizations are essential interveners, often the best suited to offering the most appropriate measures.

The federal government is the largest funder of service structures that report to the band councils. While the Government of Québec is also participating in this effort, especially through recurrent funding for Aboriginal police departments, it is also supporting numerous community organizations, which, off the reserves, offer varied services to the Inuit and the members of the First Nations. The Québec State simultaneously accommodates in its networks, for example health, social services or education, a substantial Aboriginal clientele.

It is, therefore, apparent that constant cooperation must be established between the different stakeholders. First, the aim is to maximize the efficiency of the resources invested by coordinating the measures and avoiding duplications. Second, it is important to further bolster the collaboration that is essential to create service corridors. The coordination of the initiatives of various service providers must lead, for Aboriginal users, to coherent, continuous service delivery.

Of course, a smooth service continuum must, above all, be achieved between different public networks and, consequently, within the networks. At the same time, different Government of Québec services and the services that Aboriginal organizations offer must be better linked. The linking must be achieved bearing in mind certain obstacles, such as the considerable mobility in Québec of the Aboriginal populations, language barriers, the jurisdictional responsibilities of different service providers, or the lack of resources of Aboriginal organizations.

In this perspective, this action plan puts forward measures that establish effective complementarity between the services that the Government of Québec offers and those that on-reserve and off-reserve Aboriginal organizations offer. While the Government of Québec is promoting the management by the Aboriginal peoples of the means to ensure their well-being, it should be noted that it is not a question of establishing bodies parallel to the Québec networks. While it continues to encourage the establishment and development of Aboriginal service organizations, the Government of Québec wishes, above all, to harmonize its initiatives and those of the Aboriginal organizations.

For example, it is adopting the following measures:

- establish collaborative forums in Québec municipalities in which significant numbers of Aboriginal peoples live in order to draw closer together the representatives of the Aboriginal organizations concerned and local stakeholders in the public networks;
- implement the recommendations in the report of the committee on the administration of Bill 21, the *Act to amend the Professional Code and other legislative provisions in the field of mental health and human relations*, in the Aboriginal communities.

The first strategic priority of the action plan can be summarized schematically as follows:





2

PROMOTE THE ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND LANGUAGES

The Inuit and the First Nations are an integral part of Québec's cultural landscape. They are building contemporary Québec and contributing to its cultural diversity and identity.

However, the hardships have been many and the after-effects persist. A society does not survive a concerted attempt to annihilate its culture without bearing significant consequences. In this respect, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada described at length the devastating effects of the residential school system on the transmission of the basic underlying facets of the Aboriginal identity, such as language and culture. Torn at a very young age from their communities, the children had to attend for eight or nine years schools where they were socialized according to the model of white society and forced to internalize a foreign value system, prohibited from speaking their language, and even taught to scorn their own customs and to disdain their parents' culture. The pressure, exerted on several generations, provoked the obliteration of identity and a genuine hiatus in the transmission of the Aboriginal cultures and languages.

Everyone now acknowledges the need to restore them to their rightful place. However, this approach must not only be carried out in the perspective of healing. The Aboriginal languages and cultures must also be promoted because in themselves they enrich Québec. To discover them is also to discover to what extent the First Nations and Inuit have a great deal to contribute to our collective heritage.

This action plan therefore proposes concrete support both for the Aboriginal cultures and languages.

The Aboriginal languages and cultures must also be promoted because in themselves they enrich Québec. To discover them is also to discover to what extent the First Nations and Inuit have a great deal to contribute to our collective heritage.

2.1 Support the blossoming of the Aboriginal cultures

Despite prolonged attacks, the Aboriginal nations have maintained living, authentic cultures. Over time, the development of the cultures has certainly been inhibited or even sometimes compromised, but, when all is said and done, the historic record clearly shows that faced with adversity, Québec's Aboriginal peoples have preserved a deep-seated determination to assert their difference and their diversity. The cultures of Québec's First Peoples bear witness to a strength and diversity that have enabled the Aboriginal peoples to create a way of seeing, an identity and values that constitute a powerful lever for the development of their communities.

Contrary to what some people think, the Aboriginal cultures are not vestiges of bygone days or a folkloric past that are out of step with the contemporary world. In many ways, the Aboriginal cultures reflect how Québec's First Peoples now grasp the world, i.e. resolutely modern but deeply rooted in their traditions, sensitive to the attractions of urban environments, but solidly rooted in the fullness of the territory. Aboriginal poets, sculptors, painters, singers and performers from all fields today blend with broad sensitivity their

experience of the modern environment and a traditional perspective of the world. The Aboriginal cultures have never been static. They mirror, in a manner of speaking, a dynamic collective experience.

The vitality of the Aboriginal cultures must not only be contemplated in terms of artistic creation. It must be said that they also express themselves in everyday customs and ancestral practices that reveal a distinct way of life and an especially varied relationship with nature.

We must now ensure that the Aboriginal cultures have the means to sustain their vitality.

Moreover, support for Aboriginal cultural development is the ideal tool to deal with numerous social problems linked to exclusion, poverty or isolation. The strengthening of cultures and their integration in communities are contributing to enhancing living environments. Indeed, a living, shared culture facilitates cohesion, dialogue, inclusion and the overall quality of social bonds.

Furthermore, it is, above all, through the influence of the Aboriginal cultures that it will be possible to significantly reverse the racism and discrimination in Québec of which the First Nations and Inuit are still the victims. Ignorance is the cornerstone of stereotypes. The dissemination of the Aboriginal cultures, their recognition and

promotion are the foremost means of eliminating myths and generally accepted ideas that many non-natives continue to harbour.

To support the Aboriginal peoples in this cultural affirmation process and thus contribute to the rapid development of their communities, the Government of Québec does not intend to put forward a set model. The cultures of the 11 Aboriginal nations are unique and even if they have a great deal in common, they all display significant traits that must be acknowledged and promoted. To this end, the Government of Québec wishes to emphasize support that reflects each nation's specific traits, in particular through the following measures:

- support the communities to promote the emergence of cultural governance;
- elaborate a strategy aimed at developing the Aboriginal heritage;
- implement support measures in the handicrafts and arts and crafts sector;
- financially support Aboriginal artists.

Furthermore, it is, above all, through the influence of the Aboriginal cultures that it will be possible to significantly reverse the racism and discrimination in Québec of which the First Nations and Inuit are still the victims. Ignorance is the cornerstone of stereotypes.

2.2

Strengthen the Aboriginal languages

Language, identity and culture are interrelated, all the more so in societies with oral traditions such as the First Nations and Inuit. Language is an expression of a shared experience of the world and is the instrument par excellence to transmit such experience. It is the first manifestation of the existence of a group and its presence in history.

The Aboriginal languages of Québec are divided into the Iroquoian, Algonquian and Eskimo-Aleut language families. Nine languages and their dialects are still spoken there: Inuktitut, Innu, Cree, Attikamek, Algonquin, Mi'kmaq, Mohawk, Naskapi and Abenaki. The linguistic status of the Aboriginal peoples varies considerably depending on the groups and nations,

but three cases are usually observed: 1) the language is transmitted in a family setting and the speakers use it in their everyday activities; 2) it is the elders, above all, who master the language, which is not systematically transmitted in the family setting; 3) the language is dying out or only traces of it remain in written or sound documentation.⁵ It should also be noted that the Aboriginal languages generally display greater vitality in Québec than elsewhere in Canada. Accordingly,

5. Mention should be made of Wendat, deemed to be a dormant language, but that is subject to significant efforts to revitalize it.

in relation to their fellow citizens in the other provinces, roughly twice as many Québec Aboriginal individuals still speak their mother tongue.⁶

Whatever may be inferred from this observation, there is no cause for rejoicing. It simply means that, in relation to the very alarming Canadian average, the linguistic status of the First Nations and Inuit is slightly less disturbing in Québec. Indeed, only 32.6% of Québec's Aboriginal peoples still use their mother tongue in the family setting, while 59% only speak French or English.⁷ For several generations, the Aboriginal languages have experienced a decline that has put some of them in an extremely precarious state.



However, it is important to understand that the historic desire to assimilate the Aboriginal cultures and eradicate their languages does not alone explain this fragility.

Like most of the minority languages in the world, the Aboriginal languages suffer from the proximity of so-called dominant languages, i.e. languages spoken in communities that not only control political power and the economic levers but also make up an overwhelming majority of speakers. In this respect, the Inuit and the First Nations share the risks of almost all minority language speakers. A trend toward linguistic homogenization has always been observable the world over and at all times. Less frequently spoken languages retreat, obliterated by the implacable advance of more widely spoken languages, the mastery of which is often deemed more useful or more prestigious.

Such attrition unquestionably impoverishes the collective heritage. The disappearance of a language signals the disappearance of original perspectives of the world, ancestral knowledge, complete imaginative universes, entire systems of spirituality, and a different conception of history. Linguistic diversity is valuable and Québec must protect itself from the cultural weakening that the decline of the Aboriginal languages signifies.



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6. See Lynn Drapeau, *Les langues autochtones au Québec : un patrimoine en danger*, Québec City: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2011, page 22. See also Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal languages in Canada", 2011, page 3.
 7. Alain Beaulieu, Stéphan Gervais and Martin Papillon, *Les Autochtones et le Québec, des premiers contacts au Plan Nord*, Montréal: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2013, page 198.

It is incumbent upon each community and each nation to decide on the action to be taken to protect its language and promote its use. In the last analysis, the effectiveness of the defence and revitalization of the Aboriginal languages will always be measured in terms of the determination and efforts that the Inuit and the First Nations display. They will always be the sole masters of this perpetual project.

The Government of Québec is nevertheless aware that it can play an important role. It is, therefore, adopting the following measures:

- elaborate and fund support programs for Aboriginal languages, including increased support for community radio stations, in collaboration with the relevant Aboriginal bodies;
- establish with the federal government a dialogue in order to implement joint means to support Québec's Aboriginal languages;
- adopt a national declaration on the Aboriginal languages that affirms the specific place that such languages occupy in Québec.

This action plan therefore proposes a twofold approach in the realm of Aboriginal culture and languages.

First, the Government of Québec wishes to support the emergence in the Aboriginal communities of cultural governance, which must be implemented by and for the communities in order to contribute to their development, in a spirit of respect for their concerns and circumstances. The support, accompanied by concrete assistance for Aboriginal artists, seeks, in other words, to provide all of the communities with the resources and structures to enable them to plan and implement their own cultural development.

Second, the Government of Québec wishes to contribute to the blossoming of the languages of the First Nations and Inuit. Communities cannot be developed without a sustained effort to promote the Aboriginal languages, increase the number of speakers, and foster their use in the activities of daily living. This initiative depends, what is more, on the formal recognition of the contribution to Québec as a whole of the languages that the Inuit and the First Nations speak.

The Government of Québec's initiatives can be summarized schematically as follows:





• 3 •

DEVELOP THE POWER TO ACT OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

Both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples emphasized the importance of healing as a necessary transition for the rapid development of Aboriginal societies. To achieve collective self-fulfilment, the Inuit and the First Nations must overcome the oppressive heritage of the past: they need to thrive and grow.

The Aboriginal communities must design the tools that will enable them to make more enlightened choices for their own future. However, this collective objective will invariably make the development of the capacity of individuals imperative. In the Aboriginal communities, social relations have historically been established in light of the values of cooperation and cohesion, through taking root in the community and a strong sense of belonging. Against this background, collective self-fulfilment is especially dependent on the quality of individual abilities.

The goal is, therefore, to create conditions conducive to the realization of the individual potential of community members and their ability to solve their own problems. We must strive to broaden the power to act of individuals, not only to ensure that they take themselves in hand and mobilize in favour of the conditions of their personal existence but also to become active participants in the process of cohabitation and collective healing.

Accordingly, the delivery of effective, relevant, reassuring services from a cultural standpoint is not, in itself, sufficient. It is not sufficient, either, to adequately target measures geared to critical needs and priorities: we must also implement initiatives that will foster individual empowerment, citizenship learning, and social cohesion.

This action plan reflects that logic. It seeks to support innovative social initiatives, which promote individual empowerment and will put individuals at the forefront of the community's social and cultural development.

3.1

Rely on the potential of individuals

The difficulties that the Aboriginal populations experience with respect to schooling, poverty, employment or health are often deplored at their face value, i.e. given the unacceptable, abnormal nature of individual suffering, public authorities are mobilizing to enhance their conditions.

There is, however, another way to contemplate these questions. In point of fact, we often pay less attention to what has been lost or even ruined in the prevalence of social problems: the waste of individual talent and potential and the loss by thousands of Aboriginal

peoples of the ability to change the course of events, translate a perspective of the common good, and become actors for change.

Accordingly, this action plan implements measures that seek to promote the development of the capacity of individuals and communities, in the perspective of broadening citizen involvement. Citizen learning and the exercise of citizenship imply that individuals share a concern for the enrichment of the collective future and that they make their best contribution to it. The Aboriginal societies must be able to rely on individuals who are able and willing to contribute. Poverty and social exclusion often have as a corollary limited participation in the economic, cultural and political life of the community. Against this background, the need for incentive measures respecting citizen involvement is even clearer.

In point of fact, we often pay less attention to what has been lost or even ruined in the prevalence of social problems: the waste of individual talent and potential and the loss by thousands of Aboriginal peoples of the ability to change the course of events, translate a perspective of the common good, and become actors for change.

**Citizen learning
and the exercise of citizenship
imply that individuals share
a concern for the enrichment
of the collective future
and that they make their
best contribution to it.**

The Government of Québec thus intends to take action that will ultimately enable individuals to better participate in the elaboration of social bonds:

- support the band councils to enable them to work with young people and propose diversified, unifying programming in the realms of sports, recreation and citizen involvement;
- promote the sharing of good practices with respect to parenting skills in Aboriginal communities;
- promote entrepreneurship among Aboriginal youth and women;
- elaborate and disseminate information that enables the Aboriginal peoples to better understand the judicial process and become more aware of their rights;
- encourage the recognition of Aboriginal elders to foster their participation in social life;
- support projects aimed at promoting egalitarian relationships among Aboriginal boys and girls.

3.2

Foster social innovation

What is more, to promote the exercise of citizenship and solidarity in the Aboriginal communities, the Government of Québec will support social innovation projects, i.e. initiatives that propose original approaches that are more closely matched to social conditions in the communities. This action plan encourages such approaches, which, by breaking in a manner of speaking with the status quo, afford on a long-term basis a response to needs and problems, thereby engendering significant benefits not only for certain individuals but also for the community.

Conceived in this manner, such initiatives have the potential to transform communities. While the initiatives can emerge from all environments (bodies that report to the band councils or the Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador [AFNQL]), tribal councils or off-reserve community organizations, and so on,

or be sponsored by youth, women's and other groups, they also have in common that they present innovative solutions to concrete social problems.

In this way, they can affect such varied sectors as education, health, the family, justice or gender equality and complementarity although, in all cases, they target the social inclusion of the Aboriginal peoples and the strengthening of cohesion in their communities.

In this perspective, mention should be made of the following initiatives:

- foster, through the new provisions in the AIF, the implementation of innovative projects and partnerships in fields that are crucial for Aboriginal social development;
- encourage the emergence of community action in the Aboriginal communities;

- broaden the scope of community action in urban settings;
- accentuate support for community justice committees in the Aboriginal communities;
- support the activities of the Elected Women Circle of the AFNQL;
- support projects aimed at Aboriginal young people to promote citizen involvement.

To conclude, the third strategic priority of the action plan seeks to contribute to the revitalization of civic life in the Aboriginal communities by fostering the reappropriation by community members of their own power to act and, more generally, the management of their lives. It can be summarized as follows:





• 4 •

FOSTER COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH

In the realm of Aboriginal social and cultural development, collaboration is one of the conditions for the success of public policies. First, such policies are aimed at a clientele, which, in Québec, displays a unique trait: the Aboriginal peoples form nations and are therefore best suited to determine the initiatives that will contribute to their development. The First Nations and Inuit must, therefore, participate in the elaboration of and follow-up to the measures.

Second, such public policies are developed in a context in which the Government of Québec is not acting alone. It is a question of reconciling the Government of Québec's initiatives with those of federal bodies, bearing in mind the specific role that the Government of Canada plays and its jurisdiction over indigenous peoples and the lands reserved for them.

At another level, it should not be forgotten that the Aboriginal communities are developing in a regional environment, which necessarily implies exchanges with local non-native authorities, especially at the municipal level.

While public policies implemented in Aboriginal communities must rely on a confirmed spirit of cooperation, their effectiveness will also depend on the quality of prior knowledge on conditions in the communities. Research and the production of reliable data are indispensable in this respect.

The Government of Québec intends to focus on collaboration and research.

4.]

Implement more fruitful exchanges

Joint action with the Aboriginal peoples

As we have seen, the Government of Québec regularly conducts sectoral consultations in the Aboriginal communities concerned in an array of fields pertaining to social and cultural development. During their work sessions, Government of Québec decision-makers are able to gauge the concerns and priorities of the communities and contemplate with them implementation procedures. This way of working has become almost systematic and we can indeed be pleased about such progress.

Consultation allows,
of course, for the collection
of useful materials, but joint
action implies an additional
notion, that of partnership.

However, we can still do even more. From now on, the Government of Québec is seeking, when possible, to establish with the Aboriginal communities ongoing joint-action mechanisms. Consultation allows, of course, for the collection of useful information, but joint action implies an additional notion, that of partnership. Looked

at from that point of view, joint action does not only mean taking into account the opinions of the Aboriginal peoples but also implies the notions of participation and dialogue.

This principle must be carried out through concrete initiatives. The local discussion tables on the accessibility of services in urban environments established in several cities in Québec to ensure constant complementarity between the services administered by the Québec networks and those offered by Aboriginal organizations in urban environments are a concrete example of the joint-action model that the Government of Québec is seeking to establish with its partners.⁸

The Saqijuq social regulation initiative also follows this model. It seeks to reduce alcohol or drug consumption among the Inuit and its numerous consequences. Through the mobilization of regional and local resources, Saqijuq must make it possible to enhance the way in which community stakeholders work together to cope with behaviour that all too often leads to over-judicialisation. Saqijuq is an innovative approach adapted to conditions in Nunavik and carried out in collaboration with the Government of Québec. Several government departments are participating in the deliberations of the coordinating committee and the governance office.

This approach has also governed the conception of Aboriginal youth strategies. In partnership with the Secrétariat à la jeunesse du Québec, Aboriginal young people have overseen the elaboration of the three strategies devoted to the Inuit, Cree and First Nations launched in the spring of 2017.

The Aboriginal Socio-Judicial Forum is another important joint-action initiative. It stems from a shared desire by the Government of Québec, partner organizations in the realms of justice, public security, health and

8. This initiative was mentioned earlier in the first strategic priority (enhance services).

social services, and organizations representative of the Aboriginal communities to establish an ongoing forum for discussion in order to promote better joint action with respect to social, police, legal and correctional services. It has the general objective of jointly determining ways of broadening the effectiveness of socio-judicial services in the Aboriginal communities.

The implementation of this action plan, which covers the entire array of Government of Québec initiatives governing Aboriginal social and cultural development will also be carried out in this spirit of cooperation. A joint mechanism that involves the representatives of the Aboriginal bodies concerned and those of the Government of Québec will ensure follow-up to the measures.

Joint action with the Aboriginal peoples must also

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Discussions can be initiated or intensified between the municipalities and Québec's Aboriginal communities. Reconciliation is necessary and sustained efforts must be devoted to this objective. This instruction must be given in all city halls in population centres near reserves.

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occur in local bodies. The potential for cooperation is considerable both in the regions and in urban settings. Discussions can be initiated or intensified between the municipalities and Québec's Aboriginal communities. Reconciliation is necessary and sustained efforts must be devoted to this objective. This instruction must be given in all city halls in population centres near reserves.

Mention should be made in this respect of a hitherto unheard-of initiative in Québec. On March 23, 2017, nine directors of Aboriginal friendship centres and nine Québec mayors signed an agreement entitled *Engagement mutuel pour l'amélioration des conditions de vie des Autochtones en milieu urbain*. In so doing, the parties recognize their respective responsibilities and solemnly express their desire to collaborate and maintain a sustained, constructive dialogue. This type of joint action and, above all, the intentions that it reveals, is destined to serve as a model.

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Joint action between governments

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More extensive joint action is also necessary between governments, which, all too often, do not take sufficiently into account public measures outside their purview. This can lead to service interruptions or duplications and inefficiencies that do not do justice to the resources mobilized.

More sustained discussions with the federal government will allow for better coordination of each level of government's initiatives. Government of Québec departments and agencies must engage in closer dialogue with the Canadian government services concerned. Significant collaboration already exists, for example through formal agreements, but substantial improvements are necessary, in particular in order to overcome jurisdictional disputes. In this respect, the Government of Québec is willing to work actively with its federal partner to implement Jordan's Principle.

The Government of Québec will also continue to put a lot of effort into Canadian intergovernmental bodies that discuss social and cultural issues pertaining to the Inuit and the First Nations. What is more, in recent years it has participated assiduously in such gatherings, among other things in the summit on Aboriginal women. The Government of Québec regards such gatherings as the ideal forums at which to discuss best practices with its partners in the Canadian federation and to establish with the federal government an increasingly constructive dialogue.

For the past two years, the Aboriginal issues have occupied a growing place in discussions between the governments, which better reflects their objective importance. The recent establishment of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Indigenous Forum devoted to the enhancement of the Aboriginal peoples' living conditions in a spirit of reconciliation, clearly reflects this progress. The Government of Québec will continue to participate actively in this movement.

In addition to endeavouring from now on to implement all of its initiatives in a spirit of ongoing cooperation, the Government of Québec is adopting, in particular, the following measures:

- support the consultations that Aboriginal service organizations periodically conduct in their communities or among their clientele;
- establish a working committee on the training of future Aboriginal or non-native police officers destined to work in Aboriginal communities and promote the sharing of expertise and good practices between the police forces concerned;
- establish a joint working mechanism focusing on problems that typically concern women: sexual abuse, gender equality, and spousal and family violence;
- encourage more sustained exchanges between the leaders of the Aboriginal communities and the representatives of municipal authorities;
- contribute actively to Canadian intergovernmental deliberations in the perspective of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada;
- agree with the representatives of the Inuit and the First Nations on a common mechanism to monitor the implementation of this action plan.

4.2

Develop and promote research in Aboriginal communities

The initiatives that Aboriginal service organizations and Government of Québec departments, agencies or networks plan must draw on sufficient data. Diagnoses must be established to facilitate the elaboration of the measures that will adequately satisfy the known needs. Such material is produced by researchers, whose activities must be supported and funded.

In Québec, data on the actual living conditions of the Aboriginal peoples could be more varied and extensive. A substantial body of material already exists but, in several fields, a lack of information, especially empirical data, has been observed. For example, it is sometimes difficult to obtain certain basic quantitative data on the situation of Québec's Aboriginal peoples in the realms of health, education, employment, literacy, and so on, data that are, however, commonly used in the social sciences to evaluate the standard of living of populations. The aim is to broaden knowledge of certain social and cultural realities in order to better clarify the elaboration of public policies.

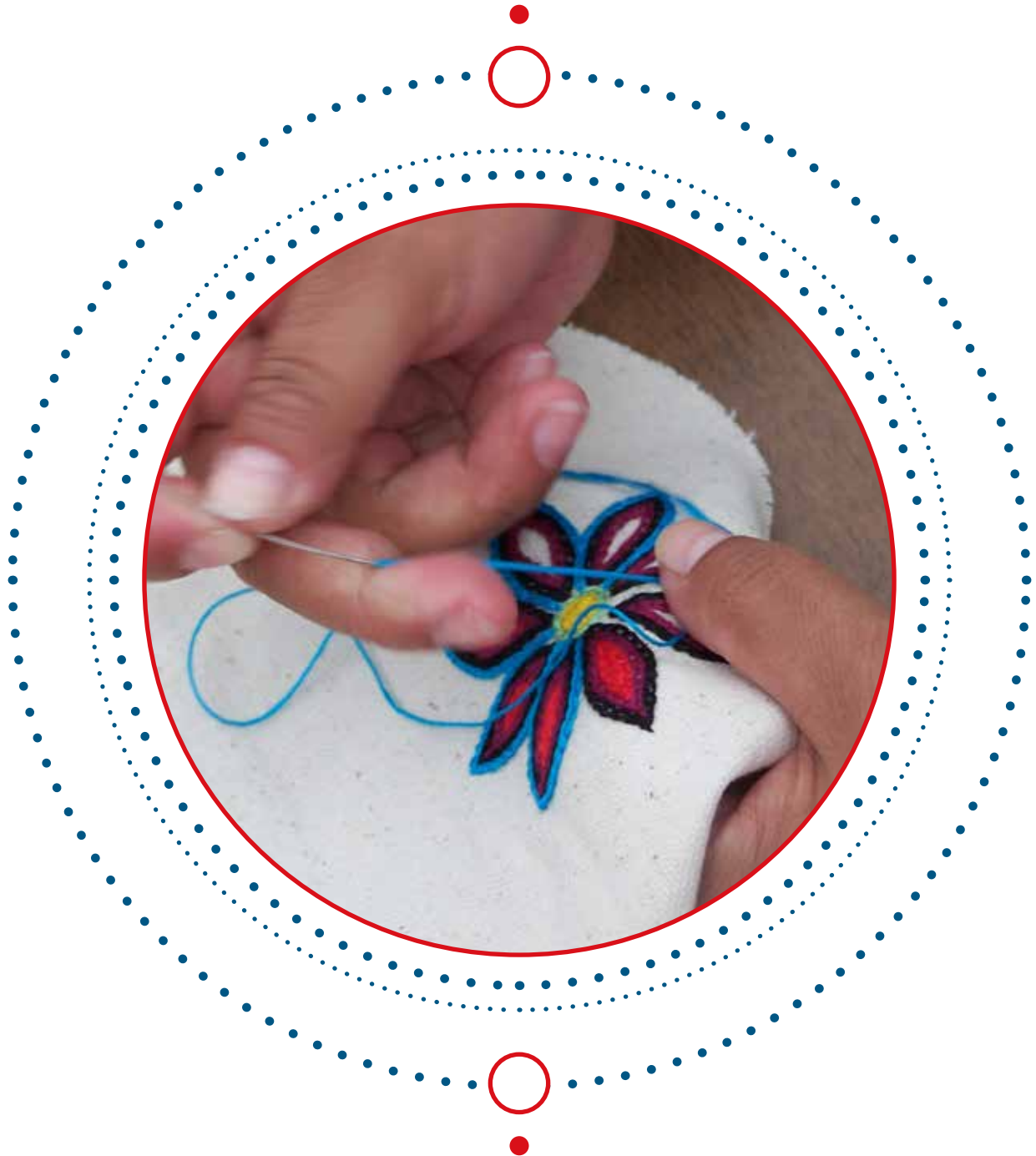
The aim is to broaden knowledge of certain social and cultural realities in order to better clarify the elaboration of public policies.


The Government of Québec wishes to contribute to the development of research on Aboriginal realities. It wishes to encourage the work of researchers and promote Aboriginal affairs as a field of study in the universities. It is, therefore, implementing, the following initiatives:

- broaden knowledge on the social reintegration of Aboriginal men subject to judicial control;
- support research on Aboriginal youth;
- support the realization of research projects devoted to Aboriginal social and cultural development, especially the specific circumstances of Aboriginal women;
- enhance knowledge of addiction in Aboriginal societies;
- document the health and well-being needs of Aboriginal men.

The Government of Québec's initiatives with respect to joint action and research can be summarized in the following diagram:







Our sons and daughters will leave the reserves
The grandparents on their backs
The ancestors in their ears
They will walk toward the south, redraw the north

They will remember the fabricated misery
They will crawl out of reservoirs, dams, outfitting operations
They will murmur: "I remember" ...
They will feel
what is real
what is honourable

They will utter Papakassik, Tshiuetinishu
Tshakapesh, Tshishikushkueu
Tales will spring back to life on the forest roads
Titans will rise up for the nebulous storm
Our grandparents will shed the tears of love, the rivers of joy
Their eyes, the mountains where they watch over us
Welcome the sun

We will say yes to our birth.

Natasha Kanapé Fontaine

THE MEASURES



• FIRST STRATEGIC PRIORITY • ENHANCE SERVICES

It should be noted that each measure that directly affects women and young people is indicated in the right-hand column. Appendix A contains a list of initialisms and acronyms.

1.1

Implement a diversified, effective, relevant, reassuring service offer from the standpoint of the Aboriginal cultures

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.1.1	Support projects devoted specifically to Aboriginal realities under the Fight against Homophobia program	MJQ	SAA	
1.1.2	Offer a guidance and specialized information service to Aboriginal workers and employers through liaison officers and develop specific measures for the Aboriginal communities	CCQ		Women
1.1.3	Carry out a diagnosis and propose recommendations to counteract discrimination toward the Aboriginal peoples in the construction industry, in particular toward women and the Aboriginal peoples in urban environments	CCQ		Women
1.1.4	Elaborate initiatives and projects that target the educational success and school retention of Aboriginal students	MEES MSSS	D/A concerned	Youth
1.1.5	Facilitate the hiring of staff to support students and parents in the learning path	MEES		Youth
1.1.6	Support the establishment of two Aboriginal student housing pilot projects	MEES	SHQ SAA MFA	Youth

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.1.7	Support the establishment by the Aboriginal communities of mechanisms to handle customary adoption files	MJQ	MSSS	
1.1.8	Establish guidance programs in the courts for Aboriginal offenders, especially as regards questions related to alcohol and drug addiction, spousal and family violence, mental health or homelessness	MJQ	MSP MSSS DCPP The judiciary	
1.1.9	Enhance the youth sexual abuse prevention and intervention plan, once it is in force, through the establishment of an Aboriginal component	MSP	SAA	Youth Women
1.1.10	Establish a mixed police action—community service providing team in Sept-Îles	MSP (SQ)	MSSS	
1.1.11	Carry out initiatives in the territories that the Plan Nord covers to mitigate adverse impacts from northern development on Aboriginal women and prevent sexual abuse toward the Aboriginal peoples, especially women and children	SCF	Plan Nord SAA	Women
1.1.12	Offer Aboriginal inmates in detention facilities services and conditions more favourable to the initiation of a rehabilitation or healing process, by means of a culturally adapted approach	MSP		
1.1.13	Design and implement a province-wide tool to collect clinico-administrative data from centres designated to provide emergency services to sexual assault victims	MSSS		Women
1.1.14	Implement cultural safety strategies to enhance the service delivery of the health and social services network	MSSS		
1.1.15	Develop access to the services of midwives in non-treaty Aboriginal communities	MSSS		Women
1.1.16	Elaborate a training program to support intervention among young people and Aboriginal families in difficulty	MSSS		Youth

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.1.17	Financially support Quebec Native Women to offer training in respect of sexual assault (“Sortir de l’ombre, marcher vers la lumière”) to interveners who work with the clientele in Québec Aboriginal friendship centres	MSSS		Women
1.1.18	Establish general training accessible online on Aboriginal realities for government employees in the public and parapublic sectors	SAA	D/A concerned	
1.1.19	Support initiatives aimed at combating abuse and promote the proper treatment of Aboriginal seniors (Improved June 5, 2018)	SAA SA	D/A concerned	
1.1.20	Support, in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, developmental projects for Aboriginal women in the realm of sexual abuse	SAA	SCF, D/A concerned	Women
1.1.21	Support, in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, developmental projects aimed at reducing the persistent, worrisome inequality that Aboriginal women are facing	SCF	SAA MEES	Women
1.1.22	Support, in partnership with Aboriginal organizations, developmental projects for Aboriginal women in the realm of spousal and family violence	SCF	D/A concerned	Women
1.1.23	Adapt information and awareness-raising tools in the addiction prevention campaign	MSSS		
1.1.24	Inform and heighten awareness among pregnant women, those who wish to become pregnant and their family circle concerning the risks linked to psychoactive substances	MSSS		Women
1.1.25	Make accessible training to support the rollout of the addiction service offer for community interveners and Aboriginal organizations	MSSS		
1.1.26	Reach agreements to establish a specific Aboriginal youth protection scheme	MSSS	SAA	Youth

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.1.27	Provide financial support for initiatives contributing to the adoption and maintaining of healthy lifestyles among Aboriginal people living either temporarily or permanently in an urban setting. (Added March 5, 2018)	MSSS	SAA	

1.2

Consolidate existing services and promote the establishment of service continuums through the complementarity of initiatives

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.2.1	Elaborate a communications and awareness-raising plan adapted to the Aboriginal clientele	CCQ		Women Youth
1.2.2	Train criminal and penal prosecuting attorneys in Aboriginal realities in the context of criminal justice	DCPP		
1.2.3	Offer an awareness-raising activity on Aboriginal realities for elected municipal officers and officials	MAMOT	SAA	
1.2.4	Support projects that enable students to engage in a sustained manner in learning (Improved March 5, 2018)	MEES		Youth
1.2.5	Promote the establishment of smaller classes for Aboriginal students	MEES		Youth
1.2.6	Promote the organization of teaching practicums in Aboriginal communities	MEES		Youth
1.2.7	Elaborate, with Aboriginal partners and officials in the health and social services network responsible for Aboriginal issues, a strategy designed to enhance access to and the continuity of addiction services for members of the First Nations and Inuit	MSSS		

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/YOUTH
1.2.8	Establish terminology sessions that target certain Aboriginal languages in order to elaborate and revise common law legal terms	MJQ	DCPP MSSS MCC	
1.2.9	Group together cases involving Aboriginal individuals who live in remote communities and hold hearings for those cases on the same days	MJQ	The judiciary DCPP	
1.2.10	Promote the use of videoconferencing in Aboriginal communities during meetings between the criminal or penal prosecuting attorney and the victim	MJQ	DCPP	
1.2.11	Heighten awareness among and train interveners in the socio-judicial sector so that their initiatives are culturally adapted	MJQ		
1.2.12	Increase the number of awareness-raising sessions devoted to Aboriginal realities and make them accessible to non-native police officers in Aboriginal police forces	MSP (SQ)		
1.2.13	Establish online training on Aboriginal realities for members of the Sûreté du Québec	MSP (SQ)		
1.2.14	Extend Aboriginal liaison services to urban settings	MSP (SQ)		
1.2.15	Offer the Aboriginal peoples the possibility of obtaining the assistance of an interpreter to guide them during sessions before the Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles	CQLC		
1.2.16	Offer, on request, the translation into English of decisions of the Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles	CQLC		
1.2.17	Design and make available training on sexual assault, including a module devoted to intervention among the Aboriginal clientele, for interveners and professional staff in the health and social services network	MSSS		Women
1.2.18	Enhance the program in faculties of medicine for the First Nations and Inuit of Québec	MSSS	MEES	Youth

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.2.19	Implement the <i>Stratégie pour l'intégration professionnelle des Premières Nations et des Inuits</i>	MTESS		
1.2.20	Facilitate the placement of coordinators specializing in the fight against elder abuse devoted specifically to the First Nations, the Inuit and the Cree (Improved June 5, 2018)	SA		
1.2.21	Support the adaptation in the form of a digital platform of <i>Aboriginal Peoples - Fact and Fiction</i>	SAA	MJQ MEES MSSS	
1.2.22	Implement the recommendations of the report of the Committee on the application of the <i>Act to amend the Professional Code and other legislative provisions in the field of mental health and human relations</i> in the Aboriginal communities, especially those that target additional hiring, training and retention of professionals working in the realm of health and social services	SAA	OPQ MEES MSSS	
1.2.23	Pursue the implementation of local coordinating tables of the <i>Table centrale sur l'accessibilité des services pour les Autochtones en milieu urbain</i>	SAA	DPCP MEES MTESS MSP MSSS MJQ SQ	
1.2.24	Produce a directory of training offered focusing on Aboriginal realities and cultural safety	SAA	D/A concerned	
1.2.25	Enhance the multi-year administrative agreements with regional governments and Cree and Inuit women's groups	SCF		Women
1.2.26	Fund a measure to reduce the cost of low-cost housing for tenants in Nunavik	SHQ	Plan Nord	
1.2.27	Support the construction below the 55th parallel of public and community housing units for the Aboriginal peoples in urban environments under the AccèsLogis Québec program	SHQ	SAA	

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.2.28	Enhance the Programme spécial de rénovation de maisons de la communauté algonquine de Kitcisakik	SHQ	SAA CCQ	
1.2.29	Elaborate a frame of reference on life projects for Aboriginal children	MSSS		Youth
1.2.30	Financially support and ensure the development in Aboriginal communities of culturally relevant intervention by the assistance centres for victims of crime (CAVAC) in order to offer culturally relevant, reassuring services to crime victims	MJQ		Women
1.2.31	Support the structuring initiatives, especially in the realm of skills development, prioritized by the Réseau pour la stratégie urbaine de la communauté autochtone de Montréal	SAA		
1.2.32	Develop and deploy training for workers in the health and social services system and in Aboriginal organizations, with the goal of better taking into account practices that are culturally safe and relevant to First Nations and Inuit in the context of interventions in health promotion and prevention of preventable problems (Added March 5, 2018)	MSSS	SAA	
1.2.33	Provide financial support for the organization of physical activities among young Aboriginal people in the school system to foster a physically active lifestyle, particularly through interschool games (Added March 5, 2018)	MSSS	MEES	
1.2.34	Implement a new food security policy for the region of Nunavik ⁹ (Added March 5, 2018)	MSSS (Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services)		
1.2.35	Promote the <i>Québec ami des aînés</i> program in Aboriginal communities in Québec. (Added June 5, 2018)	SA	SAA	

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
1.2.36	Provide a personalized accompaniment service for First Nations and Inuit communities wishing to create the conditions to optimize opportunities for active aging. (Added June 5, 2018)	SA	SAA	

9. Implementation of this policy will be subject to its adoption by the competent authorities.

• SECOND STRATEGIC PRIORITY •

PROMOTE THE ABORIGINAL CULTURE AND LANGUAGES

It should be noted that each measure that directly affects women and young people is indicated in the right-hand column. Appendix A contains a list of initialisms and acronyms.

2.1

Foster the contribution of the First Nations and Inuit to Québec's cultural vitality

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
2.1.1	Increase the number of cultural development agreements and strengthen the existing agreements	MCC		
2.1.2	Establish a permanent collaboration and consensus-building mechanism in the realm of culture in the First Nations and Inuit communities	MCC		
2.1.3	Establish a program to train and hire cultural development officers in the communities	MCC		
2.1.4	Implement a strategy to promote heritage of interest to the Aboriginal peoples	MCC		
2.1.5	Promote the presence of the Aboriginal cultures and arts in the public space	MCC		

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
2.1.6	Establish an assistance program for Aboriginal cultural enterprises, especially in the handicrafts and arts and crafts sector	MCC		
2.1.7	Establish a financial assistance program for Aboriginal craftspeople	MCC	CALQ	
2.1.8	Support cultural projects for school-age children	MCC	MEES	

2.2

Promote the Aboriginal languages as an essential vector for the development of Aboriginal societies

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
2.2.1	Broaden support for the communications sector, especially community radio stations, and the creation of original content in the Aboriginal communities	MCC		
2.2.2	Elaborate, in collaboration with the federal government, support programs for the Aboriginal languages	MCC		
2.2.3	Adopt a national declaration on the Aboriginal languages that affirms the specific place that such languages occupy in Québec	MCC		
2.2.4	Make available children's literature in the Aboriginal languages	MESS	MCC	Youth

• THIRD STRATEGIC PRIORITY •

DEVELOP THE POWER TO ACT OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

It should be noted that each measure that directly affects women and young people is indicated in the right-hand column. Appendix A contains a list of initialisms and acronyms.

3.1

Contribute to strengthening individual capacities and citizen involvement

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
3.1.1	Implement a new program to hire coordinators responsible for community mobilization, citizen involvement and the promotion of healthy lifestyles in Aboriginal communities in Québec ¹⁰ (Improved March 5, 2018)	SAA	SAA MSP MEES	Youth
3.1.2	Support entrepreneurship initiatives in the Aboriginal communities	MEES		
3.1.3	Support initiatives that promote the sharing of expertise and good practices with respect to support for parental roles between family-related community organizations and services in the Aboriginal communities	MFA		Youth

10. The improvement to measure 3.1.1 adds the MSSS as a partner in this measure, specifically in hiring coordinators in the communities under agreement.

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
3.1.4	Financially support structuring projects aimed at encouraging and promoting gender equality among girls and boys from Québec's Aboriginal nations	SCF	SAA MFA	Women Youth
3.1.5	Elaborate an intersectoral and interdepartmental communications plan to produce joint communications tools to disseminate information in the Aboriginal communities through a concerted approach in order to facilitate understanding by the Aboriginal peoples of their rights and the judicial process in the civil, youth and criminal justice sectors	MJQ MSSS	MSP DCPP	
3.1.6	Promote the hiring of the Aboriginal peoples to fill jobs related to legal services	MJQ		
3.1.7	Inform Aboriginal crime victims of their right to protection and the measures available to them to ensure their safety and that of their family circle	MJQ	DCPP MSP	Women
3.1.8	Support the development among Aboriginal women of entrepreneurship	SCF	SAA MESI	Women
3.1.9	Encourage the recognition of Aboriginal seniors to foster their social participation (Improved June 5, 2018)	SA		

3.2

Promote innovative social initiatives

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
3.2.1	Support activities organized for elected Aboriginal women, especially those proposed at the Congrès des élus autochtones du Québec	SCF SAA		Women
3.2.2	Encourage citizen involvement, the capacity to act and community development through the elaboration of projects in partnership with Aboriginal young people	SAJ		
3.2.3	Support the community justice committees that work with adult and young offenders and in the realm of youth protection in the Aboriginal communities interested	MJQ	MSSS MSP	Youth
3.2.4	Promote and encourage the development of community action in the Aboriginal communities by contributing financially to the launching of organizations and developmental projects	SAA	D/A concerned	
3.2.5	Fund social development projects and partnerships under the Aboriginal Initiatives Fund III	SAA	D/A concerned	
3.2.6	Consolidate support for the overall mission of the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec	SAA		
3.2.7	Support the overall mission of the new Roberval and Maniwaki Aboriginal friendship centres	SAA		
3.2.8	Support Chemin des mille rêves, an organization dedicated to the development of the potential of Aboriginal young people, in promoting the Aboriginal identity and healthy lifestyle habits	SAA		Youth
3.2.9	Encourage the transmission of traditional knowledge by supporting, in particular, intergenerational activities and seniors' groups among the members of the First Nations and Inuit. (Added June 5, 2018)	SAA	SA	

FOURTH STRATEGIC PRIORITY

FOSTER COLLABORATION AND RESEARCH

It should be noted that each measure that directly affects women and young people is indicated in the right-hand column. Appendix A contains a list of initialisms and acronyms.

4.1

Broaden collaboration with the Aboriginal peoples and between governments

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
4.1.1	Implement activities that promote the transfer of knowledge pertaining to addiction in the First Nations and Inuit communities	MSSS		
4.1.2	Promote linking and the exchange of good practices with Aboriginal police forces with respect to referral by the police to the crime victims' assistance centres of victims from the Aboriginal communities	MSP	SQ MJQ	Women
4.1.3	Establish a working committee on the training of future Aboriginal police officers and police officers working in the Aboriginal communities, including training in investigation	MSP	MEES	

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
4.1.4	Support Inuit communities in the implementation of Saqijjuq	MSSS	SAA MJQ MSP	
4.1.5	Participate in the Comité régional des coordonnateurs du Québec pour la mise en œuvre du principe de Jordan established by the federal government	SAA MSSS		
4.1.6	Support initiatives devoted to reconciliation between communities and local authorities to focus on specific issues	SAA		
4.1.7	Play an active role in the new Federal-Provincial-Territorial-Indigenous Forum in keeping with the call to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada	SAIC SAA		
4.1.8	Establish jointly with representatives of the First Nations and Inuit and with government departments and agencies a consensus-building and follow-up mechanism to ensure the implementation of this action plan	SAA	D/A concerned	
4.1.9	Establish an Aboriginal women's working committee devoted to sexual abuse, gender equality and spousal and family violence in order to prioritize structuring initiatives for Aboriginal women	SCF SAA	D/A concerned	Women
4.1.10	Establish in the Aboriginal communities interested an alternative measures program involving the handling of certain conjugal violence cases	MJQ	DCPP MSSS	Women
4.1.11	Foster the sharing between Aboriginal police forces of practices, expertise and intervention methods in the realm of sexual assault	MSP		Women
4.1.12	Support mutual aid and sharing initiatives among Aboriginal women	SAA		Women
4.1.13	Support the consultations related to government priorities conducted by Aboriginal service organizations in their communities and among their clienteles	SAA		

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
4.1.14	Participate, in collaboration with the federal government and the First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission, in the elaboration of a transitional process to a new governance model in health and social services for the First Nations of Québec	SAA	MSSS	
4.1.15	Broaden the action of the Aboriginal Socio-Judicial Forum to include the implementation of measures under this action plan that correspond to the fulfilment of its mandate	MJQ	SAA MSP MSSS DPCP	
4.1.16	Establish a partners' committee to discuss the linking of federal and provincial programs concerning the service offer and home healthcare for the First Nations and Inuit. (Added June 5, 2018)	MSSS		

4.2

Contribute to the development and promotion of research on the Aboriginal peoples' social and cultural realities

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
4.2.1	Conduct qualitative research in prisons to improve understanding of the rehabilitation and healing processes of incarcerated Aboriginal men	MSP		
4.2.2	Support the implementation of projects on Aboriginal social and cultural development	SAA	FQRSC D/A concerned	
4.2.3	Establish an Aboriginal section under the Chaire de recherche sur la jeunesse québécoise	SAJ		Youth
4.2.4	Document the situation of Aboriginal lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and two-spirited individuals	MJQ	SAA	

	MEASURES	D/A RESPONSIBLE	COLLABORATING D/A	WOMEN/ YOUTH
4.2.5	Document, in collaboration with Aboriginal partners and organizations the health and well-being needs of Aboriginal men	MSSS		
4.2.6	Explore avenues that facilitate monitoring of changes in behaviour with respect to the consumption of psychoactive substances and the practice of the JHA Autochtones	MSSS		
4.2.7	Take stock of knowledge on addiction problems in First Nations and Inuit communities	MSSS		
4.2.8	Determine possible applications of the information inventoried with respect to addiction treatment in First Nations and Inuit communities	MSSS		
4.2.9	Conduct research on targeted themes according to the need for knowledge on addiction in First Nations and Inuit communities	MSSS		
4.2.10	Inventory best practices in the realm of support for the natural caregivers of Inuit seniors or members of the First Nations and promote them among the interveners concerned. (Added June 5, 2018)	MSSS	SAA	



CONCLUSION

In order to thrive, the Aboriginal nations need to rely on their strengths. In other words, they must rely on fulfilled, skilled individuals rooted in a vigorous culture who are enthusiastic about the future and who are assets for the Aboriginal nations. At the same time, they must rely on dynamic communities characterized by healthy social relationships imbued with solidarity.

The healing process certainly demands a great deal of effort. Among other things, it demands that individuals recover from the profound after-effects of a still recent past. The process will, of course, be lengthy, but the movement is resolutely underway and is apparent throughout Québec, especially in the determination of Aboriginal young people and women, who are increasingly becoming agents for change.

Work together for change

This initial *Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit* is a concrete commitment by the Government of Québec in respect of the healing process of Québec's Aboriginal nations. It implements measures in an array of crucial areas: language, culture, health and social services, education, employment, housing, justice, sexual abuse, domestic violence, public security, research, gender equality, youth, and citizen involvement. The initiatives under the strategy hinge on four strategic priorities: 1) enhance services; 2) promote the Aboriginal culture and languages; 3) develop the ability to act of individuals and communities; and 4) promote consensus building and research.

The measures in the action plan draw on the numerous sectoral consultations carried out in recent years by Government of Québec departments and agencies. The deliberations were accompanied by a general consultation organized by the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones on January 25 and 26, 2017, in which 100 Aboriginal organizations (band councils, northern villages, province-wide, service, community and other organizations) participated. The action plan therefore endeavours to respond within the framework of the Government of Québec's jurisdiction and means to the needs expressed by the Aboriginal peoples, whether they live on reserves or in urban environments.

It also marks a major shift in the manner of conceiving the Government of Québec's action with respect to the social and cultural development of the First Nations and Inuit. The incorporation into a single instrument of this action implies, indeed, a significant reorganization of government intervention as regards broader coherence and the widespread application to public services of the principle of cultural safety and relevance.

The Government of Québec wishes to pursue dialogue and wants the action plan to be an open, dynamic initiative.

The action plan is also meant to be an evolving approach that will focus on the needs and concerns expressed by the First Nations and Inuit during its five-year duration. Accordingly, the measures presented do not immediately represent the sum of its ambitions. It is not a closed document. Indeed, as its implementation proceeds, measures proposed by the Aboriginal communities can possibly be added to it. The Government of Québec wishes to pursue dialogue and wants the action plan to be an open, dynamic initiative.

For this reason, the action plan will also be able to accommodate initiatives inspired by the impending recommendations of the Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

The Government of Québec also wishes for the measures in the action plan to be implemented in a spirit of collaboration. It therefore invites the First Nations and Inuit to agree with it on a common structure that will monitor its implementation.

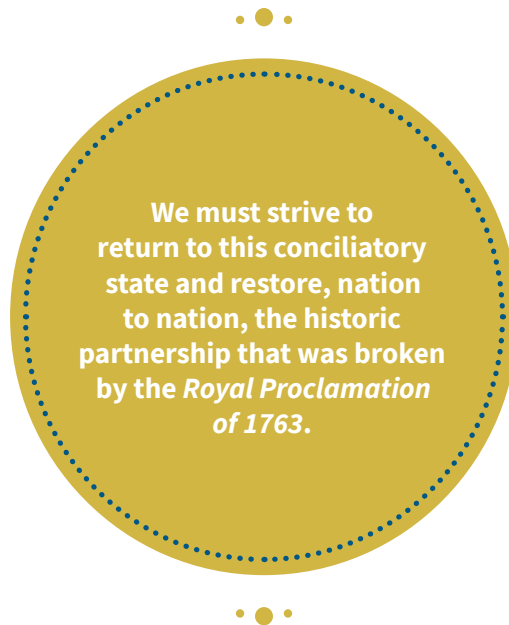
Seek reconciliation, nation to nation

The action plan responds directly to the call launched to governments by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in 2015 and it seeks to serve as a foundation in the reconciliation between the Aboriginal peoples and non-natives in Québec. It thus rounds out significant actions undertaken by the Government of Québec over the past 40 years, in particular the *James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement*, the *Northeastern Quebec Agreement*, the "Fifteen Principles," the motion in the National Assembly on the recognition of the Aboriginal peoples' rights, the establishment of the AIF, and the *Paix des Braves*.

Mutual aid and support and discussion were the hallmarks of the initial relations between Quebecers' ancestors and the First Peoples. We must strive to return to this conciliatory state and restore, nation to nation, the historic partnership that was broken by the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*. This action plan is meant to be a milestone in the ongoing effort to restore trust and respect and a concrete manifestation of the Government of Québec's desire to put right the mistakes of the past.

Québec must no longer tolerate the difficult living conditions that affect too many Aboriginal peoples, nor any longer deprive itself of the contribution of thousands of citizens whose capacities are for the time being only latent.

The healing of the Aboriginal nations and reconciliation are the necessary path of the project to which history invites us, together, non-natives and the Aboriginal peoples, to build the Québec of tomorrow.





APPENDIX A

INITIALISMS AND ACRONYMS

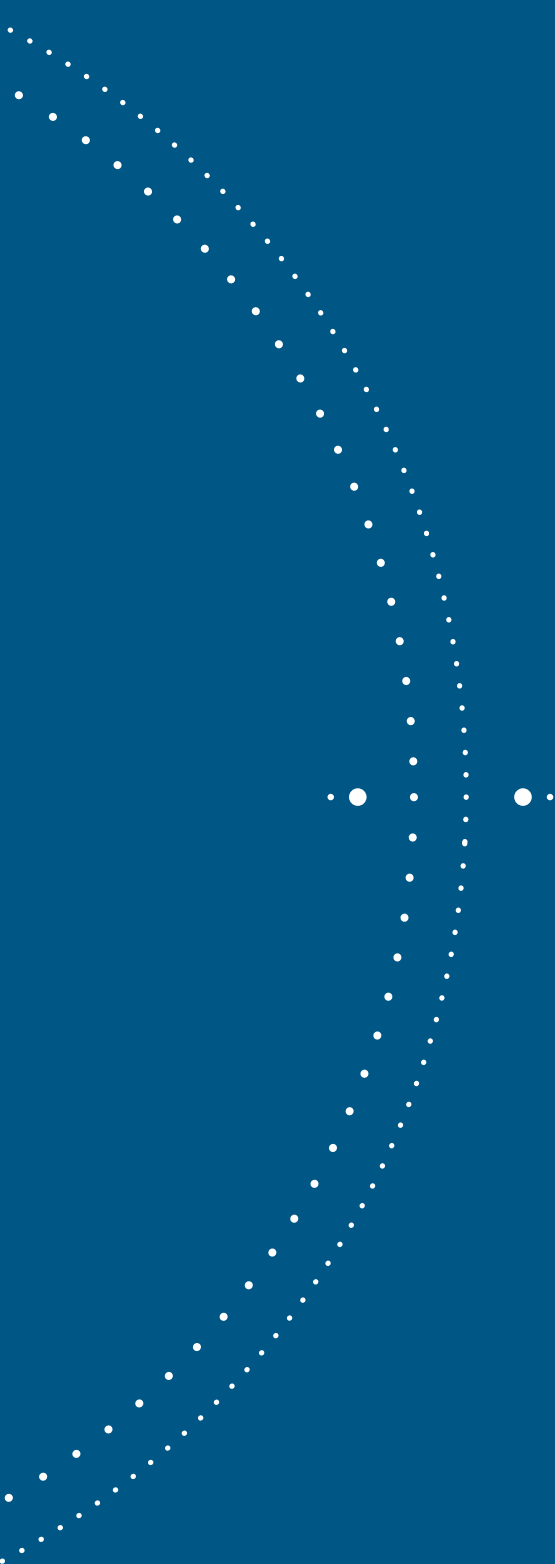
AFNQL	Assembly of First Nations of Quebec and Labrador
AIF	Aboriginal Initiatives Fund
BLCH	Bureau de lutte contre l'homophobie
CALQ	Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec
CAVAC	Assistance centres for victims of crime
CCQ	Commission de la construction du Québec
CQLC	Commission québécoise des libérations conditionnelles
D/A	Departments and agencies
DCPP	Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions
FRQSC	Fonds de Recherche du Québec – Société et culture
MAMOT	Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Occupation du territoire
MCC	Ministère de la Culture et des Communications
MEES	Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur
MESI	Ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation
MFA	Ministère de la Famille
MJQ	Ministère de la Justice du Québec
MSP	Ministère de la Sécurité publique
MSSS	Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
MTESS	Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale
OPQ	Office des professions du Québec
SA	Secrétariat aux aînés
SAA	Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones
SAIC	Secrétariat aux affaires intergouvernementales canadiennes
SAJ	Secrétariat à la jeunesse
SCF	Secrétariat à la condition féminine
SHQ	Société d'habitation du Québec
SQ	Sûreté du Québec

APPENDIX B

MAP OF THE FIRST NATIONS AND INUIT

(French version only)





*Secrétariat
aux affaires
autochtones*

Québec

