



# QUÉBEC ON THE WORLD STAGE: INVOLVED, ENGAGED, THRIVING

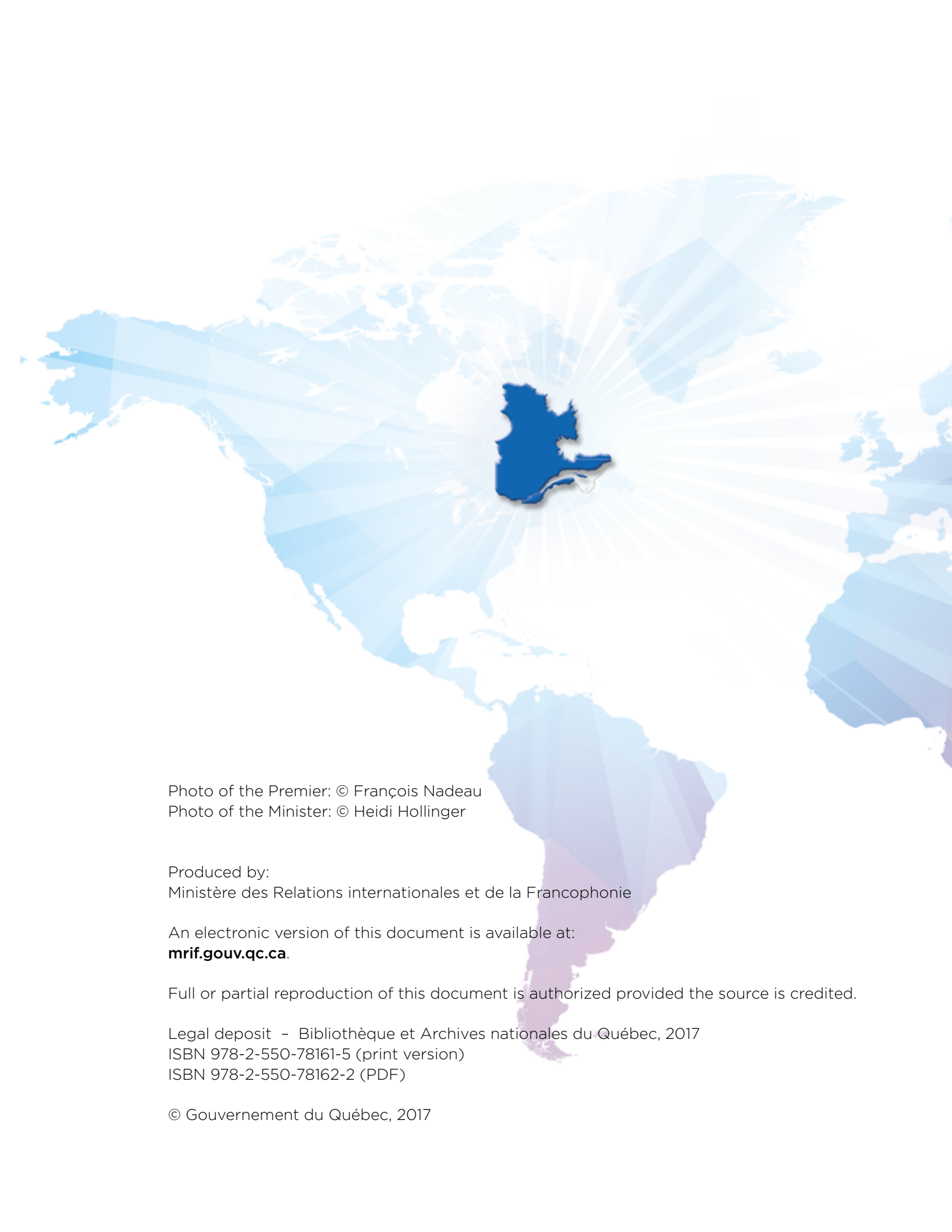


Photo of the Premier: © François Nadeau  
Photo of the Minister: © Heidi Hollinger

Produced by:  
Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie

An electronic version of this document is available at:  
**[mrif.gouv.qc.ca](http://mrif.gouv.qc.ca)**.

Full or partial reproduction of this document is authorized provided the source is credited.

Legal deposit - Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2017  
ISBN 978-2-550-78161-5 (print version)  
ISBN 978-2-550-78162-2 (PDF)

© Gouvernement du Québec, 2017



Québec's International Policy

# **QUÉBEC**

## **ON THE WORLD STAGE: INVOLVED, ENGAGED, THRIVING**







## A WORD FROM THE PREMIER OF QUÉBEC

---

The world we live in is complex, interdependent and constantly changing. The emerging economies, international mobility, the geopolitical context, new technologies and the digital transformation bring benefits and create new opportunities, but can also give rise to apprehension. More than ever, what happens beyond our borders has a direct impact on what happens here at home.

This is why Québec's international presence enables us to advance our ideas, values and projects on the world stage. Over the past few years, our government played a prominent role in the adoption of the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). Our actions also helped secure recognition for the role of federated states and regions in the Paris Agreement on climate change. We recently hosted an international conference on radicalization in collaboration with UNESCO (United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture), and have been represented within the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO since 2006. We launched the Québec International Climate Cooperation Program (PCCI) to support the efforts of francophone countries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. We have also supported international solidarity initiatives and promoted our language, creativity and culture on every continent and in every body of which Québec is a member, including the International Organization of la Francophonie. Every day, we show that Québec is ready to tackle the major challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and promote its interests around the globe.

Québec's International Policy will be a mobilization tool that enables us to act consistently and achieve clear goals: building a more prosperous Québec; contributing to a more sustainable, just and secure world; and promoting creativity, culture, knowledge and Québec's specificity. We will seek to establish new alliances, strengthen existing ones and develop new areas of international action.

More than five decades ago, Québec chose to become a full-fledged actor on the world stage and to forge lasting ties with its international partners. Successive governments have since contributed to shaping the Québec of today. Their achievements were made possible in part by the work of such visionaries as Paul Gérin-Lajoie, who in 1965 declared, "In all the domains which are completely or partially within its competence, Québec plans to play a direct role, in keeping with its individual characteristics and the full measure of its rights."

This approach lives on in Québec's new International Policy, which provides a renewed and unifying vision of Québec's international ambitions.

**Philippe Couillard**





## A WORD FROM THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND LA FRANCOPHONIE

---

Fifty years ago, in the midst of the Quiet Revolution, Québec established a department tasked with planning, coordinating and carrying out international actions on behalf of the Québec government. Today, the ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie represents Québec's interests abroad and oversees the development of its international policy in keeping with a changing world.

Québec's earliest forays into international relations date back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it dispatched its first agents and representatives to London and Paris. Since its inception, Québec's network of overseas offices has adapted to the changing global environment and to the needs of Québec society. Québec currently operates 26 offices in 14 countries. In the years ahead, Québec intends to exercise strong leadership in areas such as climate and northern issues, and to draw on the energy and global aspirations of its youth, entrepreneurs, artists and researchers in conducting its international relations.

In keeping with the Gérin-Lajoie doctrine, the government remains committed to making Québec's voice heard ever further afield so as to occupy its place on the world stage. Québec has its own special international role to play. As a credible and responsible actor, Québec is guided in its actions by a central principle: its jurisdictions at home are also its jurisdictions abroad. Québec's engagement on behalf of the Francophonie, international mobility, the promotion of Québec talent and the reaffirmation of its convictions with respect to human rights and freedoms and respect for diversity will continue to characterize its international initiatives.

The government develops political relationships that subsequently serve as the foundation for stronger economic, scientific and cultural ties. In an era where nothing that happens beyond our borders is without repercussions in Québec, the relationships of trust we maintain with our partners all over the planet are of crucial importance. The role played by Québec's offices abroad in this respect is therefore critical.

It is with great pride that I present Québec's new International Policy. Today more than ever, Québec aspires to a world in which it is involved, engaged and thriving.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. St-Pierre'.

**Christine St-Pierre**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: PORTRAIT OF A CHANGING WORLD</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>THE THREE THRUSTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY</b>	<b>21</b>
3.1	MAKE QUEBECERS MORE PROSPEROUS	24
3.1.1	MOBILITY AND YOUTH	24
3.1.2	TRADE RELATIONS	31
3.1.3	RESPONSIBLE PROSPERITY	39
	<b>SUMMARY OF THRUST 1</b>	<b>43</b>
3.2	CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE, JUST AND SECURE WORLD	44
3.2.1	CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE, THE ENERGY TRANSITION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT	44
3.2.2	NORTHERN AND ARCTIC AFFAIRS	49
3.2.3	INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY	50
3.2.4	HUMAN RIGHT AND FREEDOMS, DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW	53
3.2.5	SECURITY	55
	<b>SUMMARY OF THRUST 2</b>	<b>59</b>
3.3	PROMOTE CREATIVITY, CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE AND QUÉBEC'S SPECIFICITY	60
3.3.1	RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT	60
3.3.2	CULTURE	63
3.3.3	FRENCH LANGUAGE	66
	<b>SUMMARY OF THRUST 3</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>PUTTING QUÉBEC'S INTERNATIONAL POLICY INTO ACTION</b>	<b>69</b>
4.1	FOSTERING COHESION AMONG QUÉBEC STAKEHOLDER ACTIVE ON THE WORLD STAGE	71
4.2	AN AGILE AND FLEXIBLE INTERNATIONAL POLICY APPARATUS	74

## LIST OF BOXES

---

1	Québec's offices abroad	4
2	Important international commitments	5
3	A focus on encouraging the establishment of international organizations and the holding of major international events in Québec	39
4	Québec's participation in international organizations	49
5	An active role within strengthened francophonie institutions	54







1

# INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS



# 1 INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS

The Government of Québec's first international actions date to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just a few years after its inception in 1867. These actions stemmed from two historical imperatives: attracting new immigrants and prospecting for investments and new markets. Two additional imperatives emerged over time: the extension of Québec's constitutional jurisdictions to the international realm, and the projection of its specific character on the world stage. In recent decades, globalization has further highlighted the importance of integrating international considerations into the conduct of government affairs.

In 1937, Canada's highest court ruled that responsibility for implementing Canada's international commitments lay with the level of government that had jurisdiction over the area in question.<sup>1</sup> More than fifty years ago, Québec minister Paul Gérin-Lajoie took this reasoning a step further when he argued that it was impossible to dissociate the implementation of such commitments from their negotiation and conclusion. Québec's domestic constitutional jurisdictions therefore extend to the international arena. It is on these grounds that Québec has established relations with various foreign governments and taken an active role in international organizations, forums and networks that affect its interests.

Québec's special international role is reflected in its extensive bilateral relationships, its network of foreign offices and its presence within the multilateral forums of la Francophonie, where it has been actively involved at the highest levels since 1968. This special role is also recognized in the 2006 agreement between the Government of Québec and the Government of Canada concerning the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO).

Québec's International Policy is motivated by the interests of Québec's globally oriented economy and the values of an inclusive society committed to human rights and freedoms, the rule of law, solidarity and sustainable development. It is also informed by Québec's defining characteristics, beginning with its geography. Québec shares a single land border—and numerous common challenges—with the United States, its main trading partner, and occupies a geographic position unique in northeastern North America at the junction of the Arctic and the Atlantic. Its main waterway, the St. Lawrence River, is the sole outlet of the Great Lakes Basin and the shortest route between the ports of Western Europe and North America's heartland, two of the richest industrial zones on the planet. So it is no surprise that Québec pays such close attention to the United States, Europe and maritime and northern issues. At the same time, Québec also seeks trading opportunities and mutually beneficial partnerships throughout the Americas, as well as in Africa and Asia, as it adjusts to Asia's increasingly important role in the global economy.

.....  
1. Labour Conventions Reference (1937). A.C. 326.

## BOX 1

### QUÉBEC'S OFFICES ABROAD

Over the past 50 years, Québec has developed a network of international offices to advance its interests. The network has evolved over time in response to the changing global landscape. Although its core mandate remains essentially unchanged, the network has adapted to take into account the increasingly diverse international issues affecting Québec. Québec's offices abroad play a key role in achieving Québec's economic, political, cultural and educational objectives.

Québec's offices abroad provide the following services:

- Help entrepreneurs, artists and educational and research institutions identify and seize international opportunities
- Conduct prospecting, monitoring and strategic analysis to provide Québec decision makers with information
- Promote Québec with foreign investors, decision makers, students and travellers
- Build the networks crucial to conducting international relations by forging privileged relations with foreign governments and influential figures and organizations

These actions—whether carried out in a bilateral, regional or multilateral context or in a spirit of public diplomacy—contribute to government objectives and provide support to Québec businesses, cultural organizations and research and educational institutions. In short, they help Québec move forward.

Québec's specificity has also led it to join forces with other states using French as a common language, both in the North and the South. France, with which Québec maintains a privileged direct relationship, holds special importance.

Québec's international action takes the form of bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation as well as international missions, the hosting of high-level foreign delegations (e.g., heads of state and government, ministers) and sector-specific interventions to advance Québec government objectives. It can also take the form of agreements with foreign states and international organizations on issues of common interest.

Québec diplomacy has followed a consistent course in promoting and defending Québec's interests which stem from the specificity of its society and territory. In doing so, it has been guided by two key concerns: being a credible and responsible international actor, and ensuring the effectiveness of the measures taken. The ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie was created in 1967 in response to these concerns. Not only does it coordinate Québec's international actions, it also plays a leading role in developing networks of influence abroad.

The government ensures that Québec's interests are taken into account in the formulation of Canadian foreign policy and conducts its own actions in a manner compatible with overall Canadian foreign policy positions. Canada's international influence is greater when the federation's constituent parts—the main expression of its institutional diversity—are well represented.

The International Policy reflects the contributions of Québec's economic, institutional, cultural and non-profit sectors, but also of youth representatives, experts and the general public. The consultations that were held highlighted a wide range of political, economic, demographic, cultural, linguistic, environmental and social interests and concerns, which in turn gave rise to the three main thrusts that frame the policy:

- 1. Make Quebecers more prosperous**
- 2. Contribute to a more sustainable, just and secure world**
- 3. Promote creativity, culture, knowledge and Québec's specificity**

These thrusts are in keeping with Québec's modern-day international actions, but are also consistent with issues arising from the international context. They testify to Québec's desire to cultivate, develop and consolidate its influence on the world stage in order to serve the international ambitions of Québec society.

The Policy will guide Québec's international actions over the long term, in accordance with the government's sectoral strategies. It will also be implemented through mechanisms governing its international actions and through the deployment of government resources and Québec's network of offices abroad.

## **BOX 2** **IMPORTANT** **INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS**

Under the Act respecting the ministère des Relations internationales, Québec's important international commitments must be submitted to the National Assembly in order that elected representatives have the opportunity to debate instruments likely to significantly impact Québec society. This includes important commitments include those signed directly by the Government of Québec as well as those signed by Canada that require Québec's approval because they involve Québec jurisdictions. Such is the case for trade agreements, conventions and instruments on human rights and private law and international climate change accords.







2

**THE INTERNATIONAL  
CONTEXT:  
PORTRAIT OF  
A CHANGING WORLD**



# 2

## THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: PORTRAIT OF A CHANGING WORLD

---

Since the adoption of Québec's 2006 International Policy, Working in Concert, certain global trends have solidified, even accelerated, while new ones have emerged, transforming the political landscape and global economy in the process. Québec has also changed and has dealt with major challenges. In our complex and interdependent world, Québec's position, openness, specificity and demography are such that its future will be intimately tied to its ability to identify the international trends that affect it.

### **Globalization is growing more complex**

The impact of economic globalization in recent decades has been profound. In high-income countries, globalization has contributed to wealth creation, fostered the emergence of new high-value-added economic sectors and radically transformed certain industries. In emerging countries with an abundant labour supply, international trade has in many cases generated substantial benefits, enabling these nations to fully integrate into the global economy and significantly increase their standard of living. Despite the downturn that followed the 2008–2009 financial crisis, the process of globalization continues apace, and the challenges it engenders grow all the more pressing.

Hundreds of millions of people—most of them in China and India—have emerged from poverty, and hundreds of millions more are expected to do the same by 2030, primarily in Asia, but also in Africa and Latin America. Yet economic inequality continues to grow, raising social and political challenges and ethical questions, but also posing a serious threat to long-term growth. The need for inclusive growth, where economic vitality and equity are seen as mutually reinforcing objectives, is now widely accepted.

The emerging and developing countries are also urbanizing at an ever-faster pace. By 2030, more than 60% of the world's population will live in cities (2 billion more than in 2006). The attractiveness and density of cities are making them hubs of efficiency, innovation and people diversity.



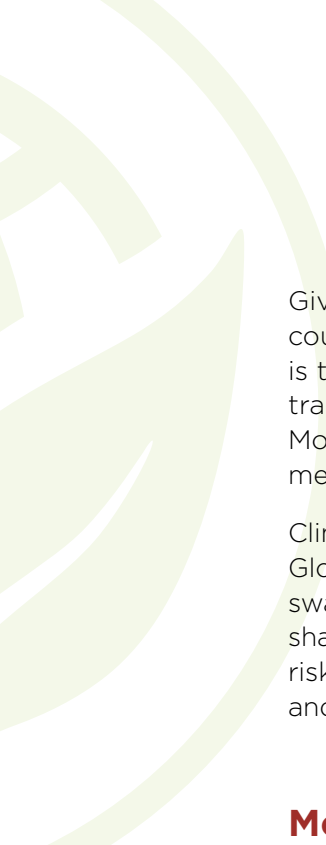
These phenomena—the growth of the emerging economies, the increase in inequality and urbanization—are generating environmental and social pressures on a planetary scale. Challenges around the management of and access to water, food and energy resources and the protection of natural habitats and air quality, all of which are amplified by climate change, are among the most conspicuous manifestations of this reality. Social and political movements fuelled by economic marginalization, the financial excesses of globalization and apprehensions over increased population movements are among the others.

By the same token, progress with respect to democracy and human rights has been uneven at best over the past decade. And advances made in certain regions cannot be taken for granted.

The increased transnational flow of talent, goods and services, data and capital is a source of prosperity and economic resilience and a catalyst for innovation. But it can also reveal systemic weaknesses and help crisis spread from one country, region or continent to another. Financial crisis, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, pandemics, hard-to-control migratory flows, cross-border organized crime and cybercrime are among the risks of direct concern to governments. All over the world, governments must learn to deal with greater uncertainty and implement appropriate methods of management and governance. They must also take the necessary measures to protect and reassure their populations and promote the importance of learning to live together.

## **The fight against climate change, a global challenge**

Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change are among the biggest challenges facing the world today. At the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21) in Paris in 2015, the international community laid the foundations for action in the fight against climate change. These included provisions for the establishment of carbon pricing mechanisms, such as the one implemented by Québec and managed in a perspective of partnership and extended international coordination. Québec was a pioneer in this regard, linking its GHG cap and trade system in 2014 to that of California—a first between federated states in different countries—and establishing by the same token the largest carbon market in North America. The Paris Accord thus wisely recognizes the importance of the engagement by all levels of government and by a wide array of stakeholders.



Given the challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change in the developing countries, international climate cooperation takes on even greater importance. The goal is to build capacity for action in these countries through measures such as technology transfer while at the same time effectively mobilizing funding to support their efforts. Moreover, climate change might increase the risks associated with natural disasters of meteorological or climatic origin.

Climate change also has a direct impact on coastal, maritime, northern and Arctic regions. Global warming brings with it serious social and environmental risks. Québec, with its vast swathes of territory north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel and its thousands of kilometers of coastline, shares the concerns of the community of northern, coastal and island peoples and states at risk of seeing their ways of life profoundly transformed. It plays a role in fostering dialogue and international cooperation in sustainable northern and maritime development.

## **More stakeholders, more varied alliances**

The rapid advance of information and communications technologies facilitates the emergence of non-state actors on the world stage. Their presence and influence is growing constantly, due in large part to their ability to build and mobilize networks.

A number of countries have been shaken by the actions of non-state criminal or terrorist entities, whose reach extends beyond state borders. These entities include extremist groups and violent networks of various forms and origins, some of which champion a deadly ideology rooted in religious fundamentalism. Their development has been fostered by the chaos of war, geopolitical turmoil and a serious governance deficit in certain regions, made easier by the use of propaganda, especially via the Internet.

The resilience of the international system to shocks and crisis depends in large part on the level of cooperation between relevant actors. The global nature of issues such as the stability of the international financial system and the fight against illegal trafficking, tax evasion, terrorism and climate change calls for the adoption of shared priorities and the implementation of formal and informal cooperation mechanisms.



In many cases, multilateral organizations remain the preferred forum for states and stakeholders to come together and define shared objectives. Such organizations also foster solidarity and the sharing of expertise and information on best practices, a crucial aspect of their work given the similar challenges states often face. These forums are necessary and their usefulness has been proven many times over. Yet there is no denying that traditional structures of international governance are struggling to respond to global issues in an entirely satisfactory way, due in part to their limited authority over the actors involved. They often lack the tools or flexibility to deal adequately with complex, evolving problems, and can face blockage when key players take opposing positions. As a result, states often turn to bilateral and regional alliances and agreements to advance their interests. The major powers also pursue dialogue within less formal institutions such as the G20, which are gaining in influence.

Concrete responses to global problems are often the product of local and regional initiatives that inform the priorities set by international forums, and may even compensate for gridlock at the central state level. At present, the most important and comprehensive priorities are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the member states of the United Nations in September 2015. They seek to mobilize all government and non-government actors with a view to eliminating poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring prosperity for all.

Within states, the various orders of government are increasingly active in international relations. In Québec, as elsewhere, rare are the issues that are not directly affected or at least influenced by the international environment. Experience has shown that federated states play a decisive role in areas such as adaptation to climate change and decarbonization of the economy, the defence and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, the mobility of people, certain aspects of trade agreements, the advancement of education, and research and innovation. Québec's international achievements depend on its ability to identify challenges, seize opportunities and establish beneficial alliances.



## MAIN FORUMS, NETWORKS AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES AND ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH QUÉBEC IS A MEMBER, PARTNER OR ASSOCIATE



Conférence des ministres de la jeunesse et des sports des pays ayant le français en partage



Conférence des ministres de l'Éducation des États et gouvernements de la Francophonie



Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (CGNA-PMEC)

Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers



Great Lakes Commission



Southeastern United States—and Canadian Provinces Alliance



North American Strategy for Competitiveness



Conférence des chefs de gouvernement des Régions partenaires



Four motors for Europe



THE CLIMATE GROUP



Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development



International Carbon Action Partnership



International Zero Emissions Vehicle Alliance



Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition

## Global and regional dynamics

As the emerging countries take on an increasingly important role in the global economy, they also seek to exercise greater influence. In consequence, the relative weight of the countries known traditionally as the “developed” nations has decreased, giving way to a more fragmented world order.

Despite this, the United States continues to play a central political role and remains a driving force for world economic growth due to the importance of its domestic demand and its capacity for innovation and trade. The border that Québec shares with the northeastern states marks a symbiotic relationship characterized by intense trade and close collaboration on security issues and other areas of common interest, including energy, the environment and transportation. The same holds true for the Great Lake states, whereas the St. Lawrence Seaway is an integral part of this region, which holds a substantial share of the world's freshwater resources and is home to an economy worth over \$5 trillion. The seaway's privileged access to the North American heartland is one of the reasons why Québec places such a high priority on providing top-quality intermodal facilities, networks and services.

If the U.S. economy and market are still very important, they are, nonetheless, deeply transforming. The U.S. has diversified its trading partners in recent decades, leading to heightened competition for Québec in its primary export market. Industries such as energy and manufacturing have undergone profound transformations. Also, the rise of economic and demographic growth in the southern and western states has created new business and collaboration opportunities.

Québec has always attached the utmost importance to the process of regional integration initiated over 25 years ago with the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA), followed by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States and Mexico. For a close U.S. trade partner like Québec, protectionist measures, when introduced, pose a special challenge and encourage it to further strengthen its relations with individual U.S. states. Québec will do all it can to protect access to markets and safeguard the principles that guided both FTA and NAFTA.

Mexico—one of the top 15 economies in the world—is another major trading partner for Québec, with which it maintains rich and diverse political, economic and institutional relations supported by cooperation mechanisms formalized under bilateral agreements. Over the years, Québec has established direct links with Mexico's federal and states governments at the highest level. The diversification and liberalization of the Mexican economy is likely to strengthen the increase in trade and new collaborative initiatives in areas such as energy and the fight against climate change.

In Europe, the rise of Eurosceptic movements in response to recent economic and security crisis challenges the cohesion of the European Union (EU) and increases economic and political uncertainty. Opinions on integration issues in Europe are often polarized, as evidenced by the 2016 Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom. The Eurozone, driven primarily by Germany – which holds a highly influential position in Europe – is still recovering from the global 2008–2009 economic and financial crisis and its aftereffects. Despite these disruptions, Europe remains one of the largest and most prosperous markets in the world. Furthermore, the principal European powers retain considerable influence over the way we tackle solutions to the challenges of our time.

Europe is a major partner, and the conclusion of the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) opens the door to numerous new possibilities. France is Québec's principal international partner in the area of multisectoral cooperation. It is Québec's natural ally, particularly in multilateral forums, but also in the ongoing effort to develop an internationally vibrant economic Francophonie. Québec can also depend on well-established relations with Germany, Belgium, Italy and the United Kingdom, as well as various European regions and federated states, including the French Community of Belgium, Flanders, Bavaria and Catalonia.<sup>2</sup>

Asia's growing importance as a key player in international affairs and the world's leading source of new economic opportunities is most apparent in the emergence of China, which is transforming the international landscape. The actions of China, like those of the United States, resonate worldwide, and it is determined to increase its influence in Asia and around the globe. Despite a period of adjustment, the Chinese economy is expected to become the world's largest in terms of nominal gross domestic product (GDP) in the medium term. This prospect highlights China's importance in a number of areas, including the fight against climate change, scientific research, green technologies, aerospace, biofood and tourism. Certain fast-growing provinces and autonomous municipalities in China are also partners of interest, given the potential for consolidating economic and institutional relations.

The Japanese economy, one of the world's largest, remains resilient. Japan is a stable democracy, an influential geopolitical force, an important source of investment and home to many leading companies in technology-intensive sectors. The same can be said for South Korea, a trade and innovation powerhouse renowned for its research and development leadership, with which Canada concluded a trade agreement in 2015. With their high standard of living and level of economic development, Japan and South Korea offer business and partnership opportunities in numerous areas, including technology, agrifood and culture.

India, the world's largest parliamentary democracy, is experiencing a major economic expansion due in part to the reforms implemented by the central government. The country still faces major economic and social challenges, but the middle class continues to grow and several states stand out for their economic vibrancy, making the Indian subcontinent a region of interest.

.....  
2. Québec has established institutional cooperation mechanisms with these four regions and federated states.

Southeast Asia, a diverse region of over 600 million inhabitants, is also undergoing sustained growth. Several countries in the region have successfully capitalized on their strategic geographic location to integrate into global value chains. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)<sup>3</sup> has signed trade agreements with all the main economies of Asia and Oceania.<sup>4</sup>

In Africa, the demographic context will play in the continent's favour to the extent it can ensure inclusive economic growth. This is notably the case for the diverse countries that make up French-speaking Africa, which will play a decisive role in the future of the French language. There are an estimated 300 million French speakers in the world today, half of them in Africa. By mid-century, that total is estimated to exceed half a billion, nearly 85% of whom will be in Africa.<sup>5</sup> The sharing of a common language is a solid base for developing rich and diverse relations. The francophone economic zone, to which Québec is part of, extends over five continents, represents more than 14% of the world's population, and accounts for 14% of the world's gross national income and 20% of global trade in goods.<sup>6</sup>

With many African economies developing rapidly, Québec is positioning itself as a partner in sectors such as energy, infrastructure, education, vocational and technical training, and professional services. Québec's relations with certain African countries, the contribution of their diasporas to Québec society and their economic potential call for substantive commitments in Africa and the deployment of resources on the ground.

Many countries in South and Central America and the Caribbean are important to Québec as well. Brazil, a key player in the southern hemisphere, is one notable example, but the same holds true for other Latin American nations that stand out for their economic performance and their progress in reducing poverty and strengthening democracy. Regional integration processes and trade agreements between Canada and various Latin American countries further facilitate the development of trade and other exchanges with Québec. In the Caribbean, Québec has forged a special relationship with Haiti, a fellow member of la Francophonie, with which it shares a long history of solidarity. Québec also intends to closely observe political, economic and diplomatic developments in Cuba.

Lastly, geopolitical tensions can impact relations with certain countries. Such is the case with Russia, a leading member of the international community, which has had an official diplomatic presence in Québec for over 50 years. It is also the case for the Middle East, where regional geopolitical tensions have been further aggravated by the often unstable security situation. For Québec, the best approach in such cases is to adopt an attitude of openness so that it is ready to take advantage of opportunities that may arise should the situation improve, or to join in international solidarity initiatives in the event the situation degenerates into a humanitarian or migration crisis.

.....  
3. The member countries of ASEAN are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.  
4. Australia, China, South Korea, India, Japan and New Zealand.  
5. Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (2014). *La langue française dans le monde 2014*.  
6. Source: *Stratégie économique pour la Francophonie*, 2014.

## Demographic change and intellectual capital will shape the future of the global economy

The global economy has entered a cycle of more moderate growth with an uncertain outlook as the population is aging while its growth rate slows. These demographic trends currently affect mainly high income countries and are projected to impact China in the medium term, but they are also gaining ground elsewhere, including Latin America. Even though the world's population continues to increase, the pace of this growth has slowed considerably compared to recent decades. At the same time, the proportion of people aged 65 and over is increasing and is expected to overtake the share of children under 15 by 2050 at the global level. Québec is at the front edge of this trend and already has a relatively rapid rate of aging.<sup>7</sup>

These changes have led to stagnation of the active population. In Québec, for example, the population aged 15 to 64 began to decrease in 2014, and productivity growth remains relatively low, limiting the potential for economic growth. More generally, these trends put pressure on public finances, health systems and pension plans, straining the capacity of governments to deliver quality services to the public. Nonetheless, they also bring advantages, including the invaluable contribution that seniors make to their communities and the emergence of new specialty market segments.

In light of these developments, states are taking action on various fronts to secure their prosperity and give everyone—men and women, young and old, urban and rural dwellers—the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Also, permanent and temporary immigration constitutes an important source of labour, entrepreneurship and students, as well as a catalyst for domestic economic development. Québec faces strong international competition in attracting talent, which is why it is important to develop new strategies to help identify and attract the qualified people who best meet Québec's needs. However, immigrant settlement and integration bring challenges that must be met, including recognition of previously acquired skills and credentials.

Innovation conditions economic productivity and competitiveness. The intellectual capital underpinning innovation is critical to how well businesses and states are able to position themselves in key segments of global value chains, both in terms of contributing to economic growth and creating quality jobs.

Technological change at the global level creates new opportunities, but also generates uncertainty. Like e-commerce and cloud computing before them, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and big data analytics will grow in importance, potentially modifying production processes, consumer and regulatory models, and even our way of life. The same holds true for innovations in energy, the life sciences and advanced materials.<sup>8</sup>

7. The increase in the proportion of elderly people in the population will slow in Québec beginning in 2030, once the last baby boomers turn 65. Source: Institut de la statistique du Québec. Données sociodémographiques en bref, Volume 19, No. 3 (June 2015).

8. For a presentation of the main emerging technologies, see OECD. Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2016.

The impact and reach of emerging technologies are, by their very nature, hard to predict. New multinational companies spring up and grow rapidly, creating wealth and disrupting the competitive environment. In some sectors such as the cultural, hospitality, transportation, media and retail industries, business models have already seen radical transformations in recent years.

Some innovations pose special challenges to governments, creating issues with respect to, for instance, regulation, taxation, training, business support and the fight against cybercrime. These same innovations also create opportunities to rethink how things are done. A good example would be the digital revolution that can foster increased government openness and transparency, improve the quality and efficiency of public services and create conditions conducive to a more dynamic form of public diplomacy.

Innovation is shaped by world issues as much as the other way around. It helps increase lifespan, improves our ability to manage natural resources and plays a key role in global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Dissemination of and access to innovation can improve social and economic inclusion. What is more, immigration can have a beneficial effect on innovation.<sup>9</sup>

Governments have an important role to play in stimulating international cooperation in science and research. They also help create environments conducive to innovation by providing appropriate funding, adapting public policy, fostering technological entrepreneurship and encouraging business–research centre partnerships and the commercialization of the products and services they generate.

## **THE GLOBAL CULTURAL ECONOMY IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

The creative and cultural industries generate an estimated US\$2.25 trillion in annual revenues and 29.5 million jobs.<sup>10</sup> The biggest market for these industries is the Asia-Pacific region, which accounts for about one-third of revenues, followed by Europe and the United States. Latin America and Africa, for their part, hold considerable development potential.

The digital revolution has had a major impact on the cultural industry, accelerating its growth and opening up new avenues for promotion and dissemination. It has also significantly increased the availability and affordability of the cultural offer, creating a highly competitive environment for Québec cultural products. In the face of this phenomenon, new and highly effective strategies are needed to attract capital, showcase Québec expertise, consolidate cultural enterprises and secure a greater presence for Québec artists and cultural industries on all markets, in keeping with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

9. See, for example: Zhu, Nong (2014). Synthèse de la littérature sur l'impact de l'immigration sur l'innovation.

10. International Confederation of Music Publishers, EY and UNESCO (2015). Cultural Times: The First Global Map of Cultural and Creative Industries.



## Trade and investment in a changing world

In today's more uncertain economic climate, the volume of trade continues to grow, especially in the service sector, but at a slower pace than was the case prior to 2008. The persistent deadlock in multilateral international trade negotiations and the complexity of new trade agreements add to the uncertainty. Furthermore, public opinion is sometimes ambivalent or sceptical about trade liberalization, despite its economic successes, leading certain decision makers to adopt a protectionist stance. Governments promoting trade agreements must be able to show that these agreements will create jobs and generate benefits for society as a whole without undermining their ability to protect the common good.

The increased mobility of people, goods, information and capital has profoundly transformed the organization of production. Complex supply chains are gradually erasing the distinction between the production of goods and services, and new manufacturing hubs have developed, especially in Asia, alongside the traditional centres of production in North America and Europe. Intra-firm and intra-chain trade now account for a substantial share of international trade volumes. At the same time, this new reality is confronted with certain policies that seek to limit the cross-border movement of goods and people.

International financial flows have also seen significant changes in recent years, especially in the wake of the 2008–2009 financial crisis and the ensuing downturn. New economic hubs, especially China, have become major sources of international investment. However, the United States and Europe still account for the lion's share of foreign investment in Québec and the rest of the world.

Economic uncertainty, regional instability and the growing number of transnational issues all increase the risks associated with investment, and competition for foreign capital is strong. Along with conventional considerations around profitability and specialization, today's investors must also take into account issues related to social acceptability, respect for human rights, environmental protection, low carbon development and institutional stability. In this context, Québec boasts several strengths it needs to promote in order to secure a niche in the challenging international environment.





**3**

# **THE THREE THRUSTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY**





# THE THREE THRUSTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL POLICY

---

Rooted in its historical, political and legal legacy and responsive to changing circumstances, Québec's international actions are organized around the following three thrusts:

- 1. Make Quebecers more prosperous**
- 2. Contribute to a more sustainable, just and secure world**
- 3. Promote creativity, culture, knowledge and Québec's specificity**

These three thrusts are closely interlinked and interdependent in their design, implementation and outcomes. The prosperity of Quebecers will be greater and more durable in a world where development is sustainable, where more people lift themselves out of poverty and see their basic rights respected, and where security is assured. It will be greater still if Québec becomes a global hub of inventiveness and creativity, whereas innovation is gaining a decisive importance for international competitiveness. To this end, the contribution of Québec knowledge to addressing global sustainable development challenges must be supported and promoted. Lastly, Québec's ability to make its mark internationally, including in terms of attracting and retaining talent, is intimately linked to its francophone character and its aptitude for efficiently promoting the principles of openness and inclusiveness which anime its society.

## Political relations commensurate with Québec's ambitions

Québec has its own purpose on the international scene. In a world characterized by interdependence, Québec's political relations form the framework for its actions; in addition to helping it defend its interests, these relations preserve and, in the longer term, open up markets and ensure the promotion of Québec's talents and assets while, at the same time, serving the common good. In this context, the Québec government and its offices abroad play a fundamental role in establishing and maintaining relationships of trust with foreign decision makers, institutions and organizations.

To implement its International Policy, Québec will continue to lean on its historical first-tier circle of partners in North America, Western Europe and the international Francophonie. It will also pursue its efforts within multilateral forums active in its areas of jurisdiction, including various specialized United Nations bodies, as well as its action regarding the northern and Arctic regions issues and certain like-minded federated states and regions.

In a changing international context that impels to think in global terms, the government recognizes that business opportunities and partnerships can be found everywhere. This is why Québec has been investing time and effort for several years now in a second tier circle composed of Asian, Latin American and African countries, where economic opportunities abound. Québec is also willing to play a greater role in the francophone economic community, where a common language and the complementarity of its actors hold major growth potential, especially in Africa.

Given the evolution of the global situation and the principle according to which diplomacy bears fruit over the long term, Québec intends to continue on this path and gradually expand its means of intervention.

### **3.1 MAKE QUEBECERS MORE PROSPEROUS**

More than ever, the advancement of Québec's economic, commercial and financial interests is central to the international actions of the government and its overseas offices.

The vitality of the business community, the availability of skilled labour and the quality and predictability of the legal and fiscal frameworks all contribute to making an economy competitive. At the same time, the distinction between measures to promote mobility, trade and investment appears increasingly artificial; all three are fundamental and interconnected elements for successfully integrating into the world economy.

In this context, the government intends to use all the tools at its disposal to influence, at its level, the international determinants of Québec's prosperity.

#### **3.1.1 MOBILITY AND YOUTH**

Québec's prosperity is linked on its ability to differentiate itself in high-value-added sectors. In an era where knowledge is one of the main determinants of economic performance, the human capital is of paramount importance. In this context, Québec can bank on the quality and creativity of its workforce and its educational institutions as well as the diversity and openness of its society.

In managing the selection and welcome of foreign nationals, the government takes the profiles of applicants into account and performs its actions in complementarity with those of the Government of Canada, which has sole responsibility for admitting people to Canada, ordering removals and defining and applying criteria that determine who can enter and stay in the country.

Talent mobility<sup>11</sup> not only constitutes part of the response to demographic imperatives, it also stimulates the accumulation, sharing and creation of knowledge. It makes it possible to create and maintain the international networks essential to market development, professional improvement and innovation. It is also revealing that, despite the ever-growing possibilities offered by information and communication technologies, business travel, intra-firm staff transfers, international tourism and students are at record levels, or even sharply increasing.

## **TOURISM, AN IMPORTANT DIMENSION OF THE PEOPLE MOBILITY AND OF THE SERVICE SECTOR**

International tourist arrivals grew from 278 million in 1980 to 527 million in 1995, and reached 1.18 billion in 2015. The World Tourism Organization expects this upward trend to continue, driven in part by the rising living standards in the emerging countries and the population ageing, and predicts that the number of international tourists will reach 1.8 billion by 2030.<sup>12</sup>

The emergence of new tourist destinations around the globe may result in unequal distribution of this anticipated growth of international tourism. For Québec, this highlights the importance of remaining innovative and internationally competitive by focusing on services that meet international standards and showcasing itself as a secure destination.

A major contributor to the economic development of Québec, tourism generated over \$13 billion in revenue in 2014, and is a source of economic diversification for all regions. Over 32,000 companies and some 350,000 jobs are associated with the tourism industry.<sup>13</sup>

## **Workers**

Permanent and temporary immigration contributes to several socio-economic objectives, notably with respect to Québec's economic and demographic weight and to worker replacement in a context of rising retirements.<sup>14</sup> Québec pays special attention to the selection of immigrants who, by virtue of their vocational, technical or university training, can help meet labour needs. Under the Canada-Québec Accord relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens, Québec retains exclusive responsibilities with respect to immigrant selection, reception and integration within its borders.<sup>15</sup>

.....  
11. The mobility of researchers, artists and creators is dealt with more specifically in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

12. World Tourism Organization. UNTWO Tourism Highlights, 2016 Edition.

13. Ministère du Tourisme. Données sur le tourisme au Québec. Updated February 15, 2016.

14. It is estimated that between 2015 and 2024, some 1.372 million jobs will open up in Québec, 21% of which will be filled by immigration. Most of these jobs (1.132 million) will be due to retirements. Source: Emploi-Québec (2015). Le marché du travail et l'emploi par industrie au Québec – Perspectives à moyen (2015-2019) et à long terme (2015-2024).

15. Except for immigrants in the family class, who are not strictly speaking subject to selection, and persons who are granted refugee status after applying for asylum in Canada.



The government conducted an in-depth review of its approach to attracting, retaining and integrating immigrant workers in preparing its Policy on Immigration, Participation, and Inclusion and the accompanying action strategy. It has undertaken to offer online francization and integration services for temporary residents and family members with a view to facilitating their transition to permanent resident status and long-term settlement in Québec. In addition, the government recognizes that people of all origins will be unable to contribute with their full potential to the society unless there is a major commitment to promoting real equality in the labour market. To achieve this, the government intends to improve and accelerate the recognition of the skills acquired by immigrants trained abroad, mobilize government departments and agencies with a role to play in this regard, and involve all labour market stakeholders, including employers, organizations that regulate professions and trades, and the education system. Successfully integrated immigration requires the shared commitment of the host society and the immigrants themselves.

The government will work to increase the number of agreements dealing with the recognition of professional qualifications, drawing inspiration from the Québec-France Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications.<sup>16</sup> Taking into consideration the interest expressed by professional orders and the competent authorities, the government will prioritize targeted countries considering, among other things, the importance of their ties to Québec. Matching skills with Québec's labour market needs will be an important parameter in the selection of professions, occupations and trades targeted by the agreements.

#### **FACILITATING MOBILITY BY COORDINATING SOCIAL SECURITY REGIMES**

The goal of social security agreements with other governments is to coordinate their respective social security regimes mentioned therein. Between 1979 and 2016, Québec concluded such agreements with 34 countries. In concrete terms, they facilitate the mobility of people by guaranteeing that their rights to benefits they have acquired or are in the process of acquiring in their country of origin will be maintained. These agreements also enable them to compensate missing insurance periods with those completed in the other jurisdiction in order to be entitled to receive a benefit.

These agreements also benefit companies by guaranteeing that employers who temporarily assign workers on the territory of the other jurisdiction are not required to pay social security contributions in duplicate. The provisions regarding the applicable legislation determine that to which employees remain subject during their temporary assignment and to which regime the employer must make the relevant contributions. Analogous provisions apply to self-employed workers.

The Government of Québec is also working toward the implementation of a private conventions on international law that will allow people to benefits from certain rights, such as the Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance.

.....  
16. Reciprocal recognition of professional qualifications under these agreements also opens doors to Quebecers wishing to enhance their professional careers with work experience abroad.



The Government of Québec is implementing a new prospection and recruitment strategy aimed at attracting people with a sought-after socio-professional profile, based on the changing needs of Québec's labour market. This strategy supports the objective of maintaining the vitality of the French language. It also enables Québec to position itself on the global market for strategic talent attractiveness while at the same time ensuring that future candidates are well informed about the immigration process, the realities of the labour market and the importance of learning French as early as possible in the immigration process.

To broaden the scope of prospecting, attraction and recruitment initiatives, partnerships and collaboration between Québec stakeholders and local partners abroad are essential. With their presence on the ground and their networks of partners, Québec's offices abroad help increase Québec's attractiveness and facilitate the process of matching candidates with labour market needs, especially in growth sectors affected by labour shortages.

### **IMMIGRATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INVESTMENT**

Like many mature economies with ageing populations, Québec faces major challenges with respect to its entrepreneurial vitality. Given this, it is important to take full advantage of immigrant entrepreneurship. According to data compiled by the Fondation de l'entrepreneuriat du Québec, immigrants form a segment of the population that is particularly active in terms of entrepreneurship. The Government of Québec will, among other things, put in place a strategy to attract immigrant entrepreneurs and innovators, and promote their integration so that they can contribute to the economic development of Québec.

Like immigrant entrepreneurs, immigrant investors are also important for the economic development of Québec, especially for investing in Québec SMEs. While it has been relatively easy to attract immigrant investors historically, it remains a challenge to retain them. This is why the government continues to work to encourage them to remain in Québec over the long term by improving reception and support services.

A recent trend is the steadily growing contribution of temporary foreign workers. These workers can help a region or sector fill occasional needs. Temporary foreign worker admissions have increased by over 50% since 2008 to more than 37,000.<sup>17</sup> Québec recognizes the vulnerability of low-paid or low-skill temporary foreign workers and has therefore taken the necessary measures to protect their safety, including the fight against human trafficking. Temporary foreign workers make up a diverse group composed, among others, of agricultural workers (approximately 20% of annual entries), specialized workers (approx. 10%) and participants in youth exchange programs (over 35%).

.....  
17. Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (2014). L'immigration temporaire au Québec 2008-2013.

## Youth

Today's youth are and will be more exposed to the diversity of languages and cultures and to the effects of globalization. They are also increasingly aware that the global economic and environmental landscape can have concrete impacts on their lives and aspirations.

Youth mobility is a defining element for relations between societies, and can also serve as a stepping stone for young people in search of personal and professional experiences. In The 2030 Québec Youth Policy, the government set ambitious objectives for mobility through the support of international projects in youth entrepreneurship, career development, socio-professional integration and citizen engagement. It has also committed to increase youth representation in trade missions abroad.

Les Offices jeunesse internationaux du Québec (LOJIQ) will continue to play a very active role in youth mobility through programs that enable young adults from Québec and elsewhere to carry out projects in all the regions of Québec, in Canada and abroad. International cooperation organizations and education networks are also major actors in youth mobility.

## Students

Québec's education system is the cornerstone of its development, which is why major efforts are being made to improve it and ensure that it remains competitive on the world stage.

According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Québec students rank among the best in the world in reading and science and, more importantly, in mathematics and problem solving. Vocational training programs at the secondary school level and technical training programs at the college level<sup>18</sup> enjoy an enviable reputation and are in growing demand, both from international students and countries seeking inspiration from best practices, notably with regard to Québec's competency-based approach. Many Québec universities also perform well in the main international rankings, and Montréal is widely viewed as one of the best student cities in the world.<sup>19</sup> The quality of educational institutions, the variety of programs available, the relatively low tuition fees and cost of living, the openness of Québec society and safety are all first-class comparative advantages for Québec.

In the international education market, Québec also possesses another distinctive advantage related to the linguistic characteristics of its educational institutions: the quality and diversity of programs available in both French and English. This enables Québec to attract a large and diversified pool of international students.

.....  
18. The college network and Fédération des cégeps are very active on the world stage and play an important role in attracting exchange students.

19. Montréal finished in top spot in the 2017 Quacquarelli Symonds Best Student Cities rankings.

The internationalization of education generates significant benefits. International students are more likely to be interested in immigrating and to be welcomed under optimal conditions for their linguistic, social and economic integration. Furthermore, it has been estimated that international students studying in Québec contribute \$1.3 billion to the GDP and support some 20,000 jobs.<sup>20</sup>

The recruitment of international students also helps strengthen Québec scientific and technological research base and develop an informal network of ambassadors who contribute to enhancing Québec's international notoriety. While some institutions see their student population declining, the presence of international students boosts their vitality and helps them maintaining a broad range of programs.

At the same time, studying abroad is a rewarding experience for Québec students, personally and professionally, while it participates in raising Québec's international profile.

### **STUDENT MOBILITY IN NUMBERS**

The total number of international students worldwide increased from 1.7 million in 1995 to 3.0 million in 2005, and reached 4.5 million in 2012 (higher education alone).<sup>21</sup> The number of international students studying in Québec grew by roughly the same proportion, increasing from 11,729 in 1995 to 23,172 in 2005 and to 34,339 in 2012<sup>22</sup>, and the progression continues. However, Québec's share of international students in Canada as a whole is approximately 14%, far behind Ontario (43%) and British Columbia (27%).<sup>23</sup>

The rapid growth in international student enrolments in Canada and around the world in the last decade is mainly due to the increase in the number of Asian students. Québec's performance during this period can essentially be attributed to its attractiveness for French students, who account for over 50% of the rise in international student enrolments.

At the global level, it is estimated that the number of international students will continue its upswing in coming years, following the rhythm of the increase in the number of young adults and the purchasing power of developing and emerging countries.

20. Roslyn Kunin & Associates, Inc. Economic Impact of International Education in Canada-2016 Update. (2014 data)

21. OECD. Education at a Glance 2015: OECD Indicators, p. 389.

22. Sources: Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (2014). Statistiques sur les étudiants internationaux dans le réseau universitaire.

Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (2014). Statistiques sur les étudiants internationaux dans le réseau collégial.

23. Immigration Canada (2016). Facts and figures: Immigration overview (2015): Temporary residents.

International educational offerings are changing as competition for the attraction of international students grows stronger and more diverse. Student profiles also continue to evolve in response to demographic and political changes, economic growth, foreign exchange markets, mobility policies and the development of education systems in their countries of origin. Historically, internationalization has mainly impacted universities, but today all levels of education are affected, especially vocational and technical schools.

Students from France make up the largest contingent of international students at Québec universities and colleges, due in part to agreements signed by Québec and France. In all, Québec has some forty international agreements with foreign governments providing for exemptions from differential tuition fees as well as merit scholarships for citizens of signatory countries. Since they are based on a principle of reciprocity, these agreements offer financial incentives to international students wishing to study in Québec and to Québec students wishing to study abroad. They also play a role in the development of bilateral relations and act as levers to promote gender equality.

A certain number of exemptions are also granted to universities and vocational and technical schools to enable them to recruit international students.

These exemptions are important recruitment tools, especially for institutions outside of the main urban areas. However, given the size of the potential pool of candidates, more effort is required at all levels to recruit a greater proportion of international students who do not benefit from differential tuition fees exemptions.

In addition to student mobility, Québec institutions have the possibility of offering training programs abroad, including online courses. Interest in such programs among foreign students, institutions and governments creates new opportunities, enabling institutions to raise their profiles and enhance Québec's reputation abroad.

### **A new strategy to attract international students<sup>24</sup>**

Given these facts, the government plans to work with education stakeholders—especially institutions and institutional networks with an international focus—to develop a new international strategy to promote educational opportunities in Québec, including vocational and technical training. Québec's network of offices abroad will be called on to help implement the strategy.

.....  
24. The internationalization of education has numerous other important and interrelated facets, including the internationalization of education programs, the international mobility of Québec students (or "outgoing" mobility) and the participation in the work of international organizations such as OECD, UNESCO, Agence universitaire de la Francophonie and CONFEMEN. These facets are the focus of intense interest by stakeholders, including the ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur. Among other things, the government intends to pursue its actions to promote the international mobility of Québec students.

To meet its ambitious targets, the new strategy will aim to enhance the prospecting and promotional capacities of educational institutions while, at the same time, building on their knowledge of their market and of their position in it. This could involve assistance in identifying target markets, designing promotional campaigns, supporting recruitment efforts, developing adjusted market-based approaches, building a stronger Web and social media presence, supporting francization measures for international students or helping in the conclusion of institutional partnerships. The new strategy will be consistent with the Québec Policy on Immigration, Participation and Inclusion, one goal of which is to facilitate the settlement of international students who wish to pursue their careers in Québec.

In support of this new strategy, the government will ensure that Québec's international agreements in the field of education contribute to the attainment of established objectives regarding student mobility and the international promotion of educational opportunities in Québec.

### **3.1.2 TRADE RELATIONS**

#### **Trade policy**

Given its relatively small domestic market, Québec has long maintained an open economy and advocated for trade as a vector of economic prosperity. International exports of goods and services account for nearly 30% of Québec's GDP, and a large number of quality Québec jobs depend directly or indirectly on international trade.

In an environment where protectionism seems to be gaining ground, the Government of Québec continues to work on all fronts to improve the conditions in which Québec companies can access and integrate into world markets. By doing so, it shows that it is possible to maintain an inclusive socio-economic model while at the same time stimulating growth and innovation through successful integration into major global trade networks.

While trade liberalization is generally beneficial for the economy, it can also lead to changes that negatively impact certain groups of workers. These imbalances must be mitigated by establishing dynamic labour markets, redistribution or compensation mechanisms and innovative economic revitalisation projects.



## **Strengthening existing economic and trade partnerships and creating new ones**

More than 25 years after the entry into force of the first Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Canada and the United States, economic and trade relations with the U.S.—the destination for approximately 70% of Québec's international exports—remain Québec's number one priority. For a number of years now, Québec companies have faced increased competition from emerging countries in the U.S. market. Despite the benefits of geographical proximity, the Québec-U.S. trade relationship must never be taken for granted, which is why additional and steady efforts must be achieved to maintain and improve the position of Québec companies in the United States.

The inclusion of Mexico in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the strengthened economic partnership that came into force in 1994, led to the creation of one of the largest free-trade zones in the world. NAFTA tripled trilateral trade value, which totalled more than \$1 trillion in 2015, and stimulated economic growth in all three countries. It also led to the establishment of a continental energy market that enhanced North American energy security.

Working in concert with its partners, especially the other Canadian provinces as well as the American states, the Government of Québec will seek to consolidate existing access and promote greater openness of public procurement markets (procurement of good and services and construction contracts awarded by public bodies).

Québec will always hold on to play a direct role within Canadian delegations during negotiations on any NAFTA modifications that affect Québec's interests as well as in all trade negotiations on matters within its jurisdiction, as in the softwood lumber issue.

Québec will make a sustained effort to raise awareness of the shared benefits of Canadian-American free trade. Québec's representatives in the United States will therefore work to deepen relations and increase contacts with political and economic actors as well as with universities and other opinion leaders.

The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is also of strategic importance for Québec. CETA's potential is considerable, and it will help consolidate Québec's position as a transatlantic trade hub at the crossroads of two of the biggest markets on the planet. The EU is an economic and trade giant, and a key partner in terms of exports and investments given that a substantial part of the foreign companies established in Québec is European. The Government of Québec was the very first promoter of CETA and participated actively in the negotiations. It intends to ensure that Québec companies benefit fully from the new openings created in this market of nearly 500 million consumers. It also reiterates its support in principle for efforts aimed at promoting trade with European countries, including non-EU members.



Major trade initiatives have also been launched in recent years in the Asia-Pacific region, some of which involving Canada. The free trade agreement between Canada and South Korea provides attractive opportunities for Québec companies. Given the strategic role played by the Asia-Pacific region in the global economy, Québec is closely watching developments there and will seek to participate in all negotiations to liberalize trade between Canada and the Asian countries with which it does not already have a trade agreement, including Japan, India and the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Gaining increased access to the Chinese market is also one of Québec's goals. Trade with China has grown and diversified significantly over the past ten years, so much so that it is now Québec's second largest international client. Québec intends to pursue its efforts by integrating the dialogue structures the Government of Canada has established with China. Québec also intends to enhance its contacts with Chinese provinces and cities as well as with representatives of Chinese and Québec economic sectors in order to establish initiatives with the potential to foster Québec's strategic interests in China, in a spirit of mutually beneficial partnerships.

Further expansion of exports to emerging markets constitutes a goal to be maintained. Québec will continue encouraging the Government of Canada to start or pursue trade negotiations with countries where Québec companies will be likely to develop new markets and find new partners.

In parallel, Québec will continue to monitor developments, pursue dialogue with foreign governments, including federated states, and work with the Government of Canada to support Québec exporters grappling with complex international regulations.

Lastly, the Government of Québec endorses the principles and main objectives of the multilateral trade system as defended by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and reiterates its support for WTO multilateral negotiations.

### **Trade agreements that respect Québec's jurisdictions and interests**

Québec intends to actively participate in all stages of Canada's trade negotiations, not only to promote its economic interests but also to assert and protect its specificity.

Québec will therefore seek the inclusion of exceptions for culture and cultural industries in trade agreements in order to protect its ability to develop and implement its own cultural policies and measures. Québec will implement trade agreements concluded by Canada in a manner consistent with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

In the same way, the government will ensure that trade agreements include provisions to protect intellectual property and combat piracy so that Québec can continue to be a hub of innovation, including in the digital sector.

The Government of Québec also intends to collaborate with its partners to use trade as a lever for the transition to a sustainable, low carbon economy. It also intends to ensure that Canada's position on these issues reflects Québec's interests and will support actions to promote trade in environmental goods and services globally and regionally.

Lastly, Québec's specific agricultural and food safety regime, including the supply management system, must also be taken into account in any trade agreement involving Canada. Protection for the field of education, including higher education, will also be maintained.

## **The internationalization of Québec companies**

In a jurisdiction like Québec, whose economy is so closely linked to those of its neighbours and the rest of the world, international trade shapes most sectors and affects many business activities, from research to marketing. In addition, companies that internationalize tend, in Québec as elsewhere, to be more productive and innovative and to generate more jobs.<sup>25</sup> It is with this in mind that the Government of Québec will continue to assist and support companies in their internationalization efforts. It will focus its initiatives on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the backbone of Québec's economy, taking into consideration their needs and the profound changes the global economy has undergone in recent decades.

### **Successfully navigating traditional and emerging markets**

For Québec, one of the most noticeable impacts of these changes is the diversification of its trade partners. It was this very diversification that enabled Québec exports to rapidly recover to pre-2008-2009 crisis levels, and even exceed them. While Québec exports to the United States in 2015 were similar to 2005 levels, exports to other regions of the world rose significantly during the same period (see Figures 1 and 2).

.....  
25. Industry Canada. SME Profile: Canadian Exporters (2015).



Figure 1

# QUÉBEC EXPORTS OF GOODS, BY DESTINATION, IN 2005, 2010 AND 2015

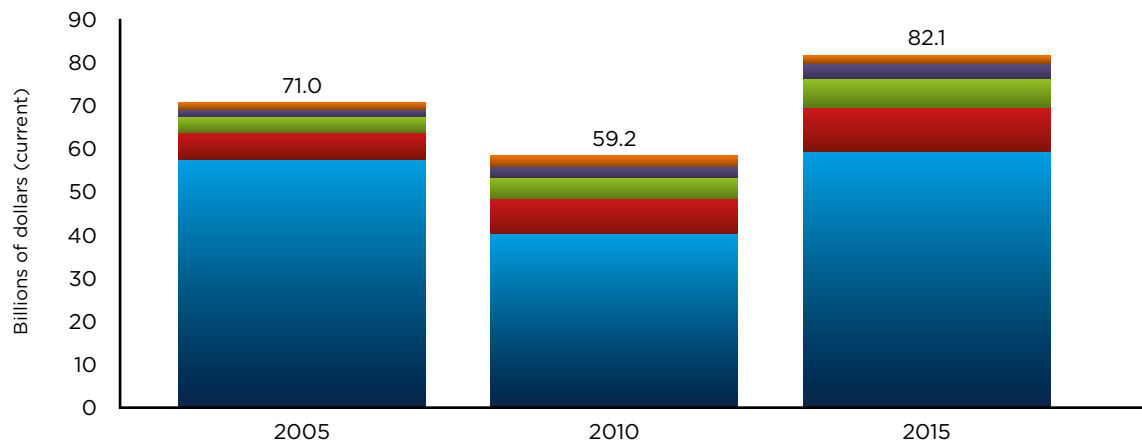
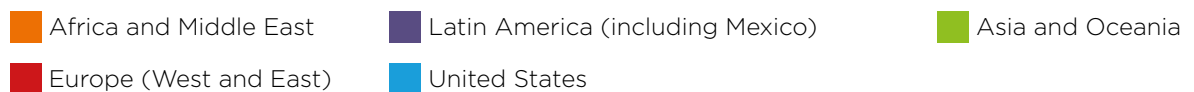
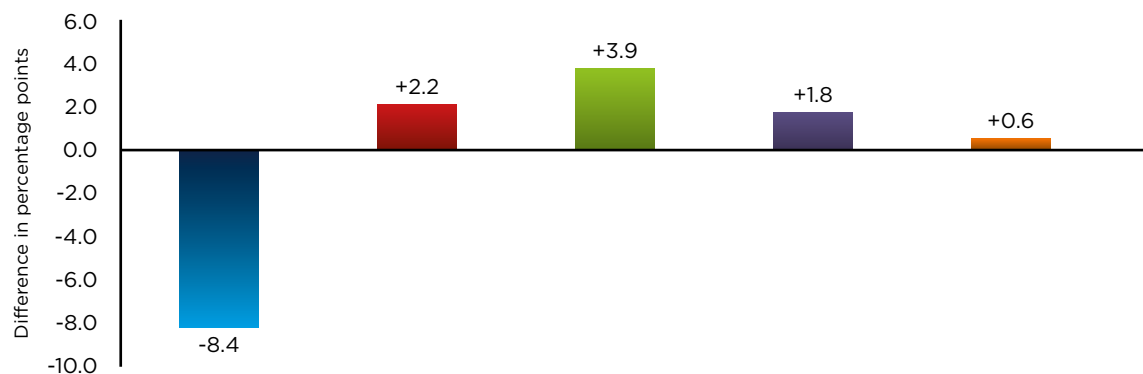


Figure 2

# CHANGE IN RESPECTIVE SHARES OF TOTAL EXPORTS OF QUÉBEC GOODS, BY DESTINATION, BETWEEN 2005 AND 2015



Sources : Statistics Canada and Institut de la statistique du Québec, November 2016 data  
 Compilation: Ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie

## **Integrating global value chains and digital economy**

Another major goal of Québec exporters in relation to the transformation of international trade is to integrate global value chains.<sup>26</sup> Their importance is linked with the increase in international trade in intermediary products and services (or inputs as opposed to finished products) and in intra-industry and intra-firm trade. The issue for transnational companies is now to ensure that tasks along the chain are performed where it is the most advantageous for them.

In this context, Québec's goal is to ensure that its SMEs—which can be subcontracted by transnational firms to perform certain tasks—fill high-value-added links in these chains by drawing on expertise developed in Québec sectors of excellence.

Digital expertise is another avenue ideally suited to developing world-class products and services offer. It dramatically reduces physical barriers to trade by reaching customers and suppliers around the world and allows for the development of new business models based on the optimal use of big data and the convergence of digital and other technologies and emerging sectors.

The competitiveness of companies in international markets hinges on their ability to innovate and differentiate themselves from their competitors. While companies bear the main responsibility in this respect, the government nevertheless has a role to play by ensuring that conditions in place with regard to training and research, infrastructure, taxation and regulation encourage the emergence of successful companies. The Government of Québec is committed to redouble its efforts to assist companies in transitioning to this new economy, as with the Digital Economy Action Plan developed under Québec's Digital Strategy.

## **Agile support adapted to companies' internationalization needs**

When government support measures respond directly to the expectations and needs of Québec exporting SMEs, they can be decisive in strengthening their export capacity and helping them carry out their plans. Depending on the circumstances, this support may involve helping SMEs develop their competences in internationalization, providing strategic market information, giving them access to key players, organizing trade missions and networking activities involving buyers and sellers or helping bring a Québec innovation to the international market

.....  
26. Global value chains can be described as " the full spectrum of company activities needed to bring a product or service from concept to end use, as well as the way these activities are distributed geographically and across international borders." For more information, see Institut de la statistique du Québec (2015). Les chaînes de valeur mondiales au Québec, Bulletin S@voir.stat, volume 16, no. 1.

In this area, the government and its network of offices abroad can provide valuable support to Québec exporters by sharing their knowledge of the supply chains and the local distribution and procurement networks in the regions they cover. They can also help Québec companies navigate foreign business environments and open doors to decision makers.

In the same vein, the strategic establishment of Québec companies abroad must be encouraged. The economic activity of these subsidiaries boosts the international standing and competitiveness of Québec industries, deepens their economic and commercial partnerships and further bolsters Québec's international status. The government will therefore support the activities and projects of Québec companies abroad when they are expected to generate jobs, investments, added value and the consolidation of the decision centres in Québec.

Promoting Québec's sectors of excellence and numerous advantages is also important since this reflects favourably on all Québec companies.

### **PROMOTING QUÉBEC'S SECTORS OF EXCELLENCE IN MAJOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE SHOWS**

Major international trade shows are a unique opportunity to promote Québec's sectors of excellence, especially with senior executives from large international companies already present in Québec or thinking about settling here. Trade shows are also of considerable interest for participating Québec SMEs because they allow them to directly target potential business partners, promote sales in foreign markets and actively monitor the latest technological and commercial trends in their industries.

Leading aerospace industry exhibitions are a good example of this. The ministère de l'Économie, de la Science et de l'Innovation, in collaboration with Québec's offices abroad, coordinates the organization, hosting and running of trade and ministerial missions to the main shows that are Le Bourget in France, Farnborough in the United Kingdom and the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA) Convention and Exhibition in the United States.

Lastly, given the essential role played by innovation, international partnerships in research and development can also contribute to the internationalization of Québec companies and their integration into global value chains.

The volatile and rapidly changing economic and trade environment also requires a flexible, scalable and targeted approach. This is why the government will work with relevant stakeholders to update its approach and means of action on an ongoing basis, both at home and abroad, with the goal of optimally linking Québec's sectoral activities with international opportunities as set out more specifically in the Québec Export Strategy.



## Foreign investment

Productive investments create jobs, finance innovation, grow the economy and generate new income for shareholders, workers, the government and communities. Multinationals play a particularly important role in this regard; even though they only make up a small percentage of active business entities in Québec, they account for a significant portion of investments and jobs in Québec, as elsewhere.

More specifically, foreign investment encourages partnerships between multinationals and local companies and opens the door to new business opportunities. It also fosters technology transfer and the import of new and improved processes.

The government remains determined to attract foreign investment in sectors that are strategic for Québec, such as innovative manufacturing. It also encourages the development of activities by foreign subsidiaries in Québec, notably by supporting their efforts to secure global mandates likely to stimulate the creation of permanent jobs in growth sectors.

Countries, cities and regions compete to attract and retain foreign investment and international decision centres, as do subsidiaries of the same multinational enterprises. Since innovation is the motor of economic success, one of the main levers for attracting and retaining important investments and decision centres in Québec is the presence of hubs of knowledge and expertise in key sectors like aerospace, information technology, the creative economy, the life sciences, biofood, natural resources, clean technology and financial services. The quality of Québec's human capital is evident in its specialized workforce as well as in its multilingualism and the quality of its training.

Québec also offers access to clean and affordable renewable energy, some of the lowest operating costs in North America, tax and investment incentives, geographic proximity to and economic integration with the United States, an efficient multimodal transportation infrastructure, well integrated local industrial port zones, abundant natural resources, a business-friendly environment and exceptional living conditions.

All of these comparative advantages strengthen Québec's image, helping attract foreign investment and facilitating the internationalization of Québec companies. Working closely with prospecting agencies, the government has a key role to play on this matter, for example, by actively maintaining influential networks on the ground and striving to reach targeted audiences. However, attracting investments is a complex process. There are many steps and stakeholders involved: companies, political representatives, government departments and state companies, diplomats, municipalities and economic development agencies.

### BOX 3

## ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE HOLDING OF MAJOR INTERNATIONAL EVENTS IN QUÉBEC

International organizations occupy a significant place among decision centres that Québec seeks to attract, retain and see grow. Québec is already home to seven governmental organizations and some fifty non-governmental organizations, most of which are located in Montréal. This makes Montréal the leading host city in Canada for international organizations and the third in North America behind New York City and Washington, DC. The presence of these decision centres is a source of international prestige for Québec and a source of pride for Quebecers. International organizations also represent over 1,500 high-quality jobs, revenues derived almost 80% from foreign sources and annual net economic spinoffs of \$215 million.<sup>27</sup> The Government of Québec and the Government of Canada work together to establish favourable conditions for hosting the most important organizations and, together with the City of Montréal, directly support efforts by Montréal International to attract, retain and expand international organizations. The goal is to ensure that these organizations benefit from conditions that facilitate the discharge of their mandates and activities in Québec.

The most important international organization in Québec is the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a United Nations specialized agency that works to make the civil aviation sector safe and efficient worldwide and to ensure the sector develops in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner. ICAO has helped attract some ten other non-governmental organizations along with it, making Montréal the world capital of civil aviation and enriching the city's aerospace industry ecosystem, which is also home to leading multinationals and a multitude of Québec SMEs and specialized research centres. In addition to ICAO, the other major international organizations located in Québec include the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the International Air Transport Association, the World Anti-Doping Agency and the Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable. The Government of Québec will continue to encourage the presence of international organizations within its borders.

The presence of international organizations also helps draw major international events to Québec. Such events generate significant direct benefits in terms of business tourism and are leading platforms for bringing diplomatic influence to bear in support of Québec's interests. For example, the annual International Economic Forum of the Americas attracts thousands of participants and hundreds of high-calibre speakers from some fifty countries to Montréal. For over 20 years now, it has also provided a forum and outstanding networking opportunities to Québec companies and government representatives. Other major international events held in Québec include the ICAO Assembly, the International Summit of Cooperatives as well as C2 Montréal, which has become one of the world's top conferences on commerce and creativity.

### 3.1.3 RESPONSIBLE PROSPERITY

#### **Sustainable economic development**

Québec promotes sustainable development that integrates economic, social and environmental dimensions in keeping with the principles set out in the *Sustainable Development Act* and in international instruments such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises as well as the United Nations Global Compact and Principles for Responsible Investment. This is illustrated by the determination of Québec institutions to adopt best practices and by its efforts to facilitate the application of the principles of sustainable development in the private sector. This is also manifested by the government's approach in developing the economic potential of Québec's maritime and northern territories in harmony with the indigenous and non-indigenous populations, while ensuring the social acceptability of projects and taking necessary steps to preserve biodiversity.

.....  
<sup>27</sup> Sources: Montréal International and SECOR.

The paradigm shift toward a lower-carbon economy in many regions of the world also creates opportunities for Québec companies that are able to take advantage of green technology investments in sectors such as energy, materials and transportation.

*The Stratégie économique pour la Francophonie* adopted at the Dakar Francophonie Summit in 2014 can also be seen within this context. The Strategy aims to reconcile economic growth with efforts to reduce poverty and inequality, protect the environment and preserve culture heritage by improving economic coordination between the states and governments of the francophone economic community with a view to maximizing the advantages of a common language.

Part of its inclusive and sustainable approach to economic development, Québec's experience with the social economy receives international attention. Bringing together cooperatives and mutuels as well as not-for-profit organizations whose commercial activities promote a social goal, the social economy can be a powerful lever for addressing the major challenges of our time, alongside governments and conventional businesses. In Québec, the social economy is a major component of the economy, representing over 100,000 jobs and \$38 billion in revenue in the cooperative and mutual networks.<sup>28</sup> The government intends to promote Québec's social economy on the world stage and help sharing on best practices with foreign partners.

## **Responsible and coordinated regulation of financial flows**

Québec takes a keen interest in the responsible, efficient and coordinated oversight of international finance and taxation, which regulatory framework has undergone substantial changes since the economic and financial crisis of 2008-2009. Under the leadership of the G20 and with the participation of many international organizations, including the Financial Stability Board and OECD, major reforms were undertaken to ensure that finance and taxation remain a source of prosperity for the many. More specifically, these initiatives seek to increase market transparency, supervision and stability and improve international tax cooperation in order to ensure greater fairness and to preserve states tax bases.

### **Transparency, supervision, and stability of financial markets**

Québec has important responsibilities in the regulation of financial markets, especially with respect to financial cooperatives, the insurance sector and securities (including the negotiation of over-the-counter derivatives, a sector in which Montréal Exchange plays a leading role). Québec has implemented the reforms undertaken by the G20 in coordination with Canadian and international measures. Already one of the world's most solid, its financial sector is even more so today.

.....  
28. Source: Conseil québécois de la coopération et de la mutualité.

These reforms were facilitated by the fact that Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF) cooperates actively in various international forums<sup>29</sup> and is a signatory to a number of bilateral and multilateral international agreements designed to facilitate and provide a framework for cooperation and information exchange between regulators. AMF's international role helps it improve its practices and extend its influence, further undergirding Québec's prosperity and financial stability. The Government of Québec intends to continue its support for the international cooperation efforts of AMF and the implementation of the resulting reforms.

### **International tax cooperation**

The 2008-2009 economic and financial crisis was also an opportunity for the international community to revitalize efforts to increase fairness in the international tax system and better protect tax bases. While much remains to be done, increased national and international coordination has enhanced capabilities for fighting tax evasion, tax avoidance and aggressive tax planning schemes. Québec is closely following these efforts, including the work by OECD on transparency, information exchange and tax base erosion. It supports these efforts and is adjusting its tax regime accordingly.

Given the crucial role of international cooperation in this area, the Government of Québec encourages the exchange of tax information between countries. In this regard, it is important that bilateral and multilateral tax treaties involving Canada continue to include a clause authorizing the Canada Revenue Agency to share information obtained from abroad with Revenu Québec.

E-commerce, which has grown significantly in recent years, poses particular challenges with regard to sales tax collection when the supplier of goods and services is located outside national borders. Once again, Québec is closely monitoring international efforts in this regard and will work in concert with its Canadian partners to ensure that the rapid expansion of e-commerce does not erode its tax revenues.

## **Improving public policies through international relations**

Québec has developed by drawing on and adapting successful reforms and public policies implemented elsewhere in areas such as health, education, taxation, immigration, innovation, the environment, childcare and access to employment. In certain areas, it has even become a model in its own right.

In order to pursue this progression and deal more effectively with the major demographic, economic and environmental challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Government of Québec supports and encourages international monitoring and benchmarking efforts that enable its departments and agencies to maintain and support the productivity and quality of their services and better meet the expectations of citizens.

.....  
29. Including the International Association of Deposit Insurers, the International Association of Insurance Supervisors, the International Organization of Securities Commissions and the Over-the-Counter Derivatives Regulators' Group.



It will promote participation by Québec decision makers and experts in international forums where Québec's main public policy concerns are discussed, including OECD. The government will also encourage sectoral collaborations with partner states known for public service excellence in areas that come under Québec's jurisdiction in Canada.

In this same spirit of continuous improvement and of inclusive and sustainable development, Québec will participate, where appropriate, in peer review processes under the aegis of international organizations, and will evaluate with rigour and openness the resulting recommendations.

## Maritime affairs

The government has set out a forward-looking vision through its Maritime Strategy to help Québec capitalize more effectively on its maritime expertise and potential. To this end, the Strategy seeks to build on the economic, environmental and social riches of the St. Lawrence River, Estuary and Gulf and Québec's northern coastline (which stretches for over 2,700 kilometres).

By their very nature, maritime affairs are closely linked to international affairs. The development of shipping routes, industrial port zones and logistics hubs, marine bioresources, marine biotechnologies and maritime tourism relies on international exchanges and investments as well as Québec's geographic location.

International collaboration is also an important vector for developing knowledge by sharing expertise in the maritime sector. Created with this in mind, the Québec Maritime Network pools Québec's main marine science resources as part of an inter-sectoral approach to foster sustainable maritime innovation and development.<sup>30</sup> The first international collaboration arising from this network is the *Institut France-Québec pour la coopération scientifique en appui au secteur maritime*. Besides, and given the projected increase in maritime traffic on the St. Lawrence, Québec is also promoting risk and incident management best practices.

Lastly, in order to encourage the development of the full potential of Québec's maritime territory, the government, through its network of offices abroad, is promoting Québec's maritime industries and comparative advantages around the world.

.....  
30. Section 3.3.1 deals more specifically with the importance of international collaboration in the fields of science, research and innovation.

# SUMMARY: THRUST 1

## MAKE QUEBECERS MORE PROSPEROUS

### MOBILITY AND YOUTH

- Increase the mobility of people through:
  - the strategic contribution of permanent and temporary immigration, including the recognition of immigrants' skills and credentials;
  - youth and student mobility.
- Implement a new international strategy to promote educational opportunities in Québec.

### TRADE POLICY

- Defend Québec's priority interests in all trade negotiations involving the Government of Canada, notably by participating in the negotiating team, and ensure the inclusion of measures to protect culture and cultural industries, intellectual property, the environment and Québec's specificity in matters of agriculture and food security.
- Influence Canadian trade policy by encouraging the negotiation of new trade agreements with countries likely to offer significant opportunities for Québec industries.
- Raise more awareness among Québec businesses of the opportunities provided by trade agreements.

### INTERNATIONALIZATION OF QUÉBEC COMPANIES

- Provide Québec exporters with flexible, needs-oriented support in order to:
  - strengthen their export capacity and facilitate project implementation;
  - help them successfully integrate into global value chains and the digital economy.
- Promote Québec's sectors of excellence and industries on international markets.
- Help align Québec product and service offerings with international market opportunities.
- Deploy resources and initiatives to preserve traditional markets and further develop new ones.

### FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND DECISION CENTRES

- Better coordinate efforts to attract foreign investment to Québec and put in place measures to attract, retain, and expand international decision centres.

### RESPONSIBLE PROSPERITY

- Take part in international efforts to further the responsible, coordinated regulation of financial markets and work in concert with the Government of Canada to enhance international cooperation with a view to tackling tax problems engendered by globalization.
- Showcase exemplary Québec sustainable development practices that tangibly impact integration of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development.
- Promote the continuous improvement of Québec public services by encouraging monitoring, benchmarking, peer review and sectoral cooperation with relevant international forums, as well as with states faced with similar challenges or recognized for excellence in public policy.

## **3.2 CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE, JUST AND SECURE WORLD**

The fight against climate change, inequality and insecurity is a matter of concern for public and private actors, from the local to the global level. Québec is aware of this shared destiny and contributes to the effort in a spirit of openness and partnership.

The key global challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are remarkably interconnected. Climate change is a major risk factor for increased poverty and insecurity. The fight against poverty and exclusion contributes to the struggle against conditions of fragility and instability, which in turn can facilitate the spread of criminal and terrorist organizations. Respect for human rights and freedom is an essential component of efforts to reduce inequality and exclusion. Finally, a lack of security undermines all human activities.

These challenges are also complex. Managing them requires a high level of international cooperation and, in certain cases, close coordination. It is in Québec's interest to contribute in a tangible way to addressing global challenges related to sustainable development, security and the fight against inequality.

### **3.2.1 CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE, THE ENERGY TRANSITION AND THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Scientific findings on climate change are alarming. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if the trend continues, average global temperatures could rise by 4 to 5°C by 2100, with catastrophic consequences for security, health, the environment and the economy. Developing countries are likely to be affected even more.

In the face of mounting scientific evidence of climate disruption and the undeniable role human activity plays in contributing to this phenomenon, the fight against climate change has become a global challenge.

At the same time, this challenge also holds enormous potential for modernization and economic growth. For example, the creation of quality jobs in the clean technology and renewable energy industries as well as energy efficiency gains, especially in transportation, could help improve industrial productivity and competitiveness while at the same time, reduce petroleum imports and their adverse effect on Québec's trade balance. In the same vein, improvements to mass transit systems will help reduce GHG emissions as well as the costs of urban congestion. And that is without counting the savings accruing from improved air and water quality, through its direct impact on population health.

Québec has been actively engaged in the fight against climate change since the international community first began to mobilize. It has set ambitious GHG emission reduction goals since the early 2000s, supported by measures in its Action Plan on Climate Change. Québec has since exceeded its 2012 target, reducing GHGs by 8% under 1990 levels, surpassing the initial target of 6%. Québec has also been a pioneer on several occasions, adopting California standards for light vehicles, for example, or creating a carbon market and Green Fund to help finance the fight against climate change. This has allowed it to fund a number of initiatives, including a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

These innovative measures, alliances with other governments, as well as the expertise developed in the fields of carbon markets, green technologies, renewable energies and climate adaptation modelling also contribute to Québec's good international reputation, as does its active participation in various international groups and its collaborations with leading institutions such as the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Québec's international role has also helped foster the emergence of a form of "climate diplomacy" based on an essential principle that subnational entities are key actors in climate change mitigation and adaptation, as recognized in the Paris Accord adopted at COP21 in 2015.

## **Fast-tracking the energy transition**

Facing the challenge of energy transition, Québec has diverse, abundant green resources that contribute to the quality of life of its citizens and that can help decarbonize the world economy. This is why Québec has been taking steps with its North American partners to facilitate and increase the supply of renewably sourced electricity to the continental northeast, notably by increasing inter-connections with neighbouring U.S. states. Québec is also working to more widely share Hydro-Québec's expertise as a leader in the production, transmission and distribution of clean, renewable energy, and to contribute to transportation electrification efforts through partnerships.

More specifically, the government will position Québec's hydroelectricity supply as part of the solution to the needs of its partners in the northeastern United States for clean, renewable, reliable and cost-competitive energy.

## **Electrification and intelligent transportation**

In Québec, no other sector will be impacted by the energy transition as much as the transportation sector, as indicated in the Energy Policy 2030 and the Transportation Electrification Action Plan, both of which clearly acknowledge the scope of the task that lies ahead. The government has drawn inspiration from the best international legislative practices to increase the number of electric vehicles in Québec. It also collaborates with other jurisdictions and international organizations with similar innovative public policy goals and is developing new electric recharging corridors with its North American partners. This same partnership approach will feed efforts aimed at anticipating, understanding and fostering opportunities offered by the convergence of electrification, interconnectivity and intelligent transportation. This approach will be that much broader in that it targets all forms of transportation of passengers (e.g., active and collective) and goods, and includes the development of intermodal transportation and improvements to the efficiency of maritime, air and rail transportation.


Given the key role of innovation in the energy transition, international R&D collaborations, with the thirty or so Québec research centres active in the field of transportation electrification, will be encouraged. The government will also support the commercialization and export of innovative products and services. In this regard, Québec boasts recognized expertise and quality products and services associated with electric vehicles and their components as well as an established network of suppliers composed of dynamic SMEs. These assets will also help attract foreign companies looking to participate in the transportation revolution.

## **Promoting carbon pricing and the expansion of the Western Climate Initiative market**

One of the most effective ways to reduce global GHG emissions is to put a price on carbon. This approach is endorsed by various international organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, OECD and the World Bank.

Carbon pricing provides GHG emitters with a price signal that allows them to decide which GHG reduction measures to put in place and how big a reduction they wish to make in order to soften the impact on their operations. This flexibility makes carbon pricing more efficient than traditional regulatory approaches by encouraging reductions in sectors and industries where the costs are lower while, at the same time, stimulating technological innovation and assigning a value to reductions in GHG emissions.

In 2016, over 40 countries and 20 federated states, regions and cities had a carbon price in place, whether through a tax, a performance standard or a cap-and-trade system, also known as “carbon market.”



In 2014, Québec linked its carbon market to that of California under the Western Climate Initiative (WCI). The WCI market is the first to be implemented by federated states in different countries. Building on the success of its partnership with California, Québec is pursuing its efforts with North American governments to encourage carbon pricing and expand the WCI market. Ontario committed itself to this path in 2015. Mexico is another partner of interest with which Québec is collaborating to expand the carbon market.

Ultimately, the WCI carbon market could expand even further by linking up with similar markets around the world. The larger the WCI market, the greater its capacity to contribute to the international effort to reduce GHG emissions. In parallel, Québec will continue to share the expertise it has developed through its active participation in various international coalitions in order to support the establishment of a global carbon price.

## **Sharing best practices within the framework of bilateral and multilateral partnerships**

Over the years Québec has forged numerous partnerships that foster the sharing of best practices in climate change adaptation, GHG emission reductions, carbon pricing and transportation electrification.

These partnerships have been developed with other federated states and regions as well as with various countries and international organizations. For example, several regional initiatives to fight climate change have come out of the multilateral forum of the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers. In addition, the participation of numerous governments of federated states in international networks such as the Climate Group, the Conference of Heads of Government of Partner Regions and the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Government has also fostered concrete and effective measures to fight climate change. These networks of federated state governments are also a useful way to showcase the role this level of government can play during international negotiations on environmental issues, including climate change, water and biodiversity.

Québec is also home to the Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable. Through its work in support of the sustainable development objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015, the institute encourages the sharing of expertise within the Francophonie and the mobilization of francophone actors in support of the fight against climate change.

## Showing solidarity in the fight against climate change

At the Paris Climate Change Conference in 2015, the international community reiterated its commitment to investing \$100 billion annually by 2025 to support climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives in developing countries.

Through its contribution to the Least Developed Countries Fund, Québec was the first federated state to participate in the multilateral funding of the fight against climate change. Québec's international climate cooperation measures, financed by the Green Fund, give priority to capacity-building in the francophone countries most vulnerable to climate change. These measures will facilitate the transfer of technology and the sharing of Québec expertise through projects and initiatives that respond to the needs expressed by local partners.

Québec's international climate cooperation measures also target youth in countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and the Caribbean by providing support for projects to strengthen their capacities in entrepreneurship, the green economy and climate change education.

## Water and biodiversity management and the blue economy

Québec is characterized by its size; its forests, which cover over half its land mass; its mineral resources, its thousands of lakes, rivers and groundwater aquifers, which make up nearly 3% of the planet's supply of fresh water; its 150,000 km<sup>2</sup> of marine environments; and its nordicity.

Québec's biodiversity is part of its collective heritage and a source of economic, social and cultural wealth. The same is true of its water resources, which Québec is working to develop as part of the blue economy. Many of its economic activities depend on water for their existence.

For Québec, sustainable management of its water resources and biodiversity is primordial. It pays special attention to the growing importance given to the sustainable management of water and biodiversity in most countries around the world at a time when climate change, economic development and urbanization are creating unprecedented pressure.

In North America, more specifically, Québec looks to regional cooperation to protect the rich and diverse ecosystem of the St. Lawrence River, the only outlet for the Great Lakes basin. This cooperation has been institutionalized through the Conference of Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers, the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Water Resources Regional Body and the Great Lakes Commission. Québec, Ontario and eight American states bordering the Great Lakes work together within these bodies to foster the sustainable development of this vitally important basin, which represents approximately 18% of the world's supply of fresh surface water.



Québec also endorses the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), whose secretariat is based in Montréal, in order to protect its biodiversity and the sustainable use of its natural resources, essential elements in maintaining the quality of life of its citizens. Québec has established an extensive network of protected marine and land areas, which will be expanded while taking into account international targets as well as ambitious commitments with respect to its northern development and the development of the St. Lawrence. Québec also holds discussions with other regions and federated states that are proactive with regard to biodiversity protection, for example within the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development and the CBD Advisory Committee of Subnational Governments on Biological Diversity.

### 3.2.2 NORTHERN AND ARCTIC AFFAIRS

Québec is a northern region by virtue of its population and its territory. Part of its territory also meets most of the definitions of an Arctic region. In addition, Québec is one of only two Canadian provinces with direct access to seas and straits (Labrador Sea, Davis Strait, Hudson Strait) that are contiguous with circumpolar seas, which in turn make up part of the Arctic Ocean.

The northern and Arctic regions are heating up almost twice as fast as the rest of the planet. The north was one of the first regions in Québec to experience the growing effects of climate change. This situation is causing profound transformations, including changes in the lifestyle of northern communities, impacts on their health and safety and the advent of new challenges involving the sustainable management of a fragile environment (new shipping routes, natural resources, permafrost degradation, changes to ecosystems, etc.).

#### BOX 4

#### QUÉBEC'S PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

International organizations and conferences not only set standards and serve as privileged forums for sharing information, they also often deal with international relations issues directly related to Québec's jurisdictions. Consequently, it is in Québec that the decisions and standards these organizations adopt—some of which are legally binding—must be implemented. Québec is therefore active on the multilateral scene to defend its political, economic, social and cultural interests, participate in the negotiation of international commitments that concern it, share its values, culture and experience, and acquire new know-how from foreign specialists.

Over the years, multilateralism has been steadily increasing its influence, and the areas affected or influenced by its effects, as well as the international norms it produces, have multiplied. Québec's opportunity to participate in one or another of these numerous organizations and conferences thus depends on the impact on Québec society of the discussions held as well as the government's priorities and policies.

Canada, as a sovereign state, is the sole Canadian member of international governmental organizations, with one important exception: the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF – see box 5).

When Québec participates in the work of other international governmental organizations, it acts through the Canadian delegation. In the case of UNESCO, Québec's role was enshrined in an agreement between the governments of Québec and Canada signed in May 2006. Acknowledging the specificity of Québec and its distinct role on the international scene, the agreement provides for the presence of a Permanent Representative appointed by Québec within the Permanent Delegation of Canada to UNESCO. This is an important precedent that gives Québec a clear say over a number of issues under Québec's jurisdiction that are dealt with by UNESCO bodies.

These transformations are taking place in a context of northern development and have raised many issues central to a comprehensive reflection involving numerous actors, including subnational entities. Actors across the northern and Arctic regions must work together and share their knowledge in order to adapt to the changes and ensure the sustainable development of the north. Québec shares these concerns and intends to play a leading role in stepping up international dialogue and cooperation in these areas.

The government, through the Plan Nord, recognizes that the economic development of the north must take this fragile environment into consideration and must be implemented in a way that respects local communities, especially Aboriginal communities. It intends to support Québec companies that have developed expertise and innovative solutions for the north in the context of their international activities and the consolidation of their markets. This will encourage the exchange of best practices with its northern partners, including the countries of Northern Europe.

It also intends—notably through the Société du Plan Nord, which promotes the involvement of all stakeholders—to encourage joint political initiatives and business, scientific, technological and cultural partnerships to ensure the sustainable development of this unique region. The government will also continue its participation in relevant international forums that deal with these issues, including the Arctic Council and the Arctic Circle.

A number of Québec universities and research institutes have recognized expertise in fields related to northern development. Québec has also created the Institut nordique du Québec (INQ), a new research and knowledge transfer infrastructure. The institute brings together several major Québec institutions to consolidate support for Québec northern specialists and encourage international collaborations in all spheres of northern research.

### 3.2.3 INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000 by the United Nations, set ambitious international development targets, several of which have already been met. Thus, over the course of the past 20 years, the probability of a child dying before the age of five and the proportion of people living in extreme poverty or with no access to drinking water have been cut in half. However, achieving all the MDGs has proved impossible. Progress has been uneven from one country or region to another, and major economic, social and environmental problems remain. For example, while China has far exceeded the poverty reduction goal (–93%), the same cannot be said of sub-Saharan Africa where advances, while real, have been insufficient, and over 40% of the population still lives in extreme poverty.

Inequalities also have a greater impact on segments of the population that are already marginalized and discriminated against in certain regions of the world, such as women and girls, certain linguistic, cultural and religious minorities, refugees and people with disabilities.

Under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations in 2015 to replace the MDGs, the international community has acknowledged that the elimination of poverty is dependent on and indissociable from inclusive and sustainable economic development, social development and the protection of the environment. Québec's commitment to the SDGs is expressed, among others, through international solidarity programs, its support for the mandates of Francophonie institutions and other international organizations as well as its long tradition of welcoming people admitted to Québec on compassionate and humanitarian grounds. It also materializes through the sharing of expertise and cooperation with developing countries, for example in education, and through the provision of scholarships and exemptions for their citizens.

Lastly, Québec's commitment to SDGs is manifested through its efforts to fight climate change and its involvement in developing and implementing innovative solutions and new sources of funding for international solidarity initiatives.

## **An effective approach based on partnership and mobilization**

Québec has a very long tradition of international solidarity characterized by partnerships with civil society actors as well as an emphasis on understanding the situation on the ground and the needs expressed by local communities. Québec's initiatives contribute in a concrete way to community development efforts in Africa, Latin America and the West Indies, with a sustained focus on francophone Africa and Haiti.

The Government of Québec recognizes the contribution of civil society organizations to the exercise of citizenship, to social and economic development and to the building of fairer, solidarity-based relations between peoples. It partners with international cooperation organizations (ICOs) that possess expertise and partner networks in developing countries, where they work closely with local communities. More specifically, this involves providing financial support for international development initiatives and sending young people abroad to contribute to these projects. The Québec Without Borders program allows numerous young people to acquire hands-on experience in solidarity projects in the field.

The goal is to meet the basic needs expressed by communities in partner countries in accordance with the principles of inclusive growth and sustainable development, using an approach that advances human rights and freedoms. The government also ensures that projects are monitored and evaluated to make sure that its solidarity initiatives are effective.

Over the years, the government has developed a partnership with the Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale, the body that represents Québec's cooperation organizations. It intends to continue its commitment to ICOs by encouraging dialogue, sharing best practices and pooling resources. The focus will be on meeting the needs identified by ICOs to increase the effectiveness and scope of their actions, including measures to enhance the health and safety of people working in international solidarity and to develop ICO expertise in gender equality. The empowerment of women and girls has a positive effect on household living standards and community prosperity.

Achieving the SDGs requires the involvement and mobilization of a broad cross-section of civil society actors, including the private sector and union organizations as well as a wide variety of public and para-public actors, including government departments and agencies, municipalities and educational institutions. In this regard, the ministère des Relations internationales et de la Francophonie plays an important consultative and coordinating role to ensure that Québec initiatives are coherent and effective. A number of government departments and agencies are also involved in what UNESCO calls "global citizenship education," which includes raising awareness of international solidarity issues, SDGs and intercultural education.

Increased mobilization in support of international solidarity must be accompanied by predictable, stable and diversified funding. This is why Québec is investing part of the revenue generated from auctioning greenhouse gas emission units to support projects in francophone countries most vulnerable and most exposed to the impact of climate change. It is also why the government will encourage the implementation of other effective and innovative funding mechanisms in a manner consistent with *the Stratégie économique pour la Francophonie*.<sup>31</sup>

## **Emergency aid for victims of natural disasters and humanitarian crisis**

When faced with natural disasters and humanitarian crisis, the first priority is to meet the basic needs of the affected populations, as determined by the authorities of the regions involved, immediately followed by reconstruction.

Québec is committed to fulfilling its duty of solidarity with populations affected by natural disasters and humanitarian crisis, especially in the most vulnerable countries. On the field, it is essential that interventions in challenging environments be led by organizations with solid humanitarian experience in the affected zones, in collaboration with local partners. This is why the Government of Québec relies on such organizations to deploy its emergency aid.

.....  
31. Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (2014). *Stratégie économique pour la Francophonie*.

When a humanitarian crisis or emergency arises, an appropriate level of consultation and coordination must be ensured to properly assess needs and promote a structured and effective response. Special multi-agency mechanisms involving all stakeholders (Québec government departments, agencies and corporations; municipalities; the federal government, ICOs) are immediately triggered in such cases. Québec's Policy on Immigration, Participation and Inclusion also provides for the creation of a special program for humanitarian sponsorships.

### 3.2.4 HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS, DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW

Progress in improving the rule of law, respect for human rights and freedoms, and democracy is essential for building a sustainable, just and secure world. These universal values are also the most fundamental values in Québec, which supports efforts to protect and promote them.

Obstacles and setbacks to human rights and freedoms, democracy and the rule of law are proof that they require ongoing protection and support. With the means at its disposal, Québec is resolutely committed to pursuing its advocacy in these areas in order to promote the recognition, protection and implementation of human rights and the advancement of democracy and the rule of law around the world.

The basis for Québec's actions in support of these principles can be found first and foremost in the instruments and texts to which it subscribes. The Québec *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, which was adopted in 1975, was inspired by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Québec has also declared itself bound by major international human rights instruments<sup>32</sup> and, within IOF, promotes the consistent application of the *Déclaration de Bamako sur les pratiques de la démocratie, des droits et des libertés dans l'espace francophone*.

The government is regularly called upon to present its human rights track record before international instances responsible for assessing state practices in accordance with the instruments to which Québec has declared itself bound. Its participation in these reporting exercises helps demonstrate its commitment to these values.

Numerous Québec institutions are also committed to sharing best practices and to capacity building, including the National Assembly, the Commission d'accès à l'information, the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse, the Directeur général des élections, the Directeur des poursuites criminelles et pénales, Sûreté du Québec, the École nationale de police du Québec, the Protecteur du citoyen and the Conseil de la magistrature. Indeed, these organizations and institutions are very active members of the institutional networks of la Francophonie<sup>33</sup>, where they make significant contributions worthy of recognition and promotion. Their work within la Francophonie and through various forums contribute directly to advancing human and equality rights and patiently creating conditions conducive to peace, stability, democracy and justice.

.....  
32. The implementation of international human rights treaties is first and foremost a matter of domestic law, responsibility for which lies mainly with the provincial governments. As a party to these texts, Québec has a duty to enforce them within its borders and to report on compliance to the competent United Nations human rights bodies.

33. Assemblée des parlementaires de la Francophonie, Association internationale des procureurs et poursuivants francophones, Réseau des compétences électorales francophones, Réseau international francophone de formation policière (Francopol), etc.

## **BOX 5 AN ACTIVE ROLE WITHIN STRENGTHENED INSTITUTIONAL FRANCOPHONIE**

The Government of Québec has full voting rights within IOF, which means that its actions within the organization have special significance. As a full-fledged member, Québec can participate directly in discussions and influence decisions on global issues involving culture, the French language, democracy, human rights and freedoms, the environment, economic development, gender equality, youth, sport, and education.

With over 80 member and observer states, IOF is a diplomatic and political relations catalyst that gives Québec a lever for forging alliances and advancing common positions. IOF promotes the sustainable prosperity of French-speaking peoples and the empowerment of youth and women. It works to ensure that everyone has access to quality education and promotes democracy. In addition to IOF, the institutional Francophonie include operators, sectoral ministerial conferences and numerous institutional and civil society networks.

Québec benefits from a united Francophonie and a strong and credible IOF, hence the importance of strengthening its institutions. Québec intends to maintain an active presence within these and work to ensure that la Francophonie continues to contribute meaningfully to the development of its members.

Through its participation in multilateral forums, Québec has access to platforms where it can promote, share and acquaint itself with best practices in the areas of human rights, rule of law and democracy. It participates actively in international dialogue on the rights of indigenous peoples, in keeping with its constitutional jurisdictions. These platforms also allow it to address certain other issues to which it attaches special importance, including gender equality, respect for human dignity, equality rights for people with disabilities, the fight against racism and discrimination and the strengthening of democratic institutions and good governance.

Struggles for human rights and freedoms have always required perseverance, tenacity and sacrifice on the part of those fighting for them. Hard-won rights require constant vigilance to ensure they remain protected, and to advance them and ensure that they are fairly applied to all. In some instances, much work remains to be done. This is notably the case with rights and freedoms related to sexual orientation and gender identity, commonly referred to as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights<sup>34</sup>. Québec will strive to forge alliances with the goal of moving forward on this issue.

## **Welcoming refugees**

Québec's international commitment to human rights and freedoms is exemplified by the mechanisms it has put in place to receive, resettle and integrate women, men and children who have obtained refugee status under applicable criteria.

.....  
34. For more information on this topic, please see the Jogjakarta Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

In recent years, wars, conflicts, persecution widespread violence, and human rights violations have produced the largest number ever of displaced people seeking sanctuary and safety.<sup>35</sup> Conventional and asymmetric wars, coupled with climate disturbances, growing pressure on natural resources and food insecurity around the world, will likely amplify this problem further in the near future. Québec's commitment is unequivocal and is based on its tradition of hospitality.<sup>36</sup> The government has committed to redoubling its efforts to resettle persons admitted on protection or humanitarian grounds, many of whom have significant and sometimes special needs.

### 3.2.5 SECURITY

The threats facing the world in the 21<sup>st</sup> century require unprecedented cooperation at every level, from local to global. The increased movement of people, goods and services, information and capital has created prosperity but has also generated new opportunities for criminals. The impact of trafficking in humans, drugs and arms, organized crime, fraud, money laundering, hacking and terrorism can be significantly compounded when they have a transnational dimension. Other risks related, for example, to health or the transportation of hazardous materials can also be compounded by the growing flow of people and goods.

Québec, which shares a long border with the United States and does business around the world, is devoting, has devoted considerable efforts to improving security, one of the most fundamental obligations of a government toward its citizens. The priority that Québec attaches to the imperatives of security, justice and human rights is crucial to its ability to be recognized as a credible and responsible actor in international relations.

While every state has its own legal system composed of a unique set of laws based on a distinct tradition, international cooperation is key to the success of transnational criminal investigations and prosecutions. In this context, it is important to focus on establishing and maintaining trustworthy relations and strong lines of communications between Québec police forces and prosecutors as well as and their counterparts elsewhere.

More generally, international cooperation encourages the exchange of best practices and the development of emergency management, prevention and law enforcement expertise. It allows swift action that can be critical to the success of investigations, prosecutions, and operations.

.....  
35. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2016). Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015.

36. Under the *Canada-Québec Accord Relating to Immigration and Temporary Admission of Aliens*, Québec is responsible for the selection of foreign nationals based, among other things, on the likelihood of their successfully settling in Québec. The Québec immigration system can also respond to emergency situations based on humanitarian considerations. Québec is also totally responsible for the collective sponsorship program for persons in distress resettling in Québec.



## Security, cooperation and mutual assistance on the North American continent

One of the main challenges governments face is reconciling the optimal flow of people and goods with security considerations, including the fight against terrorism and local and cross-border crime.

The Government of Québec takes actions and supports, where appropriate, Canadian and American government initiatives to facilitate the flow of people and goods through such means as pre-clearance systems and facilities and investments in border infrastructure while at the same time strengthening continental security in a manner respectful of the rights of citizens. Québec also aims to ensure that train stations and airports within its boundaries and that the border it shares with four American states are given the priority that reflects their importance in the implementation of these initiatives.

Every government attempts to intercept dangerous people or materials before they reach their target. To achieve this goal, it is important to effectively coordinate information and operational resources to prevent risks, fight crime, secure energy supplies and transportation infrastructures, and deal with natural disasters and industrial accidents. For this reason, Québec works in close cooperation with its partners in the continental northeast.

Québec has bilateral public security agreements with Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York State. These agreements include provisions for sharing information on terrorism and other criminal threats that could undermine security and also detail the channels of communication between government authorities and police officials of the parties involved.

As a member of the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers, Québec is also a party to the International Emergency Management Assistance Compact which provides for a mutual aid mechanism between the signatory parties, which are the six New England states (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont), Québec and the four Atlantic provinces.

With regard to the security of energy supplies, Hydro-Québec works closely with the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NAERC), and implements all NAERC standards aimed at ensuring the reliability of networks and interconnections, including those related to cybersecurity.



## **Making cyberspace more secure**

The digital revolution has given rise to innovations and new opportunities. However, it also carries risks for our societies given that communications, infrastructures and institutions increasingly rely on cyberspace to operate.

The interconnected information technology networks that make up cyberspace offer terrorist and criminal organizations and, in some cases, state-sponsored groups and entities, new ways to infiltrate public and private organizations, steal data, compromise infrastructure integrity and spread propaganda and ideologies.

Cyberspace has become both a place and a tool for committing crimes that undermine security and stability. To prevent and counteract these dangers, the Government of Québec protects government systems and is working to strengthen cooperation with its Canadian and foreign partners.

## **The fight against terrorism and the prevention of radicalization leading to violence**

The terrorist threat, which has been made tangible by the all-too-frequent attacks of recent years in locations around the globe, including Québec, is emblematic of changes in the security environment. Terrorism is perpetrated in the name of a specific political, religious or ideological objective and thrives on tensions and conflicts whose repercussions transcend borders. It generally stems from a process of radicalization that leads to violence, an evolving and multi-faceted phenomenon not associated with any one particular religion or ideology. While the targets and objectives may differ, terrorist threats tend to have one element in common—a rejection of universal values.

When dealing with terrorism, states and governments have a duty to protect their citizens, territories and interests. Given the nature of contemporary terrorism, communities, states and international governmental organizations have to work in close collaboration to fulfill this fundamental mission. The government is committed to taking all measures at its disposal to assume its responsibilities in the fight against terrorism.

Radicalization leading to violence is a source of great concern to the Québec government. Alongside essential security measures, it is taking steps to actively defend and promote the values of democracy and inclusion (“living together”), which can serve as a bulwark against intolerance and hate. Government actions, coordinated by various government departments and agencies, are focused, among other things, on prevention and education, especially to include in the dialogue and to directly target young people.

In addition to cutting edge work by academics, the Montréal Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence is a good illustration of Québec expertise in this area. Focusing more on prevention than repression, the centre's three-pronged multidisciplinary approach (research, development of prevention tools, and psychosocial interventions), has captured the attention of several international partners.

International organization such as IOF and UNESCO are forums where it is possible to pursue the exchange of views on this complex topic. The goal is to stimulate cooperation as well as the sharing of best practices and knowledge to better understand the mechanisms of radicalization and increase the effectiveness of action strategies.

International forums also provide opportunities to broaden participation and establish common priorities, as was the case with Québec's Call for Action, which was released at the end of the Québec-UNESCO Conference entitled "Internet and the radicalization of youth: preventing, acting and living together" that was held in fall 2016.

More broadly, regarding preventing crime and defining best practices, Québec is also involved actively in the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC), an international organization headquartered in Montréal. The goal of this involvement is to contribute to efforts aimed at reducing delinquency, violence and insecurity in communities here in Québec and elsewhere. Québec participated in setting up ICPC in 1994.

## **Preventing and containing the international propagation of infectious diseases and the risk of pandemics**

The advent of a more open and prosperous world has dramatically increased the mobility of people, whether for professional, scholastic, personal or tourism reasons. This mobility, while beneficial, increases the risk of infectious diseases and even pandemics spreading around the world. The management of these risks can be complicated in certain cases by major trends such as urbanization, and emerging phenomena such as antibiotic resistance.

Québec is responding to the risk of infectious diseases and pandemics spreading around the world by complying with the strictest international public health standards and by setting up partnerships and exchanging information. For example, Québec complies with World Health Organization (WHO) requirements and International Health Regulations. The Québec ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) and its network have set up numerous international partnerships, notably with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. MSSS also cooperates with the Eastern Border Health Initiative, whose aim is to facilitate cooperation in the monitoring of and response to infectious threats in northeastern North America.

## SUMMARY: THRUST 2

### CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE, JUST AND SECURE WORLD

#### THE FIGHT AGAINST CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY TRANSITION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

- Establish international partnerships that help reduce GHG emissions and encourage carbon pricing.
- Promote Québec products, services and expertise in clean technology, renewable energy, and transportation electrification.
- Contribute to global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, giving priority support to the most vulnerable francophone countries.
- Promote initiatives in sustainable water and biodiversity management.

#### NORTHERN AND ARCTIC AFFAIRS

- Establish and bolster ties with government and non-government actors in the northern and Arctic regions, especially through active participation in the leading international forums dedicated to northern and Arctic issues.
- Promote Québec's expertise in sustainable northern development and foster joint international initiatives and the sharing of best practices in the field, especially with the northern regions of Europe and North America.

#### INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

- Support Québec solidarity initiatives that are consistent with sustainable development objectives in French-speaking regions of Africa, in Latin America and in the Caribbean, and help implement predictable, stable, and diversified funding mechanisms.
- Help Québec international cooperation organizations develop expertise in areas such as global citizenship education, health and safety measures, and gender equality.
- Bolster Québec's commitment to providing emergency assistance to the victims of natural disasters and humanitarian crisis, especially in the world's most vulnerable countries.

#### HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS, DEMOCRACY, AND THE RULE OF LAW

- Uphold Québec's commitment to human rights and freedoms, the rule of law and democracy through political interventions, advocacy and the sharing of expertise.
- Position Québec's democratic institutions within la Francophonie and other relevant forums so as to encourage their contribution to democratic governance and capacity building, and the advancement of human rights and freedoms.
- Maintain Québec's commitment to refugee welcoming and integration.

#### SECURITY

- Work closely with North American partners to prevent security risks while at the same time promoting the efficient movement of people and goods.
- Pursue efforts to establish and maintain cooperation mechanisms and share expertise in the areas of emergency management, prevention, investigation and prosecution.
- Establish and strengthen international partnerships in response to threats such as transnational organized crime and radicalization leading to violence.
- Contribute to the reinforcement of cybersecurity cooperation.

### 3.3 PROMOTE CREATIVITY, CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE AND QUÉBEC'S SPECIFICITY

Whether it focuses on excellence in science, culture, and innovation, creative and intellectual vitality is a compelling calling card that enables Québec to promote its ideas, the quality of its businesses, and the strength of its institutions. Indeed, international successes in science, innovation, and culture have a positive impact on the society as a whole. The ability of Québec's creative artists, researchers, innovators and young people to build on ideas and opportunities from abroad, and its capacity to attract top talent from around the world have a direct impact on its creativity and capacity for innovation and, ultimately, its standard of living and quality of life.

To this is added the French language, which is at the very root of Québec's specificity. Its character and originality are also expressed through the contributions of eleven Aboriginal nations, the Québec English-speaking community, and the ethnocultural diversity of its immigrant population. The expression of Québec's identity is an essential element of Québec's International Policy. This desire for affirmation explains in part the scope and magnitude of Québec's international actions, especially as regards the promotion of the French language and Québec's involvement in la Francophonie.

#### 3.3.1 RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

The ability of societies to stimulate and capitalize on research, innovation and knowledge development is crucial to their well-being, economic competitiveness and future prosperity. In addition to contributing to individual and collective wealth, research and innovation also have a decisive social impact. For people around the world, generating knowledge, ideas and solutions are the basis of the hope of overcoming most pressing social, health and environmental challenges while at the same time continuing to improve their well-being and quality of life.

Québec's dynamism in research and innovation has made it a centre of knowledge and innovation<sup>37</sup> and a leading player in certain areas of excellence that deserve to be promoted on the world stage. In Canada, Québec is also leading the way in terms of investment in research and innovation.

.....  
37. While Québec makes up only 0.1% of the world's population, it produces 1% of the world's knowledge. In addition, 8% of Québec publications number among the top 5% of the most cited publications in the world. The impact of Québec's scientific output exceeds the global average, all fields combined (as measured on the basis of the relative impact factor and average relative citation factor).

## A research and innovation system commensurate with major international scientific challenges

The government has set itself the goal of continuing to invest in order to maintain and increase its commitment to research and innovation. This objective is crucial for dealing with major challenges such as demographic change and population ageing, climate change and sustainable development, wealth creation and entrepreneurship, the building of safe and inclusive societies, and improving population health. Research and innovation also make it possible to be positively involved in the digital revolution and to take part in the emergence and shaping of technologies such as artificial intelligence and genomics, which will have a profound impact on the future. Shared by the entire international community, they testify to the importance of international collaboration in bringing together talent and joining forces to implement the best solutions as efficiently as possible.

Whether in the fields of basic, applied and industrial research, Quebec seeks to consolidate, in all regions and especially Montréal, its advantageous positioning in industries such as aerospace, life sciences<sup>38</sup>, information and communications technology (including big data analytics and artificial intelligence), green technology and sustainable northern development. It also stands out in numerous other fields ranging from biofoods and timber engineering to social innovation and maritime and aluminum research.

The Québec research and innovation system is composed of various interconnected components dedicated to the funding, production and transfer of knowledge. It thus relies on a well-established model of strategic alliances, institutes, centres and networks that extend across the province and maintain links with leading clusters abroad. The government and its funding agencies, as well as Québec's universities and colleges, are increasingly opening up to the world through the establishment of research partnerships on every continent.

The government is also aware of the important role the private sector plays in the innovation process and has made industrial research a major focus of its policies and strategies. These efforts helped consolidating key actors and strengthening mechanisms aimed at funding and facilitating research partnerships between educational institutions and companies (e.g., sectoral research clusters, college technology transfer centres, precompetitive research consortiums) as well between companies (e.g., private precompetitive research partnerships). International outreach is vital to the growth of innovative firms for which research and innovation partnerships represent new opportunities for expanding into foreign markets.

.....  
38. Montréal is home to world-renowned university hospitals and specialized research centres that have established strategic alliances and research partnerships in Québec, the rest of Canada, and across the globe. Major investments totalling several billion dollars have made Montréal a centre of excellence in health that compares very favourably with other North American and European cities.

This awareness also underpins the vision of making Québec into one of the most innovative and creative societies in the world. This vision relies on various milestones, such as the adoption of measures to support and promote Québec research and innovation, which led, in 2011, to the creation of the position of Chief Scientist and the merging of Québec's three research funding agencies. The international role of the chief scientist is to establish partnerships with foreign research agencies and to represent the Québec research community on economic, departmental and institutional research and innovation missions and at appropriate international forums.

## **The globalization of knowledge and the key role it plays**

The sharing of global knowledge is essential to the advancement of science. Scientific communities form cross-border networks, and international collaborations make it easier to access and share knowledge, sometimes causing unexpected discoveries. Collaborations also facilitate the dissemination and integration of new technologies and processes that enhance industrial productivity. Thus, prosperity depends in part on the presence of a successful, globally oriented scientific community. It is also well established that publications resulting from international collaborations have more impact.

Between 2000 and 2013, the proportion of scientific publications produced in collaboration with international partners increased by 34.9% in Québec, to nearly 50% of total output. Over 45% of all such publications, produced during this period, were co-authored with a partner in the United States. More than half of Québec scientific publications in the fields of natural sciences and engineering are international collaborations, and the proportion is constantly growing.

The government plans to work in concert with the Québec research and innovation community to facilitate access to major international strategic networks and to fiscal and funding tools. It will act to enhance Québec's appeal to help secure international partnerships and attract more heads of research network and innovative start-up companies.

The government also aims to increase researcher mobility. Mobility requires reciprocity to achieve its full potential, so Québec will ensure foreign researchers can be welcomed in favourable conditions.



## The mutual reinforcement of science and diplomacy

As part of its international cooperation programs, the government will strengthen cooperation in research and innovation in areas of common interest, consistent with government priorities and the needs of Québec society. As an example, the Conseil franco-québécois de coopération universitaire will play an important role in this regard.

Research and innovation initiatives abroad will focus on promoting Québec's expertise, research incentives and its innovation-friendly tax and institutional environment. Québec's international network of offices and representatives will contribute to this effort, drawing on in-depth local knowledge to facilitate prospecting efforts and help forge ties with major strategic international centres and networks.

### 3.3.2 CULTURE

Culture is a key economic driver in Québec. Cultural industries account for 4.3% of its economy and nearly 176,000 jobs (2014 data). Given its small domestic market, however, Québec has no choice but to expand the reach of its cultural products beyond its borders. This requires a certain degree of reciprocity between Québec and its partners with respect to artist mobility and the free flow of artistic works. International markets offer Québec artists, cultural enterprises and arts organizations numerous possibilities for partnerships, creative collaborations, exposure and additional revenues. Québec has a history of cultural relations with Europe, and also aims to seize opportunities in high-potential markets like Asia and the Americas.

Cultural goods and services not only have significant economic value, they also have an intangible dimension. Culture is a vehicle for meaning, identity and values, and a driving force for inclusion, openness and diversity. Both the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) recognize the contribution of culture to sustainable development.<sup>39</sup>

These international texts are reflected in Québec's Agenda 21 for Culture, released in December 2011, where culture is presented as a major and essential component of society, integrated into the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Cultural initiatives are conducted with an eye to equitable transmission to future generations and are based on three main principles: the preservation of cultural diversity, the sustainable use of cultural resources, and creativity and innovation. Québec applies these principles in its international actions.

.....  
39. UNESCO (2005). UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

## Market development and international cooperation

The prosperity of Québec artists and creators and the growth of its arts companies and cultural enterprises depend on its ability to develop international markets. In light of increased competition and the renewal of Québec's cultural offerings, the Government of Québec supports arts organizations, cultural enterprises, artists and writers in their international projects and encourages interaction, sharing of expertise, and technology transfer between cultural stakeholders in Québec and abroad. To do so, it draws on its network of offices abroad and ensures that cultural actors are included in economic missions led by the premier. The government also strives constantly to find new ways to promote Québec cultural works and products on the world stage, including cultural showcases and artistic delegations to leading international festivals, fairs, and events. In order to foster an inclusive, concerted strategic approach, the government will develop new planning tools to encourage exports of Québec cultural products and services.

The government intends to intensify more international partnerships in order to facilitate prospecting in promising regions, stimulate cultural exchanges and encourage artistic emulation. The resulting reciprocity will ensure that the public has access to leading cultural works while at the same guaranteeing that Québec creators can continue presenting their works abroad. New partnerships may also encourage professional exchanges and the sharing of expertise in fields such as intangible heritage, where Québec is a recognized leader.

## Adapting to the digital environment

With the advent of digital technology, governments and civil society must develop new strategies adapted to the realities of digital creation, production, dissemination and marketing, as well as the physical and digital spaces in which these activities take place.<sup>40</sup> The Government of Québec assists artists, arts organizations, cultural industries, the media, heritage institutions and museums in adopting new digital practices and increasing their digital skill level. It also provides support to ensure that Québec works and cultural products are available on digital platforms, the goal being to enhance the dissemination and discoverability of Québec content in Canadian and international markets. Québec is developing a variety of intervention tools, in the wake of its Digital Culture Plan, to help the cultural industry adapt to digital trends and realities.

.....  
40. See also "The Global Cultural Economy in the Digital Age," p. 18.

## **Creativity and distinctive attractions shape Québec's image**

Artistic creativity, boldness and talent are hallmarks of Québec in the eyes of its international partners and the international press. Indeed, Québec diplomacy draws extensively on this image where creativity, originality and innovation are essential components.

International promotion of Québec culture and tourism is strategically important because it contributes to objectives in other areas as well. For example, it helps create favourable conditions for attracting decision-making centres and foreign investment. It also helps position Québec as an artistic leader in fields such as circus, dance, music and the digital and visual arts. It is important to continue projecting a positive international image by raising the profile of Québec creations and productions abroad, while at the same time ensuring foreign artists are welcomed in Québec in a spirit of reciprocity conducive to co-productions.

Québec's image is indissociable from its distinct characteristics and its positioning as a unique travel destination. The Government of Québec has therefore renewed its tourism business and governance model to enhance industry performance and boost international promotion. Development and implementation of a promotional strategy for cultural and event tourism is one of the steps being taken in this direction.

## **Protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions**

In a world where digital technology has fundamentally transformed the cultural economy, the Government of Québec devotes considerable effort to safeguarding its ability to adopt policies and measures to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions at international forums such as UNESCO and IOF.

The government reiterates its commitment to the principles and goals of the UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (hereafter "the Convention"). These embrace the principle of equal dignity and respect for all cultures, including the cultures of persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples. The government also supports UNESCO in its desire to give new impetus to the Convention by encouraging policies and measures based on ambitious goals with regards to digital technology, international cooperation and solidarity, effective integration of culture into sustainable development, media freedom and diversity, trade in cultural goods and services, gender equality and artistic freedom.

Having played a pioneering role in the development of the Convention, Québec ensures that its policies, flagship programs and practices are consistent with the document. The government is also working to promote capacity building and the emergence of dynamic cultural sectors in developing countries.

The government promotes Convention principles and goals at international forums and acts in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Convention when implementing Canadian trade agreements. It also assesses ways of keeping civil society involved in the work of the Convention. And it continues to support the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in Montréal to help arrive at a better understanding of the transformations underway in the cultural sector, especially with respect to digital technology.

Lastly, given the relevance of ongoing debates on issues related to the integration of culture into sustainable development as well as tangible and intangible heritage, copyrights, intellectual property and information and communication technology within various international organizations, the Government of Québec will monitor their work. It will do so in part to ensure that efforts to promote and position Québec culture are part of a cohesive and well-informed approach, including with respect to conventions and recommendations developed under the auspices of these organizations.

### 3.3.3 THE FRENCH LANGUAGE

French is the second most widely studied language in the world. It also ranks as the second most widely used language in international news and the second working language at most international organizations.<sup>41</sup> In other words, the French language is not only one of the defining characteristics of Québec society, it is also an international asset well worth promoting.

Québec is the principal homeland of the French fact in the Americas, and the French spoken there is an integral part of its identity. Québec therefore assumes a special responsibility in developing the French fact, and has an important influence on the vitality and development of the French language in the Americas and worldwide.

Québec remains resolutely committed to ensuring that French remains an essential element of professional and business relations and cultural exchanges with IOF member countries. One of the tools developed by the Francophonie—and one of its most significant achievements in the promotion of the French language—is the TV5 television network. A partner in this endeavour for over 30 years alongside the governments of Canada, the French Community of Belgium, France, and Switzerland, the Government of Québec intends to continue contributing to this remarkable vehicle, which enables Québec to broadcast its television productions throughout the world.

.....  
41. Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (2014). *La langue française dans le monde 2014*.

Conscious of the vulnerability of its French character, but also of the particularities of its history, geography and demography, Québec has developed, over the years, an innovative language policy oriented toward the future and respectful of its diversity. The policy is made up of laws, regulations and programs, the centrepiece of which is the Charter of the French Language, and is recognized as a model of language planning. By combining the need to safeguard and affirm Québec's French character with the respect of Québec's linguistic minorities and the promotion of the French language in Québec and elsewhere, it contributes to social inclusion and cohesion. Francization services made available to non-French-speaking immigrants contribute to the policy's success. The Québec language-planning model has helped strengthen the status of French in all spheres of public life, including the workplace, commerce, business, education and administration, not to mention as a host language. It has also enhanced Québec's international position, especially within the Francophonie.

The Government of Québec also plans to improve the perception and understanding of Québec's linguistic situation among foreign clientele and partners and to emphasize the benefits of the language policy for doing business in Québec.

Québec also contributes to the development of the Francophonie in the Americas. The mission of Centre de la francophonie des Amériques is to contribute to the promotion and development of a francophone culture that will carry the French language into the future in a context of cultural diversity, by building on the strengthening and enrichment of relations, and the complementarity of Francophones and Francophiles in Québec, Canada and the Americas.

Québec also contributes to the development of the Francophonie in the Americas. The mission of Centre de la francophonie des Amériques is to reinforce and enrich relations among francophones and francophiles in Québec, Canada and the Americas and, by fostering the complementarity of their actions, to contribute to the promotion and development of a francophone culture that will carry the French language into the future in a context of cultural diversity.

Active involvement in francophone diplomatic networks by Québec's representatives abroad is an important vehicle for promoting Québec and the French language. These networks also provide opportunities to develop and nurture collaborations within the Francophonie.

Within the UN system and the OECD, French is not only recognized as an official language, but also as a working language. The Government of Québec ensures that its representatives use French when addressing these forums during conferences and events.

In addition, the government closely monitors the work of UN institutions that deal with linguistic diversity and threatened languages, an issue that resonates in Québec, where several Aboriginal languages are at risk.

## SUMMARY: THRUST 3

### PROMOTE CREATIVITY, CULTURE, KNOWLEDGE AND QUÉBEC'S SPECIFICITY

#### RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND KNOWLEDGE

- Extend access to major international strategic networks and sources of financing for key Québec innovation actors while encouraging the mobility and hosting of researchers.
- Promote excellence in research and innovation in relation to important international scientific issues and government priorities.

#### CULTURE

- Support Québec arts organizations, cultural enterprises, artists and writers in their efforts to develop international markets.
- Step up international cultural partnerships and cooperation initiatives with a view to promoting reciprocal cultural exchanges.
- Promote Québec culture, creativity and artistic excellence on the international stage, together with Québec as a global travel destination.
- Ensure effective implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and promote its principles and objectives.

#### FRENCH LANGUAGE

- Promote and develop the Francophonie in the Americas and around the world and encourage the use of French in international institutions and organizations.
- Showcase Québec's expertise in language management and the development of French language knowledge tools, as well as Québec studies, and ensure that Québec's linguistic and cultural specificity is promoted in such a way as to facilitate the attainment of Québec's international objectives.





**4**

**PUTTING QUÉBEC'S  
INTERNATIONAL  
POLICY INTO ACTION**





# 4

## PUTTING QUÉBEC'S INTERNATIONAL POLICY INTO ACTION

---

Québec's International Policy calls on numerous stakeholders. In order to contribute significantly to the achievement of the three thrusts set out, its conduct should pay particular attention to the coordination of all relevant government departments and agencies concerned, and to the mobilization of civil society, so that efforts converge as much as possible. The aim is to take concrete action to promote Québec's interests and meet the needs of clientele seeking support for their international initiatives. The results of the government's international actions reflect the quality of its relations with foreign governments, but also the alliances forged with the federal government and provincial governments, as the case may be, as well as with actors from the municipal, private and volunteer sectors and the Aboriginal nations.

Consultation and mobilization will be especially important for setting action priorities, targeting the most promising venues, forums and activities, and efficiently allocating resources. To further strengthen Québec's international influence and capacity for action, the government will also continue adapting its actions and methods to the realities of the digital era—with its multiple communication channels and players and its far-reaching messaging opportunities—while building and maintaining a strong and coherent image.

### 4.1 FOSTERING COHESION AMONG QUÉBEC STAKEHOLDERS ACTIVE ON THE WORLD STAGE

The Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie plans, organizes and directs the government's international actions<sup>42</sup> and implements the International Policy. The mission requires the minister to play a leadership role and adopt a collaborative approach tailored to contemporary realities, but also implies that the role and contributions of other actors be acknowledged and recognized.

The International Policy will be conducted by means of strategies, action plans, measures and programs, and services developed and implemented by MRIF and the other departments and agencies that play a role in Québec's international action. Together, they will drive the implementation process and ensure that all aspects of the Policy are covered.

---

42. To support the minister in this role, MRIF has access to strategic analytical capabilities developed by its Québec-based teams and its network of representatives abroad in collaboration with the governments departments and agencies concerned. Under its constitutive act, MRIF is responsible for researching, studying and analyzing global issues as well as issues concerning foreign countries and their political and economic status. The purpose of this work is to provide advice to government authorities and other departments and agencies about the potential or existing repercussions these issues may have on the promotion and defence of Québec's interests. In addition to developing its own proper expertise, MRIF draws on the work of Québec-based research chairs and centres specializing in international studies. They offer an independent perspective that can help guide government thinking and action.

## **Governance of Québec's international actions**

In order to strengthen existing interdepartmental consultation mechanisms, and in accordance with section 18 of its constitutive act, MRIF is implementing a new approach to the governance of its international action that involves all government departments and agencies active on the world stage. This new governance approach will be overseen by a ministerial table presided over by the Minister of International Relations and La Francophonie. The ministerial table will set priorities and ensure that the government's international actions are constantly improved upon, in keeping with the Policy's three main thrusts. The table may also analyze the programming of activities abroad by the government and its departments and agencies, as well international activities programmed in Québec, and may evaluate annually their outcomes.

Given the scope and diversity of Québec's international relations, government departments and agencies will continue to act internationally in their respective fields on behalf of the government, in coordination with MRIF.

## **The effort of public diplomacy**

States rely heavily on their reputation and image to make themselves attractive, but new communications tools such as social media have radically transformed practices in this regard. The government will strive to ensure that its global promotional and communications efforts are coherent and effective on the international scene. The success of these efforts depends in part on how well messages tie-in with the government's international priorities, and on thoughtful deployment. The Government will therefore seek to strengthen the coordination of communication efforts abroad.

## **A variety of stakeholders and consultation mechanisms**

Québec's international action is no longer limited to the activities of government members, departments and agencies, or to its network of offices abroad. More and more actors from the political, economic, voluntary, cultural, academic and scientific sectors now operate in multiple global networks where they play an influential role. Given the increasingly fragmented international context, it is important to recognize and encourage cities and regions to contribute to the international action.

## **The special status of Québec's national capital and its metropolis**

As the seat of the Government of Québec, Québec's national capital—a UNESCO World Heritage City and the cradle of the Francophonie in North America—is the ideal setting for welcoming foreign dignitaries and major international political events.

Montréal, the economic engine of Québec known worldwide for its creativity, and slated to obtain official metropolitan status from the government, also plays a special role in international affairs. Testimony of its power of attraction, the city is host to the majority of international organizations, diplomatic and consular offices, foreign subsidiaries and international students and conferences in Québec. It accounts for 49.1% of Québec's population, 50% of its jobs and 54.1% of its GDP. Metropolises are innovation ecosystems and economic drivers. That is why Montréal ranks among global leaders in such highly competitive, future-oriented sectors as aerospace, the life sciences, health technology, artificial intelligence, information technology, clean tech, virtual reality, augmented reality, visual effects and video games.

## **New consultation mechanisms**

Québec boasts a diverse array of actors that are active internationally, an asset that helps define its international personality and contributes to its pluralistic character. Sharing strategic information, discussing concerns, successes and challenges, and developing common and complementary objectives in a manner respectful of the independence of these actors strengthens the cohesion and effectiveness of Québec's international initiatives.

Consequently, the MRIF intends to implement a consultation mechanism targeting cities, regions and civil society actors that are active on the world stage.

The Government of Québec will engage these actors in a dialogue that enables Québec society as a whole to benefit from opportunities for international development and influence. This dialogue will also fuel the government's efforts to promote agile and flexible diplomacy in order to continue to adapt to the changing geopolitical context and Québec's sectoral interests. The exchange of information on priorities and international activities is also a way to identify complementary interests and actions.

The government will use the information shared during these consultations to promote properly civil society initiatives and the actions of local and regional authorities consistent with the priorities of Québec's International Policy, notably through its network of offices abroad.

## 4.2 AN AGILE AND FLEXIBLE INTERNATIONAL POLICY APPARATUS

Additional efforts will be devoted to training to upgrade employee skills in areas such as changing diplomatic practices, and to the development of tools to bolster Québec initiatives in public and digital diplomacy. Special attention will also be paid to animating networks that link Quebecers in all sectors of activity with contacts abroad given the essential role these networks play in maintaining Québec's notoriety and advancing its priorities. Québec will also maintain even closer links with diplomatic and consular representatives, international organizations and other international actors with a presence in Québec.

To be effective, the government and its network of offices abroad must remain agile and be capable of adapting to global trends, while at the same time working to maintain Québec's historical relationships that they helped to build. Québec will therefore make every effort possible within its means to consolidate and develop its oversea network and constantly defend and promote its interests. The mandate of each office and the human, financial and material resources allocated to it are reviewed on a regular basis. Given that global issues know no boundaries; a thematic approach could give new impetus to Québec's international representation. In this context, the government plans to entrust delegates or envoys with missions of specific strategic interest consistent with government and International Policy priorities.





[mrif.gouv.qc.ca/international-policy](http://mrif.gouv.qc.ca/international-policy)